VATES

The Journal of New Latin Poetry

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Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of *VATES*, the free journal whose aims are to encourage both the reading and – most of all – the *writing* of new Latin poetry. I am extraordinarily gratified to note that at least two of the contributors to this issue have been sufficiently inspired by the advent of this journal to pick up their pens and write verses – in the case of Nathan Murphy (p. 10), for the very first time. *Macte uirtute*!

Since the first issue, however, I find that life and its myriad vicissitudes have derailed all my own good intentions to write more Latin verse. Fortunately the arrival of Dirk Sacré's fascinating article on Joseph Tusiani has prompted me to try harder in future, and not be afraid of expressing deeply felt feelings in stately Latin measures. Particularly inspiring, I found, was the freedom with which Tusiani uses classical verse forms: he is no mere imitator of the ancients, but a modern poet striving for his own Latin 'voice'. This in turn put me in mind of a recent incident when I was taken to task for foolishly daring to end a pentameter with a monosyllable – you can read about my sinful transgression on p. 43 below, inbetween reflections on the utility of Latin versifying by Barry Baldwin, a survey of the witty epigrams of John Owen by Stephen Coombs, and a helpful guide to accents by Brian Bishop. But perhaps the best advice a budding Latin poet will find here is that offered by David Money, whose own *Ars Poetica* (p. 3) elegantly encapsulates his extensive experience as a Latin poet.

VATES needs you!

If you like what you see here please take a moment to tell people about it. But most importantly of all, if reading this inspires you to compose some Latin verses of your own, please don't be shy – share them with us!

Once again, *gratias maximas* to all the contributors without whose kind and generous support this journal would not be possible.

If you missed the first issue, please visit the *VATES* webpage to download your free copy:

http://pineapplepubs.snazzystuff.co.uk/vates.htm

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Carmina Latina

n.b. Latin spellings follow the orthography of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Only proper names are capitalised. See ***Matters Metrical*** (p. 50) for an explanation of the verse forms.

OFFICIUM VATIS

(circa una hora compositum, 24.00 – 01.00, 10/11 Jul. 2002)

David Money

David Money writes: This poem has been published in Latin before, but not translated or commented upon. Although I hope the majority of the piece is not too hard to follow, I see, as I translate it, that in parts it lives up to its own prediction that things obvious to a writer as he writes may not be so clear to a reader (even to the writer himself, returning to it later). Nevertheless I do think I see what I meant, and still agree with it, as far as it goes. It is, naturally, on the brief side for an *Ars Poetica*. The aim is to encourage people to get on with it, to write something lively and original without taking themselves too seriously, and to communicate it to others. These simple precepts might, I hope, be in tune with the ethos of *VATES*.

The poem urges us to embrace novelty and humour, including the sort of elephantine metrical playfulness it demonstrates with the fifth-foot spondee *evitandus*. (Our standards for 'humour' need not be too high: if it makes the author smile to think of it, that's a start.) Any genre or approach to composition may work well, though original writing can offer a freshness that tends to be less evident in the traditional exercise of translation from English. Poets who do see themselves as poets (however modest their ambitions) and are true to themselves, may end up pleasing other people as they satisfy their own urge. Among other things, I would like to see more genuine love poetry in contemporary Latin, though some ambiguity and license may be inevitable, as the final lines indicate.

The original circumstances of composition dictated the poem's length, and sense of urgency. I wanted to see how much could reasonably be done in an hour, without sacrificing all sense, at the end of a day's fairly busy composition (100 lines or so) in preparation for flying out to Poland for a Latin poets' workshop and small conference, organised by Anna Elissa Radke: the results of our collective efforts may be found in the volume she entitled *Alaudae* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2005; vol. 5 in the 'Noctes Neolatinae' series; 'Officium Vatis', p. 130). Needless to say, this was not a

normal day's work (a normal day's production is zero), but under the stimulation of an imminent self-imposed deadline (self-imposed, because I needn't have taken such new stuff, and could even have tried starting earlier). It really did take about an hour to do this, just after midnight on 10-11 July 2002, and I don't think it was altered thereafter. I say this not (or not entirely) to boast of its facility, or excuse its limitations, but to argue that speedy composition, popular in the Renaissance, can still have a place in modern Latin.

To those starting off on this absorbing intellectual pastime, who may find it a challenge to achieve workable lines quickly, it will hopefully be more encouraging than off-putting to see that 19 LPH (lines per hour) is achievable, though I would more often potter along at a steadier 5 or 10 LPH – much slower if one meets a jam. The secret of minimising jams, I find, is to develop a sense of what will and won't fit where in a line, and to avoid trying anything that will produce awkward gaps to fill; if in doubt, keep it simple, putting the verb, subject and object in their most natural places (metrically), and then fill the gaps. Think first about the parts that will be hardest, usually the line-ends. Check the start and end of each word carefully against its neighbour, watching out for elisions and correct application of the two-consonant rule. It's all too easy to make errors of scansion or grammar: I often do, usually something I neglected to check because I thought I knew it. Never mind; with practice comes the ability to spot many errors for oneself, and it is one of the kindly functions of an editor to save some of the rest from entertaining the smugness of posterity. Be bold, and be a *uates* …

officium uatis quid sit? si forte Latinas

audeat ad Musas hodierna uoce uenire,

audax sit. cur non? famam sperare furorem

indicat; at placeat primo sibi – nemine laudem

praestante aut meritam aut aliter, priuata parentur

gaudia: se pellat scribendi pura cupido.

ast aliis cupiat monstrare cupidine natum

carmen. ad hunc finem facile – aut non ardua – semper

percipienda canat: quod clare percipit auctor,

sensibus haud hominum diuersis omne uidetur.

carmina si uis redde noua uernacula ueste:

Musa tamen proprias mauult res. apta creare

adfectes linguae. numeros ui strenuus urge –

parce sed ipse tuis nugis sollemniter uti.

cui loqueris? tantum tibi – nec iocus euitandus.

quanquam mentitur non numquam quisque poeta,

ueros exponat (quantum licet) aequus amores

(nomine mutato, si sic sit tutius): ergo

per noctes ualeat longum tolerare laborem.

Metre: Hexameters

Translation: 'The poet's duty'

What might the poet's duty be? If by chance he dares to approach the Latin Muses in today's voice, let him be bold. Why not? To hope for fame is an indication of poetic frenzy. But let him first please himself – if no one proffers praise (whether deserved or otherwise), let private joys be prepared; let the pure desire of writing push itself on. Yet he should desire to show to others the song born from his desire. To this end let him always sing things which are easily understood (or at least not hard); something which the author himself sees clearly is not necessarily quite obvious to people's differing senses. If you like, dress up vernacular songs in some new clothes: but the Muse nevertheless prefers her own fresh material. You should strive to create things fitted to the language. Push on your rhythms forcefully – but don't take your own stuff *too* seriously. Who are you talking to anyway? Just to yourself – nor should a chance for joking be neglected. Although each poet lies often enough, let him fairly lay down his true loves (as much as he can get away with; under a pseudonym, if that's the safer course?); and thus may he have the strength to endure long nocturnal labours.

* * *

AVE, VATES

Barry Baldwin

Barry Baldwin writes: A little something to hail ***VATES***. It is framed by opening and closing lines from Propertius and Martial.

cedite, Romani scriptores; cedite, Grai!

advenit – en! – VATES, docti super aegide Marci.

advenit – en! – VATES, idcirco gaudeat omnis

qui cupiat versus edendos scribere Marco.

Hispani memini verissima verba poetae:

sint Maecenates, non derunt, Marce, Marones!

Metre: Hexameters

Translation:

Make way Roman writers, make way, Greeks! See! ***Vates*** has arrived, under the aegis of learned Mark. See! ***Vates*** has arrived, so let all rejoice who desire to write verses for publication by Marcus. I remember the wise words of the Spanish poet: Let there be Maecenases, Mark, and Virgils will not be wanting!

* * *

COLORES DORSETIANI

Stephen Coombs

Stephen Coombs writes: In 2005 on a Swedish heraldry website I aired a suggestion for a flag for my native county of Dorset – a white (technically silver) cross edged in red on a golden field. Two years later this design was being promoted by enthusiasts living in Dorset and in June 2008, St. Wite's Cross became the accepted flag of Dorset after a voting procedure organised by the county council. I had by then written some verses in English (appended below), to provide a possible interpretation of the three colours of the flag (in heraldic language its tinctures). *Colores Dorsetiani* is a Latin paraphrase of the English verses and is in the First Archilochian metre (cf. Horace, *Odes*, 4.7).

aurum Dorsetiae terra est omnesque perenni

tempore qui steterint

mente uelut gaza fortunas ponere caras:

aera sonora procul,

hic arbusta et agros, lapsum uolucrisue canorem,

plenum holus amne recens:

Dorsetiaeque rubrum uirtus est casta rutique

cordis inerme robur,

ludis atque labore genarum feruor honestus,

grandis amicitiae

more licente ioci consanguineisque fidelis

officio pietas:

at signum medio uexillo clarius istis

Dorsetiane uides

tam purum candens animae quam rude recusans

usque quiete premi,

quo uel in aequor edax argentea pellicit unda

terrigenas timidos:

uel super oceano formidinis ulla uocamur

noscere mysteria.

Metre: First Archilochian

Translation:

The gold of Dorset is the land and each one who through time everlasting may have stopped to store in his mind, as in a treasure-house, fortunes he holds dear: in the distance bronze bells sounding, here trees and fields, the swooping or singing of a bird, the abundance of fresh herbs in a stream. And the red of Dorset is sober virtue, weaponless strength coping with a heart's devastation, warmth of cheeks that is honest in play and work, jokes of longstanding friendship in all their tolerant habituality and loyal devotion to kinsfolk expressed in service. But in the middle of the flag, Dorsetman, you behold a sign brighter than these, seen by the soul to be as pure in its shining as rough in its continual refusal to be subdued by stillness; a sign by which perhaps a silver wave entices timid sons of earth into the devouring sea: or which across an ocean of terror calls us to be initiated into some sacred knowledge.

Dorset Tinctures

The gold of Dorset is the land
and all the folk who stood or stand
to treasure in their minds and bless
this tree, this field, this bell-peal heard
far off, this song or flight of bird,
this fresh stream filled with watercress.

Then Dorset's red is sober pride
and fortitude of hearts when tried,
the glow of cheeks at honest work
and honest play, the jests that tease
twixt friends completely at their ease,
the care for kin that none will shirk.

Amid these Dorset lays to view
a mark of even brighter hue,
untainted, incandescent, raw,
relentless like a silver wave
that dares the earth-born soul to brave
some sea of mystery and awe.

* * *

2 HAIKU

Nathan Murphy

Nathan Murphy writes: I have been studying Latin for about a year now, and this is my first attempt at writing poetry in the language. After reading the first issue of *VATES*, I decided that I would have a go at writing some myself, so I promptly sat down with a pen and a notepad and cast about for some inspiration. I had already decided on *haiku* as my verse form, as ever since studying it in English lessons it had become my favourite genre of poetry. I love how its simplicity lends it an almost ethereal beauty, and its clarity and directness that make it so easy to read and enjoy. Having read a few Latin *haiku* in the first issue of *VATES*, the mixture of the Latin language and Japanese poetry seemed to be both an unusual combination, and an attractive one: the structure and the beautiful sound of Latin, together with the lucidity and the effortless precision of *haiku* seemed a perfect match.

An actual subject for the poems, however, was much harder to find. The first poem, *Harry*, is about my nephew. I was struggling to think of anything to write, and I heard him playing rather noisily downstairs. Then I realised I could write a poem about him and his games, so I thank him for the inspiration. I wrote the second poem, *Summer*, while sitting on my doorstep. I was struck by the beauty of the day, the sights and sounds of a morning in June, so I scribbled down a few things that struck me about what I could see and hear. Then I had to try and fit the words into a verse of *haiku*. The hardest part, definitely, was finding the right words to fit in with the pattern of the syllables, and still to say what I wanted to say. Having only studied Latin for a year, the grammar also proved a little tricky. However, I found the whole experience very interesting and thoroughly enjoyable, and I look forward to writing more poetry in the future.

(1) *Harry*

ludus audio,

pediculi, sonitus

risus ludicri

(2) *Summer*

aues in altum

uentus folia mouet

lux solis luce

Metre: Haiku

Translations:

(1) *Harry*

I hear a game,
Tiny feet, sounds
Of playful laughter

(2) *Summer*

Birds in the heights
Wind stirs the leaves
Sunlight shines

* * *

4 VERSICULI

L.A.

L.A. writes: These are epigrams in elegiac couplets. The first is for a young man who was bound and beaten to death in a mental hospital. When I wrote it I had in mind some of the flower imagery found in the *Hymn to Demeter*, the emblematic character of violets as calming flowers, and the ancient myth of Persephone greeting the newly dead. The second is just the vagary of an undisciplined mind (mine) in the *Sangre De Cristo* range. The third was occasioned by the cremation of my sister-in-law at a monastery in Northern Thailand where I performed the duty of setting her body on fire and, the next morning, gathered her ashes and dropped them into the water off a sandbar near the triangulation of Burma, Thailand and Laos. The fourth is a reminiscence of a long dead lady who should not have died so young.

(1) Ad amicum Ricardum Vulpem qui in ualetudinario insanus est interfectus, a.d. V Kal. Feb. MMIII

care mihi, dormi, neque flumine tu rediture,

detque tibi uiolas florida Persephone.

(2) De defectione Lunae

Iuniperis pendet uiridanti nigra Selene:

stirpi sunt Cadmi cornua sicca cinis.

Iuniperis pendet uiridanti nigra Selene:

noctua contristans carmina maesta canit.

(3) Cineres in uento

optima, ne maneas: patiaris spiritus aeque

consurgat uentis quam cinis alba tibi.

(4) Nullo titulo

tu quoque mortalis, quondam nigra fecerat ouum

muscula mellitis basiolisque tuis.

Metre: Elegiacs

Translations:

(1) To Richard Fox, Who Was Murdered in a State Mental Hospital February 10, 2003

Sleep, my dear friend, who will not cross the river,
and may flower-fresh Persephone's violets be yours.

(2) Eclipse of the Moon

Above the verdant junipers a black
moon hangs. Actaeon's antlers are dry ash.
Above the verdant junipers a black
moon hangs. The sorrowful owl mourns in song.

(3) To the Ghost of my Sister-in-Law

Dearest, do not linger. Like your pale
ashes, may your soul rise up on the wind.

(4) Untitled

You too were born to die, for once a small,
dark fly laid its eggs in the honey of your kisses.

* * *

DINOSAURIA

Mark Walker

Mark Walker writes: The origin of this silly piece was a metrical experiment using nothing but the Latin names of dinosaurs – *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, *Stegosaurus* etc – with the half-formed idea of finding a fun way to teach the basics of quantitative verse. But after playing around a little bit, I found myself writing a Sapphic ode – for the first time! – that, though hardly in the manner of Horace, does attempt at least to observe some Horatian conventions, such as *synaphea* (continuous scansion from one line to the next within each stanza), a regularly heavy fourth syllable, and occasional use of the weak *caesura* (unusually twice in the second stanza, following *talis ... qualis*). Each stanza is a single sense-unit/sentence (stanzas 3 and 4 connected by *et*).

Un-Horatian are the deliberately 'gargantuan' words, including several unwieldy genitive plurals, in an attempt to give the piece a lumbering, dinosaur-like gait. The first two stanzas seem rather prosaic but things get interesting (and funnier, hopefully) in the third and fourth when you are asked to imagine being seized by a T. Rex. The jokey payoff comes right at the end.

I have attempted a little bit of word-play in stanzas 3 and 4 with *lacertosum* ('muscular', meant ironically – how puny you actually are in the arms of the monster), *lacertarum* (*lacerta*, 'lizard') and *lacertis* (*lacertus*, 'upper arm'). Note also that the accusative + infinitive in the third stanza works both ways: you gazing at the bloody features of the T. Rex, it staring right back at you. In fact T. Rex's forearms were notoriously teeny and he couldn't really have held you in those arms at all! The word *species* is used in the Linnaean sense

Dinosaurorum species (scientes

inquiunt) olim fuerant per orbem:

rupibus ruptis fodiunt uatillis

stemma stupendum.

mors quidem talis fuit ossearum

belluarum qualis ad usque nostrum

saeculum semper miserenda nobis

et metuenda.

finge – te Regis manibus Tyranni

(sportulae causa) subito prehenso –

te lacertosum facies tueri

sanguinolentas

et lacertarum, minimis lacertis

dentibus magnis, hilareque ridet

te, renidens atque boans, minutum

Terribilis Rex.

ne queraris, ne doleas opertum

funus idcirco gregis opstupendae:

forte si saevae nihilo sepultae

te sepelissent!

Metre: Sapphics

Translation:

Species of dinosaurs, scientists say, once existed throughout the world: having broken open the rocks they unearth with their trowels an astonishing lineage. But the death of the bony monsters was such as up to our own time is still to be pitied and feared. Imagine – suddenly having been seized (for the sake of a snack) by the hands of the Tyrant King – that brawny you catches sight of his gore-stained features [and vice versa], and the Terrible King of lizards, with the smallest arms and huge teeth, cheerfully laughs – grinning and bellowing – at tiny you. Do not lament, do not mourn therefore the mysterious funeral of the astonishing flock: if by chance the fierce creatures had not been buried, they would have buried you!

* * *

3 FIRST WORLD WAR POEMS

Paul Murgatroyd

Paul Murgatroyd writes: Since I first read some World War One poets at the age of 15 I have always been very moved by such poetry. A few months ago my sister-in-law gave me for a birthday present a selection that contained several pieces which I had not seen before, and which I immediately wanted to translate into Latin.

(1)

nostra hic ossa iacent quando non uiuere dulce

nobis et patriam sic maculare fuit.

non uitae iactura grauis; iuuenes tamen illam

esse grauem credunt, et fuimus iuuenes.

(2)

dic mihi, num refert ambo deperdere crura?

namque tibi mites semper erunt homines.

uenati redeunt alii dapibusque fruuntur,

sed potes inuidiam dissimulare tuam.

dic mihi, num refert ambos deperdere ocellos?

sunt operae caecis scilicet egregiae.

cumque sedens uultum et uertens ad lumen in horto

res repetes, mites semper erunt homines.

dic mihi, num refert per somnum inferna uidere?

nempe mero laetus nec memor esse potes.

nec, gnari te pro patria pugnasse, uocabunt

te uecordem homines, solliciti nec erunt.

(3)

perdidit hic uitam, hic membrum; sed perdidit ille,

di, mentem caram: praemia quanta feret?

hic fruitur laudes, hic pacem; garrit at ille,

demisso mento: dic mihi, quid fruitur?

naufragium belli est; illi et mens turbida torpet;

tanto pro damno praemia quanta feret?

Metre: Elegiacs

Translations:

(1) *Here Dead We Lie* (A.E. Housman)

Here dead we lie
Because we did not choose
To live and shame the land
From which we sprung.

Life, to be sure,
Is nothing much to lose.
But young men think it is,
And we were young.

(2) *Does It Matter?* (Siegfried Sassoon)

Does it matter? - losing your legs?...
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter? - losing your sight?...
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter? - those dreams from the pit?...
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your country
And no one will worry a bit.

(3) What Reward? (Winifred M. Letts)

You gave your life, boy,
And you gave a limb:
But he who gave his precious wits,
Say, what reward for him?

One has his glory,
One has found his rest.
But what of this poor babbler here
With chin sunk on his breast?

Flotsam of battle,
With brain bemused and dim,
O god, for such a sacrifice,
Say, what reward for him?

* * *

FEATURES

At Bay in Geary Street

(Apologies to Michael Frayn for titular perversion)

Barry Baldwin on the charms of Frederic Charles Geary and the utility of Latin poetry

In the very same year (1940) that Leicester Bradner (*Musae Anglicanae: A History Of Anglo-Latin Poetry 1500-1925*) declared the genre extinct with A. D. Godley and A. B. Ramsay (see my essay in the first issue of *VATES*), he was refuted by the epiphany of *Pelican Pie* by Frederic Charles Geary, a collection of verses and versions published by Blackwell for 3/6d in the good old money: Amazon is charging £25 for a used copy – truly, in the words of John Owen (1564-1622 – see p. 36 below), *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis …*

Geary is little remembered. His name resists 'Googling', and he was left out of the *Dictionary of British Classicists* (2004). Robin Nisbet, however, has recently (*Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning 1800-2000*, Duckworth: 2007, p. 220) provided a tibit of informative praise, commending Geary (Dean of Corpus Christi, Oxford, until 1952) for his handling of 'quite difficult Horatian metres' and recalling how he apologised for cutting the *Agamemnon* seminar of the formidable German professor Eduard Fraenkel 'in resonant Aeschylean iambics, such as few if any of us could compose now.'

Amen (alas) to this last lament. There was a time, back in The Classical Sixth, when I could grind out Greek iambics that scanned (if nothing else), but *Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni …* Geary's *libellus* (30 pages) received a rapturous welcome from that great Virgilian editor, R. G. Austin (1901-1974), in *The Classical Review* 55.1 (March 1941, pp. 51-52, available on-line). *Pelican Pie* leaves something of an autobiographical trail. Particular poems show Geary in the roles of irreverent undergraduate (a Greek limerick on the appalling lectures of ancient historian George Bedoe Grundy, confirmed in R. C. Robertson-Glasgow's cricketing memoir *46 Not Out* (Hollis & Carter: 1948, pp. 99-102); School Certificate Examiner; Ex-Pro-Proctor (these hated officials Latinised by the nifty neologism *Taurocanes*; Dean (thanking the loyal College Porter); Don; Air Raid Warden (*doctus volantes noscere machinas*); and Digger for Victory (*cras aret qui numquam aravit, quique aravit cras aret* – a gorgeous take-off of *cras amet qui numquam amavit quique amavit cras amet*, the opening line of the

anonymous third century A.D. *Vigilium Veneris* and closing one of John Fowles' former cult novel *The Magus*).

These hints are amplified by a gamut of topics ranging from university politics (*An finis artis Finibus Artium minetur instans*) to alcaic sympathies for a friend doomed to a nursing-home by an *appendix resecta*. Despite Austin's concluding compliment, 'It is so good for a moment to be able to forget the war,' the volume abounds in bi-lingual commentary on martial events and individuals: a Greek couplet on barrage balloons; the black-out (*saccis arenae pondere turgidis quisque enigratas occuluit fores; per strata restinctis viator noctivagus titubat lucernis*); warnings against loose talk that might help the enemy (*In silentio salus, quisque paries praebet aures; lingua proditrix; tace*); Hitler and Mussolini (*Te non Adolfi fulmina fervidi verbosa turbant, cum Duce qui regit Axem per Europae tumultus laetitia generans vigorem*); Hammer-and-Sickle (*Comes Stalin agitat falcem malleumque*); and (my favourite) the Italian goose-step (*anseribus passibus ingredi*). This Godlike/Godley-like versatility of original composition is matched by Geary's versions (again, biliingual) of (e.g.) pieces by Dryden, Housman, and Masefield, along with a Russian folk-song and *The Twa Corbies* in (Austin's words) suitably gruesome Theocritean style. Austin signs off with a neat distich of his own:

Bella tua, en, belli curas bellaria tollunt;

macte esto artopta, belle Decane, tuo!

Can any *VATES* adept, who owns or acquires *Pelican Pie*, come up with a tastier verdict?

Geary re-surfaces in *More Oxford Compositions* (Clarendon Press: 1964), the sequel to (what else?) *Some Oxford Compositions* (1949). Both contain Greek and Latin prose and verse, original compositions and translations, from teams headed by T. F. Higham. Both were reviewed in high places by men of distinction, the first collection by Austin (*CR* 64. 2, September 1950, pp. 71-72) and R. J. Getty (*Classical Philology* 46. 3, July 1951, pp. 180-184, comporting some criticism of metrical and stylistic details; the second by Austin (*CR* n.s. 15. 1, March 1965, pp. 108-110) and fellow-Virgilian R. D. Williams (*Class. Phil.* 60. 4, October 1965, pp. 291-292) – all available on-line.

Austin again singles out Geary for special commendation, dubbing him the translation Club's *arbiter elegantiae* (echoing Tacitus on Petronius), lauding his various bilingual, bi-generic contributions, above all, 'a delightful Latin elegiac version of Goldsmith's Schoolmaster, whose lines *Auctaque mirandi causa est mirantibus unum / tot res exiguum posse tenere caput* prove that 'the maker of *Pelican Pie* keeps his zest.'

Higham's Introductions and the above reviewers pursue the debate (at least as old as Housman) over the value of composition, especially verse. No prizes for guessing on which side they are. In his first foray, Higham, after his somewhat Delphic, 'The process of composition meant more to them (*sc.* the contributors) than the result,' lays out a 'Metaphysic of Composition', emphasising the perceived difference between 'versions' and 'contemporary Latin', exploring the moral principle behind the mechanics of composition along with practical tips on the use of models, parallels, and tags. His second proclamation, enthusiastically endorsed by the reviewers, is more belligerent. Denouncing the charge that verse-writing is 'a fraud on credulity', Higham insists, 'No one can rightly be said to "know" a language unless he can express himself in it,' further that, 'No one can know it really well unless the form of his expression has that variety, eloquence, and precision which comes from a wide command of its resources.'

As Owen lamented, *tempora mutantur*. Austin sorrowfully records the view of an unnamed President of the Classical Assocation (no less) for the view that, 'In the brave new climate of Classics, Composition can hardly be seen as more than a minor didactic device, a useful tool for teaching the rudiments of syntax and prosody, but no indispensable part of the University currciulum', adding, 'something would perish. And how much does it matter?' To the nowadays more seemingly (especially with more and more undergraduates coming Classics-less from school) utilitarian criticism that Composition uses up time that would be better spent reading more Greek and Latin authors, Higham already had the defence prepared: 'Enlightened teachers never forget that the main object of composition is precisely what the malcontents would wish – to make possible the reading of classical texts with ease and correct understanding', subjoining that verse composition is not 'odd' or 'curious', but, 'one way of getting to know the ancient poets which gives insights and appreciation to those who have chosen to do it.'

Or, as Gilbert Norwood (*Classical Journal* 44, 1950, 223) put it, in a much-quoted nutshell: 'Here is a magic key to getting inside ancient poetry.' If this be dismissed as flim-flam, Sir R. W. Tate, himself an outstanding practitioner, provides one hard-headed practical *apologia* in his Introduction to *Carmina Dubliniensia* (2nd ed., 1946): 'At Cambridge, an overwhelming majority of those who obtain Firsts and a large proportion of those who obtain Seconds are competent verse -writers.'

To end on a personal note. I spent my three years in The Classical Sixth at The Lincoln School (1953-1956) doing Latin and Greek composition, prose and verse. For the most part, it was versions of English passages rather than one's own originals. In Greek, we did not venture beyond iambics, whereas Latin extended beyond the obvious hexameters and elegiacs into Horatian-style Alcaics and Sapphics. As earlier said (*VATES* 1), this was the sort of thing in

which P. G. Wodehouse revelled at Dulwich, and which Raymond Chandler so highly valued there. One lifelong benefit I demonstrably carried away from these exercises is the ability to quote reams of *English* poetry, a point made by the celebrated Oxford classicist Jasper Griffin in the long and detailed account of his own education at school and university given to Ved Mehta (*Up At Oxford*, W. W. Norton: 1992, pp. 277-324). One final utilitarian argument: both Griffin and the non-classical Mehta competed for the same female undergraduate – Griffin won. *QED*.

* * *

Joseph Tusiani

Dirk Sacré introduces the work of a modern Latin poet[1]

It might seem an anachronism to write and to publish Latin poetry in the twenty-first century. For many years now, such has been the perception. When in the early 1950s the Hungarian Latinist Alexander Lenard (1910-1972), the translator of *Winnie the Pooh*[2], sent a Latin manuscript to a publisher, he received this answer: 'Dear Professor, we received your honorable manuscript and we would have been ready to publish it. Unfortunately, your work arrived 1900 years late. It must be a special case of postal delays. What a loss for the public! Considering the circumstances, you will understand that, in order to avoid any further delays, we are sending you back the manuscript by courier.'[3]

Also in the fifties – in 1955 to be precise – Joseph Tusiani, then aged 31 (he was born on 14 January 1924), published his first collection of Latin verse[4], which had been preceded by some Italian booklets of poetry. For more than half a century now, Tusiani's Muse has never fallen silent and has given him great quantities of Italian and English verse – verse in the dialect of his native San Marco in Lamis, and Latin compositions[5].

Why he continues to espouse the Latin Muse, might seem a mystery to many devotees of poetry. The Roman tongue fascinates Tusiani, there can be no doubt about that. It is a language that carries him back to the studies of his youth, I would guess; and I venture to say that Latin is the vehicle that enables him to bridge the gap between Italian, his native tongue, the tongue of the country he left for the States more than 60 years ago, and the language of his new fatherland, where he made a career as a professor of Italian literature. Tusiani must be aware of the fact that his Latin poetry reaches a rather small audience, if you compare it with his Italian or English verse, but that does not really matter to him; he is conscious of the fact that he is one of the most productive Latin poets of our age, and that fills him with joy, the more so because he is not working for the *hodiernus dies*, but for the *longa dies*.

Besides, writing in Latin has become second nature to him; with an ever increasing facility he succeeds in expressing his thoughts and sentiments in Latin. From a quantitative viewpoint, his Latin production of recent years clearly eclipses his output in Italian and English; his Latin poetic vein does not dry up; almost every week, new poems take shape, very often at night, shortly after the catnap of the elderly poet, who spends his days in an apartment in Manhattan. And however much resemblance or parallelism there is between his Latin and his vernacular poetry, it seems to me that he reveals himself most fully in his poems written in Latin.

Joseph Tusiani is a passionate reader of the classics of European literature; obviously he is an expert on Italian, English and American literature, but as I have experienced myself, he also has a thorough knowledge of, for instance, French poetry. Contrary, however, to such poets as Harry C. Schnur (1909-1979)[6], Giuseppe Morabito (1900-1997)[7], Fernando Maria Brignoli (d. 1970)[8] and in fact most Latin poets of the last century, Joseph is no classical philologist; he did not specialise in Latin literature at the university and never taught classical literature. To some extent, this helps to explain the exceptional freshness of his Latin verse. When he made his first appearance on the Latin scene, more than 50 years ago, he did not care too much about the classical rules of prosody, but nevertheless succeeded in composing a kind of music, which struck the first readers on account of its rich, genuinely lyric and very personal message. From then on it became clear to the readers of modern Latin that Tusiani was not just one of these countless versifiers taking pleasure in occasional poetry written after classical models. His voice was a new one – and fundamentally it has not changed too much over the last decades.

Admittedly, he now gives more attention to syllabic quantities and is particularly fond of experimenting with both common and rather uncommon metres which he handles in his own, peculiar way. From a technical perspective, he does not object to rare types of elision, to the coincidence of words and metrical feet, to frequent spondaic lines, to hexameter endings with monosyllabic words or words of four or even more syllables. The rhythms he creates often depart from the classical ones, but nevertheless have their own charms.

His vocabulary is composite and mixes words taken from the classical and the late-Latin poets; it sometimes has Italian overtones. Most of the time, his syntax is straightforward. Basically, Tusiani's lyric persona handles Latin almost as if it were a modern and living language, by which I also mean that there is no tendency at all to rethink his ideas, images, sentiments to conform to the classical idiom, or to set his lines in a classical mould. Therefore, just as the jury of the international poetry contest, the famous Hoefftianum at Amsterdam, to which poems had to be submitted anonymously, was able to recognise a poem as a work of the great bilingual poet Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912)[9], when they had read no more than a few lines, so to it takes only two or three lines to identify a poem as a work of Tusiani, the more so, because his poetic universe has remained fairly constant over the last decades.

So in Joseph's work, one would look in vain for clever variations on ancient poetic lines written in the highly polished language of Horace. Compared to the works of the Roman poets, his poetry might seem quite direct, quite uncomplicated or ungarnished in its linguistic expression, but at the same time this poet's directness is very often elusive. Tusiani often falls back on simple, almost

unpoetical words and expresses himself time and again in short, coordinate sentences. Furthermore he is extremely sensitive to the sonic and euphonic expressiveness of his verse (besides, he is an unreserved music lover having a preference for lyric opera and the classic *Lied*). Using especially dark sounds he composes what we may call music, and just as classical music does, he uses *temi con variazioni*, subtle repetitions, while he also pays attention to well balanced compositions. This might result in completely unclassical lines, but that is not a problem for him.

Who would venture to write a verse like this one, with its threefold dark repetition, its coincidences of word and foot, and its spondaic fifth foot?

fulgere oh pergat super umbras, umbras, umbras[10]

I know almost no classical example of this, and would have to turn instead to Neo-Latin poetry, for instance to the fifteenth-century poet Giovanni Pontano, who in his book *Baiae* wrote lines like these hendecasyllables: *Me tot pocula totque totque totque,/ tot me pocula iuverint bibentem* (I.10.25-26)[11]. However, the metrical and general effect of the triple repetition is totally different, nor do I think that Tusiani is familiar with Pontano's poetry.

In any case, the music of Joseph Tusiani's seemingly innocent and straightforward verse fascinates and enchants the reader who is plunged almost unconsciously into deep, existential reflections. There are, for instance, many beautiful prayers in Joseph's *oeuvre*. One of my favourites is his *Small prayer at midnight*, written in 1993, which looks like an impromptu, but is composed with much refinement in stanzas consisting of three Glyconics and one Pherecratean:

Oratiuncula mediae noctis (1993)

Sol, amate calor, redi,

Fer novumque diem mihi:

Me ferit sine lumine

Ista nox patienda.

Ista nox sine lumine

Me tenet pavidum illius

Temporis pariter nigri

Subter aggere agendi.

Sol, amate nitor, redi,

Ac cito mea mens erit

Salva ab omine praecoci

Noctis usque ineundae.[12]

Small prayer at midnight

Come back, sun, beloved warmth,
And bring me a new day.
I am wounded by this night I have to go
Through without light.

This night without light
Terrorizes me with the thought
Of that equally dark time
That I will have to spend
Under the funeral mound.

Come back, sun, beloved splendour,
And soon my mind will be free from
That too early portent
Of the night I will have to enter forever.

Note that the first line of the third stanza differs but slightly from the opening line – *Sol, amate calor, redi … Sol, amate nitor, redi*; that the word *fer* of the second line of the poem is echoed by *ferit* in line three, to which corresponds the pun *aggere agendi* at the end of the second stanza. Of course, the end of the first stanza (*Me ferit sine lumine / ista nox patienda*) flows over to the second stanza perfectly (*Ista nox sine lumine*). In the third stanza, the words *redi* and *erit* mirror each other. Subtle rhymes add to the musical qualities of the prayer: *redi/mihi* in stanza one, *nigri/agendi* in stanza two, *redi/praecoci* in stanza three. The poet connects night with death at the end of each of the three stanzas, where three gerundive forms (*patienda/agenda/ineundae*) stress death's inexorability. Three times we witness references to light (*sol/lumine/sol*) at the beginning of the stanzas, whose endings call up darkness and death (*nox patienda/subter aggere agendi/ noctis usque ineundae*); and three times nature's appearance has an effect on the poet's mind (*sol/mihi*; *nox/me*; *sol/mea*). As so often in the elderly poet's work, death plays a central role in the poem that ends with his treasured dark sounds (*usque ineundae*).

Somehow, but in a very subtle way, the poem recalls the fifth one of Catullus (*Viuamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus*), one of the Roman poets Tusiani likes most.

Joseph Tusiani was the first non-Englishman to be awarded an important prize by the Poetry Society of England, and, later on, became president of the Catholic Poetry Society of America. He became an American citizen in 1956 and ever since has been a pivotal figure of, and an esteemed guest on, the New York literary scene. Whoever wishes to be informed about his so to speak 'external' biography should consult his extremely interesting three-volume autobiography (*La parola difficile*, *La parola nuova* and *La parola antica*, 1988-1992)[13]. But, in my opinion, the Latin Tusiani is above all an introspective poet; his poetry is most of the time *Einsamkeitslyrik*: in his Latin poetic universe, outside society is less present, as are current events; there are not too many poems dealing with his relatives, if one excludes his long-lived mother, a niece, and a few friends. Reading through his Latin poems (which undoubtedly represent only part of his personality) one has the impression of getting to know a somewhat lonely figure (how many variations there are on the line *solus sum*), who lives with and for letters and music in the solitude (however odd this may sound) of his Manhattan apartment, where he creates so to speak an ideal world, where, for the last quarter of a century or so, he has been leading his life sitting behind a writing desk rather than living 'in the real world', if I may use this expression; who time and again draws up the balances of his existence, continues to ask himself if his poetic activity has not made him forget real, active, busy life, and to speculate on the significance and sense of his literary activities; who over and over struggles with the big questions of life; who still feels sympathy for the firm (rather naïve) faith he had as a young man, but at the same times has his doubts and thus at times falls into despondency. This idea is clearly expressed in his 2001 poem *Quondam*:

Quondam

Heu verum latet horridum:

Cuncta maxima perdidi

Te perdens, pueri Fides.

Nunc et nil, nihilo minus

In terra remanet mihi.[14]

Alas, there is a terrible truth behind this:
The most important things in life did I lose
When I lost you, Faith of my childhood;

And now there is nothing left for me on earth,
Less than nothing.

A poet, furthermore, who observes or perhaps rather dreams nature, which is so prominently present in his poetry and of which he considers himself to be a part, hardly differing from a falling leaf, a sunbeam or a cloud that slips by; a man who is torn between the life he lived as an adult, far from his roots, and the idealized Puglia of his youth. On these fundamental themes Joseph Tusiani makes skilful Neo-Latin variations, perfectly conscious of his orbiting round the same themes, as his poem entitled *Parce lector*, dating from 2001, proves:

Parce lector

Ergo parce, mihi, lector, si carmina cuncta

Quondam lecta legis, repetita et adhuc repetenda.

Non mutor; pariter non mutatur mea Musa. (ll. 8-10)[15]

Therefore, forgive me, reader, if all the poems you are reading
You have read once before, poems repeated and to be repeated again.
I do not change, likewise my Muse is unchanging.

At times, his verse is characterised by a raw emotionalism, even sentimentalism; but other poems comprise only reasoning and argumentative stuctures. To articulate his ideas, he adopts recurring images and metaphors: his longing for light and his fear of the dark; nature, into whose movements he wishes to be absorbed; autumn as a foreshadowing of human departure from life, but also as a sign of hope for a new spring, for mankind too; earth and the universe which are eternal, timeless, much more beautiful and powerful than man, but which are deprived of consciousness; mankind with its consciousness, which is at the same time a blessing and a curse.

Unsurprisingly, meditations on passing away become more and more important in Tusiani's recent poetry. We have already noticed death's presence in his poetry, and the poet returns frequently to the dark lady who is whetting her scythe against each of us. Reflecting on Augustine's *Confessiones*, Tusiani wrote in 2005, using staggeringly direct words, and (especially in the last line) shockingly unclassical rhythms:

Me quoque, docte pater, mortis durae timor angit,

Me quoque dira mei putrefacti visio turbat.

Peior et est terror finis totius in imis

Nostri operis, simul et cessatio carminis echus.

Quaestio magna redit : si nil de me remanebit,

Cur vixi, cur natus sum – vermem ad saturandum?[16]

Erudite Father, I too am tortured by fear of harsh death;
I too grow perturbed at the vision of my rotting Self.
And even worse is the terror
For the final end of my work, beneath the earth,
And the dying down of the echo of my song.
The paramount question recurs: if nothing of me will remain,
Why did I live, why was I born – food for the worms?

Most of the time, however, the idea of the inevitable end is put forward less bluntly. Its muted presence accounts for the poet's depressive moods, for instance when an Indian summer cannot shield him from a premonition of the cold of Autumn with the symbolic value it has to the poet:

Primum frigus autumni (2006)

Est circum me tantus amor radiosaque terra est:

Cur felix non sum ? Quid mihi nunc opus est?

…

Nil opus est terrae, perfecta est temporis hora:

Cur felix non sum ? Cur misera est anima?

Heu, Autumne, prope es, primumque in corpore frigus

Diversi anticipat frigoris indicium.[17]

Around me there is so much love and the earth is radiant :
Why am I not happy? What more do I need now?
…
The earth does not need anything more; this hour is just perfect:
Why am I not happy? Why is my soul so sad?
Alas, you are near, Autumn, and the first cold this body feels
Is the first foretaste of a different cold.

There is a corollary to this attitude towards the gloomy end of life, namely an often surprisingly strong vitality in the aged poet, in whose blood the passions of love (and sex) are still torrid – several

poems of the last two decades evoke in a fervent way affairs the lyrical persona has had. Is there a more impassioned poem conceivable than this vehement *Desiderium*, which dates from the 90s?

Velox in venis quadriga cupidinis urget,

Accenso currens in sanguine nocte dieque;

Fumantes crepitant nigro cum pulvere flammae

Atque, rotis tritae, gemebundae horae moriuntur:

Talis, amata puella, manet sine te mea vita.[18]

The rapid charriots of passion are charging through my veins,
Running through my boiling blood, night and day;
The smoking flames crackle, the black dust banks up;
Run over by their wheels, the hours waste away in lamentation:
That, beloved girl, is the life left to me without you.

But his joy of living he also expresses in serene and peaceful poems, such as this simple, but intriguing little song from January 2007, a light-hearted and playful, but in my opinion unforgettable poem that needs no translation:

Fragmentum

Cras silebo,

Cras tacebo,

Cras habebo

Socium silentium.

Sed me, Vita,

Nunc invita

Ad ambita

Cantica viventium.[19]

Some 18 years ago, Tusiani acquired a house in his native village on Monte Gargano, more precisely in the street where his parental

home stood, the Via Palude in San Marco in Lamis. Since then he usually spends some two months there in springtime. These yearly trips have inspired the artist to numerous poems dealing with a fundamental theme of his poetry: his double identity as an Italo-American, but especially his *io diviso*, the split personality of one who is both an Italian and an American, but at the same time is neither of them, and who oscillates between his two countries, continuously conscious of, and often longing for, whichever country he is absent from. His native region, which he mostly describes with great affection, usually stands for the purity of his youth and for the fullness of life – *est in mente mea tellus, quam comparo / veri aeterno et magico*[20], he wrote in *Ver duplex* (1999): 'there is in my mind a country I compare with spring, with an eternal, magical spring'. In fact, he often sees his Monte Gargano as a *terra ubi tempus abest*[21] (*Iterum veni*, 1993), 'a place characterized by a standstill of time', a place enabling him to 'come home' (if I may say so) to his own self, that is, his young and innocent, undecayed self:

Testamentum (1999)

Oceanum dirum trepidanti corde cucurri

Sed nullum mare me oblivisci littora sivit

Terrae natalis (sunt illic omina Fati),

Atque ideo mansi puer in gravitate virili

Ut manet in fluctu vox prima atque ultima rivi.[22]

I have crossed the terrible ocean with pounding heart,
But no sea ever allowed me to forget the shores
Of my native country (there one finds the omens of one's fate);
And therefore through my manhood I remained the child I had been,
Just as the first and last murmurs of a brook resound in the foaming waves of the sea.

But, if I am not mistaken, now that the Return has become an annual ritual, the poet's perception of his native Puglia has changed. Is he really coming home when returning to San Marco in Lamis? The years spent abroad have left a profound impression, so that it becomes difficult for the poet to return to his Apulian past ; and his native region is not the same it was half a century or more before; its inhabitants belong to another generation, while his own old companions are passing away. Admittedly, in some of his poems he still counts the days until the journey to Monte Gargano can begin, but the fascination now also can wane after some days

spent in Puglia; one even comes across poems which are written in San Marco, but express a desire for New York: in his poem *Garganica pluvia*[23], dating from 2006, the poet voices, to his own surprise, his dream of the Atlantic and of the sounds floating up from New York's Central Park. Like those Renaissance poets who in the new Rome looked in vain for the ancient one, Tusiani does not always find his native village in his native village; even when staying at San Marco, the poet finds his genuine native country only in his imagination and in his memory, so that his staying on the Monte Gargano also causes some disillusion. These two points are made very clear in a poem he wrote in Italy in May 2008. Very aptly, this composition closes with the key-word *recordor* ('I remember'), which is repeated from the second line.

Reditus ad Garganum MMVIII

Mi Gargane, mihi non dant mirabile donum

Hoc anno Musae. Maestus tacitusque recordor

Carmina pacta aliis annis ex corde beato

Cum herba videbatur caeli fulgens pavimentum

Flos omnisque Dei risus per rura supremus.

Nunc solum hoc possum dare verbum triste, 'recordor'.[24]

'My Gargano, this year the Muses do not give me their wonderful gift.
Sombre and silent I remember the poems written in other years,
from a heart filled with happiness,
when the rich vegetation here to me seemed to be
the glittering pavement of the sky,
and every flower God's supreme laughter, ringing over the fields.
Now I can only give these sad words: 'I remember'.

Contrary to what these lines suggest, however, the Muses continue to inspire our poet. The year 2007 witnessed the publication of *In nobis caelum*, an impressive tome of Latin poetry, edited and translated by Emilio Bandiera, the poet's friend and colleague from Lecce university. Last year (2009) we welcomed a new volume, the *Fragmenta,* translated and edited by the same Emilio Bandiera. Tusiani remains a productive Latin poet, one whose highly original voice guarantees its perpetuity. For many generations to come that *finis operis*, that *cessatio carminis echus*, mentioned in Tusiani's *Ad Augustinum Thagastensem*, will prove to be an idle fear.

Notes:

1. The text is based on my Dutch article 'Recent werk van Joseph Tusiani', Kleio, 38 (2008-2009), 38-46 and delivered in Rome at the Academia Belgica on 5 June 2009 on the occasion of a Colloquium 'Joseph Tusiani as a Neo-Latin Poet' and the presentation of a new booklet of Latin verse written by Tusiani.
2. *A. A. Milnei Winnie ille Pu. Liber celeberrimus omnibus fere pueris puellisque notus nunc primum de anglico sermone in Latinum conversus auctore Alexandro Lenard*. With Notes and Glossary prepared in consultation with Israel Walker (New York: Dutton, 1962). On this Latin translation, see now Michiel Verweij, 'Winnie the Pooh in Latin, or How to Put Delightful English into Equally Enjoyable Latin', Humanistica Lovaniensia, 57 (2008), 263-299.
3. Quoted by András Luckás, The "Usual" Questions of Translation Studies in an "Unusual" Situation of Translation: Translation into a Dead (?) Language (Unpublished paper, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2007), p. 2.
4. Joseph Tusiani, *Melos cordis* (see Bibliography).
5. Cp. e.g. Cosma Siani (ed.), *In quattro lingue* (see Bibliography).
6. See e.g. the articles in Gilbert Tournoy, Dirk Sacré (eds.), *Pegasus devocatus. Studia in honorem C. Arri Nuri sive Harry C. Schnur. Accessere selecta eiusdem opuscula inedita*, Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia, 7 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992).
7. See e.g. the articles in Vincenzo Fera, Daniela Gionta, Elena Morabito (eds.), *La poesia latina nell'area dello Stretto fra Ottocento e Novecento. Atti del Convegno di Messina, 20-21 ottobre 2000, nel centenario della nascita di Giuseppe Morabito* (1900-1997), Percorsi dei classici, 7 (Messina: Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2006).
8. See e.g. Dirk Sacré, 'La poesia Latina moderna e contemporanea: un'introduzione ed un invito alla lettura', in Dirk Sacré, Joseph Tusiani iuvante Toma Deneire (eds.), *Musae saeculi XX Latinae. Acta selecta conventus patrocinantibus Academia Latinitati Fovendae atque Instituto Historico Belgico in Urbe Romae in Academia Belgica anno MMI habiti*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 58 (Bruxelles: Inst. Hist. Belge de Rome, 2006), pp. 15-67 (pp. 33-38).
9. See e.g. Alfonso Traina, *Il latino del Pascoli. Saggio sul bilinguismo poetico*. Terza edizione riveduta e aggiornata con la collaborazione di Patrizia Paradisi, Testi e manuali per l'insegnamento universitario del latino, 88 (Bologna : Pàtron, 2006); the articles in Emilio Pianezzola (ed.), *Il latino del Pascoli e il bilinguismo poetico* (Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2009).
10. 'Super umbras' (2006), l. 11 in *In nobis caelum* (see Bibliography), p. 395.

11. 'Laetatur de reditu Francisci Aelii', in Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, *Baiae*. Translated by Rodney G. Dennis, The I Tatti Renaissance Library, 22 (Cambridge, MA. – London: Harvard U.P., 2006), p. 26.
12. *In nobis caelum*, p. 61. Cp. also *ibid.*, p. 27: *Occasus* (written in 1996?): *Lux dum labitur ultima,/ quaerit mens aliud iubar,/ ne me proxima nox suo/ vincat imperio fero.*
13. Each of these with the subtitle *Autobiografia di un italo-americano* (Fasano: Schena, 1988, 1991, 1992).
14. *In nobis caelum*, pp. 345-347.
15. *In nobis caelum*, pp. 383-385.
16. *In nobis caelum*, pp. 369-375.
17. *In nobis caelum*, p. 391.
18. *In nobis caelum*, p. 141.
19. *Fragmenta ad Aemilium* (see Bibliography), p. 44.
20. *In nobis caelum*, p. 275.
21. *In nobis caelum*, p. 65.
22. *In nobis caelum*, p. 289.
23. *In nobis caelum*, p. 377.
24. Sacré, 'Recent werk', p. 45.

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See also Cosma Siani, *Le lingue dell'altrove. Storia, testi e bibliografia di Joseph Tusiani* (Roma : Cofine, 2004).

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* * *

The Wit of a Wykehamist Welshman

Stephen Coombs on the Latin epigrams of John Owen

A tiny book – page size 6 by 9¾ cm. – published in Amsterdam in 1650 introduced me to the epigrams of John Owen. The frontispiece shows a gaunt head with staring eyes, moustache, pointed beard and, somewhat incongruously, a very large, very neat wreath of laurels, surrounded by the inscription *IOANNES OWENVS CAMBRO BRITANNVS OXONIENSIS*[1]. Apparently a man of some importance.

Being a Cambrian, i.e. a Welshman, and an Oxford man was essential to Owen's sense of identity. He won a scholarship to Winchester in 1577, which indicates around 1564 as his date of birth. He went on to read Law at William Wykeham's other foundation, New College in Oxford, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. 'Vvichamicus', the Wykehamist, is in fact the heading of one cocky epigram:

> *Pompeianus ego non sum, non Caesarianus,*
>
> *non sum Syllanus; sum Marianus ego.*
>
> I'm not a follower of Pompey, nor of Caesar, nor of Sylla [i.e. Sulla]: I'm a Marian, I am. (VIII 87; 88 in my 1650 edition)[2]

In 1595 Owen was appointed headmaster of King's New School in Warwick, but he seems to have lived most of his remaining life in London, where he acquired a large number of wealthy patrons. He died in the 1620s, having won considerable, and for a while persisting, fame in Britain and abroad.

Epigrams were undoubtedly Owen's thing. There are around 1,500 of them, in single or multiple elegiac couplets or, very rarely, plain hexameters. They originally appeared in four publications consisting respectively of three, one, three and three collections (so-called 'books') distinguishable by their dedications rather than their titles. For reference it is easiest to number all ten books consecutively.

How good are the epigrams? Pretty good. Hardly in the 'lol' category, but certainly able to rouse a chuckle:

> *tabificum non accendat liber iste tabaccum;*
>
> *terge libro potius posteriora meo.*
>
> I wouldn't like this book to be used to light unhealthy tobacco. I'd rather you used my book to wipe your hinder parts. (I 172)

Obviously Owen doesn't take himself too seriously – and obviously he shares King James I's famous aversion. Of course there is much that he takes or has to take seriously: above all, religion and deference to his superiors. But even with these topics he can allow his eye to twinkle:

qui petit accipiet, Iacobus apostolus inquit:

o si Iacobus rex mihi dicat idem!

'He who seeks shall receive' says James the Apostle: oh, if only James the King would tell me the same! (I 170; cf. James i 5)

Addressing a patron whom you depend on however – here Lady Arabella Stuart, King James's cousin – you lay it on with an unblinking trowel, though without straying quite beyond the bounds of believability:

a teneris idem tenor et constantia uitae

arguit ingenii uim geniumque tui.

te non aduersae timidam, tumidamue secundae

res faciunt; eadem frons tibi mensque manet.

fecit et in populo tua spectatissima uirtus,

ne quis adulari me tibi posse putet.

From tender age the same course and constancy of life have shown the strength and impressiveness of your character. Adversity does not frighten you, nor does prosperity puff you up; your brow and your mind remain as before; and your moral excellence, much admired among the people, has been grounds enough for no-one to think that I might be flattering you. (IV 2)

When writing for a real friend a more off-hand tone is okay:

uno non possum quantum te diligo uersu

dicere; si satis est distichon, ecce duos.

I can't say how much you mean to me in just one line, but if a distich will do it, here you are – two lines. (VII 106)

Dislike can be expressed sharply:

se solum Labienus amat, miratur, adorat:

non modo se solum, se quoque solus amat.

Labienus only loves, admires and worships himself; it's not just that he only loves himself – only he himself loves him. (VIII 64)

Marital relations are given a shrewd glance:

vox eadem gerere et regere est, omenque notandum;

ut regat uxorem vir, gerat illa virum.

'Manage' and 'rule' are the same word [as regards their letters], a sign worth taking note of: just as the man would rule his wife, so she would manage him. (VIII 94; 1650 ed. 95)

A virtuoso in the use of language will be tempted to make words, grammar, juxtapositions of languages, topics in their own right:

Angli bed lectum uocitant, Cambrique sepultum;

lectus enim tumuli, mortis imago sopor.

'Bed' is what the English call a bed and the Welsh a grave; a bed, you see, is the image of the tomb, sleep is the image of death. (II 108)

non quaerit Christum laicus, sua commoda quaerit.

nec tu τον Χριστον, clere, το Χρηστον amas.

The layman doesn't seek Christ, he seeks his own advantage; and you, cleric, love not Christ [Gk.] but what is useful [Gk.] to you. (III 158)

nullus homo est qui se non praeferat omnibus unum;

hinc personarum prima uocatur ego.

praesentem laudas, absentem laedis amicum;

scilicet hinc mihi tu proximus, ille tibi.

There is no-one who does not put himself alone before other people; hence 'I' is called the first person. You praise your friend when he is present, do him injury when he is absent; hence 'you' obviously comes next after me, 'he' next after you. (II 139)

Sometimes Owen's punning is rather infantile, but for my part I don't mind at all:

> *'quaeritur unde tibi sit nomen Erasmus? eras mus.'*
>
> *(Resp.) 'si sum mus ego, te iudice, summus ero.'*
>
> Wondering where you got the name Erasmus from? You were a mouse. (The answer:) If I'm a mouse, then by your own verdict I'm going to be the tops. (VII 34)

A writer of epigrams should be able to turn his hand to any subject. Behold the unhappy but eloquently delineated plight of *Bombyx*, the silkworm:

> *arte mea pereo, tumulum mihi fabricor ipse.*
>
> *fila mei fati duco necemque neco.*
>
> I perish by my own art, I fabricate my own tomb. I produce the threads of my own fate and spin my own murder. (II 186)

On growing old:

> *saepe rogas, quot habes annos? respondeo nullos.*
>
> *quomodo? quos habui, Pontice, non habeo.*
>
> You often ask, 'How many years have you got under your belt?' 'None,' I reply. How so? The years I used to have, Ponticus, I have no longer. (III 114)

He had no affection for his brother-lawyers:

> *causidicum in caelis unum, inquit Paulus, habemus.*
>
> *praeter eum num qui sunt ibi causidici?*
>
> We have one Advocate in heaven, says Paul. Apart from that one, are there any advocates there? (V 87; the reference seems in fact to be to I John ii 1)

Lawyers and physicians are treated with equal scepticism:

> *dat Galenus opes, dat Iustinianus honores*
>
> *dum ne sit patiens ipse, nec ille cliens.*
>
> Galen provides riches, Justinian honours, so long as the latter is not a patient and the former not a client. (VI 47)

Specious occult correlations, as between planets and metals, were still part of the notional baggage of the age, but a principal concern then as now was plain old money:

Sol aurum astrologo est, argentum Cynthia: cuprum

alma Venus (Veneri patria Cyprus erat):

Mercurius uiuum argentum: Mars funebre ferrum:

Iuppiter est stannum: plumbeus huic pater est.

Accipe de septem tibi, Firmice, quinque planetas;

sat mihi sol solus, luna sat una mihi.

To an astrologer, [Apollo] the sun is gold, Diana [the moon] silver, kindly Venus copper – Cyprus was Venus's homeland. Mercury is quicksilver, Mars is death-delivering iron, Jupiter is tin, his father [Saturn] is made of lead. Take five planets for yourself, Firmicus; the mere sun [gold] is enough for me, enough for me is the moon [silver] alone. (X 7)[3]

As we would expect from the times he lived in, Owen's subject matter is never so vile as pagan Martial's can be, yet nor is it prudish. Here we meet *Rara auis in terris*, a bird that's rare on the ground:

uirgo puellari morbo Burgunda laborans,

iam desperata saepe salutis ope,

a medicis mentam consultis iussa minutam

sumere, quae multis utilis herba fuit.

quam per peccatum uel uiuere, maluit, id quod

peccati pretium debuit esse, mori.

A virgin from Burgundy suffering from a girlish disease had already been losing hope of getting better. The doctors she consulted told her to take a little mint, a herb which had helped many girls. But rather than actually live by sinning, she preferred what should have been the price of sin – to die! (II 45)

To get the joke one has to recall Martial's favourite word for the male sexual organ, *mentula*, which looks like a diminutive form of *menta*. Here is another example of non-prudery (well, bawdiness) headlined *Osculum*, 'The Kiss':

una trisyllaba uox inter celebratur amantes,

quam sibi quisque sua uult ab amante dari.

syllaba prima data est? reliquae sine lite dabuntur:

quae dedit os, culum non minus illa dabit.

> One word of three syllables [*osculum*] is celebrated among men who love: every one of them wants it to be given him by the woman who loves him. Has the first syllable been given? The rest will be given without quarrel. She who has given her *os* [mouth] will be sure to give her *culus* [rear end]. (VIII 11)

What can an aspiring modern writer of epigrams learn from Owen? Some of his strengths are those of competent epigrammatists and poets generally: alliteration (an advanced example is *laudas, laedis* in II 139), fluency of phrase, economy of expression (above, *passim*), the effective placing of individual words (e.g. *unum* in II 139) or of words in conjunction (*aduersae timidam, tumidamue secundae res* in IV 2). Owen's humour is principally verbal, making much use of puns and – not typical epigram content – anagrams. But anyone who persists in cultivating the epigrammatic art will find his or her own strengths (and weaknesses). When I composed epigrams on the classes (all called after animals or birds) leaving Katarinaskolan in Uppsala, Sweden, hoping to encapsulate their characters, I found – when I could manage them – internal rhymes, plays on the structure of words and ambiguities of interpretation very satisfying (see the postscript below).

Notes

1. The first critical edition of Owen's epigrams is in John R. C. Martyn, *Ioannis Audoeni Epigrammatum* vol. I libri I-III (E. J. Brill, Textus Minores vol. XLIX), Leiden 1976 and vol. II libri IV-X (E. J. Brill, Textus Minores vol. LII), Leiden 1978. I use the numbering of this edition. Many different Latin forms of Owen's surname appear in epigrams by or addressed to him.
See also Dana F. Sutton, Hypertext critical edition of the *Epigrammata* of John Owen:
http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/owen/
2. The translations provided here are my own.
3. In line 4, word 5, Martyn prints *hic* and notes no variant reading. This must be a result of negligence. *Huic* as in my copy of 1650 makes much better sense.

Postscript: Two class epigrams from Katarinaskolan

rhinoceros spissae pellis truculente rebellis,

o uellem pellem punctus habere tuam!

Thick-skinned Rhinoceros, antagonistic and insubordinate, oh how I, wounded by your horn, would love to have your hide!

turture purpureo cum murmure furfure iacto

optima consilii grana leguntur humo.

Murmuring the beautifully coloured Turtle-dove discards the bran and pecks from the ground the finest grains of wisdom.

* * *

Mea Culpa

Mark Walker on getting his verses wrong

I have a confession to make: I have sinned against the elegiac couplet. Not only have I written pentameters that don't end in disyllables, I have willfully and egregiously made a pentameter end with a monosyllable that was not *est*.

For anyone who doesn't immediately grasp the gravity of my crime, a little background: in the hands of early-ish Latin writers such as Catullus, various multi-syllabled words could terminate the pentameter, e.g. in the famous couplet #85:

> *odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris?*
> *nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.*
>
> I hate yet I love. Why should I do that, perhaps you ask?
> I don't know, but I feel it happen and I am tormented.

However, even in Catullus, there seems to be a tendency to prefer a two-syllabled word at the close of the pentameter, and this became much more pronounced in the following generation of elegiac poets. In Ovid, especially, the disyllabic ending is observed, as D. S. Raven remarks (*Latin Metre: An Introduction*, p. 106), 'with depressing rigidity'. The effect is to place the word accent on the penultimate syllable of the line. The final syllable can never carry the word accent unless one were to place a monosyllable there – something that apparently struck Ovid and his contemporaries as vulgar. True, in his rough-and-ready way Catullus had occasionally terminated his pentameters with *est* – but usually elided with the preceding word, e.g. *pollicit(a) est* (66.10). Note, though, that he did once write *sunt* (76.8).

Later Latin writers didn't follow Ovid's slick example slavishly. Martial, for example, occasionally broke the two-syllable 'rule' to put particular emphasis on an 'irregular' word at the end of his pentameters. He gives us, for example, *supercilium* (1.4), *causidicos* (4.8), *taceas* (9.68) and even an unelided *est* in *quid est?* (9.70).

So, to return to my sin. I was trying my hand at elegiacs inspired by an incident when I saw an unfortunate bumble-bee fly directly into a spider's web. I thought I'd be a little bold and try to emphasise the fact that the cunning spider had hidden not only its webs from the insect's sight, but also *itself*. I wrote:

> *in foribus uitreis casses hic celat Arachnes,*
> *letiferis filis celat aranea* ***se***
>
> Here in the glass doorway a spider conceals Arachne's webs, in death-dealing threads conceals **herself**.

Having congratulated myself on this neat trick of emphasis (as well as being grateful to my *Gradus* for the classical allusion, *casses … Arachnes*) I duly posted the verses on my website. I was gratified soon afterwards to receive an email from an eminent professor who helpfully pointed out some errors of scansion (I habitually amend words and then forget that in so doing I've altered the scansion – d'oh!). He also pointed out that I had violated the Ovidian disyllable 'rule'. I wrote back, thanking him for his helpful comments but mentioning that I felt this 'rule' could be broken sometimes, particularly since I was trying as much as possible to write poetry in my own 'voice' instead of producing something 'in the style of Ovid'. His response was frosty, to put it mildly: if I was content to leave a monosyllable (not even *est*) at the end of the pentameter, then so far as he was concerned I had put myself beyond the pale. He wanted to have nothing further to do with me or my experiments in 'free verse'.

All I seemed to have achieved by my little monosyllabic experiment was to offend a distinguished Classics professor. Oh dear.

I tell this tale because it raises what is, I think, an interesting issue in modern Latin verse composition. When writing quantitative verse, are we always to strive to write lines that would be acceptable to an ancient Roman ear, were our verses to fall into a time machine and be transported back to the Augustan age? Or, are we to attempt to mould quantitative verse according to our own taste? Is the choice not as stark as this – is there a middle way in which we find our own voice while never violating classical canons of taste?

It seems to me (and this is my opinion only), that one of the reasons why Latin verse composition has disappeared from the curriculum is that neither students nor teachers ever found much satisfaction in composing verses 'in the style' of ancient authors. The process is described to great comic effect in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1868):

> [Tom] carefully produced two large vulgus-books, and began diving into them, and picking out a line here, and an ending there (tags, as they were vulgarly called), till he had gotten all that he thought he could make fit. He then proceeded to patch his tags together with the help of his *Gradus*, producing an incongruous and feeble result of eight elegiac lines, the minimum quantity for his form, and finishing up with two highly moral lines extra, making ten in all, which he cribbed entire from one of his books.

Such 'incongruous and feeble' productions could hardly have fostered a lifelong passion for writing Latin verse. But doubtless they would pass muster with any Classics master whose sole criterion was strict adherence to ancient precedent.

I exaggerate, I know, but the question remains: must we follow not only the metrical scansion of the Roman writers, but also their

preference for certain rhythms, line terminations, *clausulae* and the like? Is no innovation at all to be countenanced in these matters? We might very well be tempted to say 'no' on the basis that past generations of neo-Latin poets managed to write within these classical norms. However, given that all these generations of poets have not only died out not to be replaced, but their works languish unread by all but a handful of scholars, we might be tempted to say: 'yes, why not innovate?' – something new, something different is needed if Latin poetry can live again. What do you think?

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* * *

Prosodia

Brian Bishop offers some practical advice on syllable weights and accents

The function of 'accents' (or 'stresses') in words is often overlooked in manuals of Latin, although when writing poetry in classical metres they are as important as the quantitative rhythms of the heavy and light syllables, as modern Latin grammarians point out. Both poetry and prose should be composed with the intention of being heard aloud, at least in the mind's ear: the quantitative metre should not be allowed to distort the natural stresses in the words.

Syllable Weight

The position of the stress in a word depends on the weight of its syllables, which therefore needs to be considered first. In scanning it is important to distinguish between the double use of the breve (˘) and the macron (¯), which are both used to represent the vowel length (short/long) *and* the syllable weight (light/heavy). Consonant groups can be constituted within or between words.

The rules for determining syllable weight are:

A syllable is **light** if it contains a short vowel followed by only one consonant or none, e.g. *fīlĭās ămăt ĭllĕ.*

A syllable is **heavy** (here indicated by an underlined vowel) if:

- it consists (regardless of whether consonants follow or not) of a vowel long by nature or a diphthong, e.g. *mŏnē, mŏnētĕ, aetātĭs*;
- a short vowel is followed by a double consonant (x ≡ ks; z ≡ zd; intervocalic -i- ≡ -jj-) within or between words, e.g. *ĭntĕxō, ĕt fŭgă, rĕiĭcĕrĕ*;
- however, if there is a combination of a mute cosnonant (*c,p,t, g,b,d, ch,ph,th*) with a following mute consonant (*l* or *r*), it may or may not constitute a double consonant for this purpose, even with the same word e.g. *vŏlŭc-rĭs / vŏlŭ-crĭs*. (This is often called 'rule of mutes and liquids').

Note that the length of a short vowel remains short and is so pronounced, irrespective of whether or not following consonants render its whole syllable heavy (e.g. *făctus/āctus*)

Syllable Accents

Stressed syllables are marked with an acute accent (´) on the vowel. The rule for stress, often called the 'penultimate rule', is as follows:

1. A one-syllable word has its own stress, e.g. *nóx*, although a preposition before a noun is weaker, e.g. *ad nóctem, in honórem*.
2. A two-syllable word always stresses the first syllable, e.g. *ā́rō, ṓră*.
3. A word of more than two syllables

   (a) if the penultimate is heavy, stresses the penultimate, e.g. *monḗrēs, intĕ´xō*;
   (b) if the penultimate is light, stresses the antepenultimate, e.g. *monū´ĕrĭt, i´ntĕgō*.

Exceptions:

- archaic remnants, e.g. *illī´c(e), adhū´c(e), addū´c(e), tantō´n(e), nostrā´(ti)s, primā´(ti)s, Arpinā´(ti)s, cūiā´(ti)s, Samnī´(ti)s*;
- contracted perfects: *-ā´(ui)t, -ī´(ui)t*;
- contracted vocatives and genitives from first declension nouns (but not adjectives) in *–ius/-ium*, e.g. *Armĭ´nī, flŭ´uī, exĭ´tī*;
- separable compounds of *-facere* and *-dare*, e.g. *madefít, arefác, satisdó, circumdó* (but *circúmdabat*);
- words differentiated by stresses, e.g. *érgo* and *ergó* (conjunction and preposition), *póne* and *poné* (imperative and preposition), *feré, uná* (adverbs).

Examples of Stress Patterns in Verse

Verse stress patterns are as follow, where "/" = stress, "o" = unstress, "(/)" = optional

The Elegiac couplet:

- hexameter: 5th and 6th feet – / o o / o
- pentameter: 2nd half (Ovid & some Catullus) – / o o / o / o
  some Catullus – / o o o / o o

Examples:

Flébat Aristáeus, quod ápes cum stírpe necátas
uíderat incéptos déstituísse fávos.
(Ovid *Fasti* 1, 363-4)

Quod míhi fortúna casúque oppréssus acérbo
conscríptum hoc lácrimis míttis epistólium.
(Catullus, 68, 1-2)

Sapphic

- stress pattern: – / o o / o (/) o (/) o / o || / o o / o

Example:

dédecet mýrtus néque mé sub árta
uíte bibéntem.
(Horace, *Odes*, 1,38, 7-8)

Iambic senarius

- stress – o / o / o / o / o / o /

Example:

Phasélus ílle quém uidétis, hóspités.
(Catullus, 4,1)

Enclitics

Despite some interpretations of classical grammarians, the enclitic particles behave according to the above rules (Allen, *Vox latina*, 87). Thus *-ce, -met, -ne, -que, -ue* leave the stress on the antepenultimate syllable when they are preceded by a light syllable, e.g. *ánima/anímaque,* but *uírum/uirúmque*; *-pse, -pte*, with double consonants, make a preceding light syllable heavy, which being now the penultimate, bears the stress, e.g. *reápse, méō/meō´que*.

The *Aeneid* illustrates that hypermetric enclitics *–que* and *–ne* (and perhaps others) can effectively lose their final vowel at the end of a line (*Aeneid,* 4.629, 10.781-782, 895-896). The first of multiple enclitics can sometimes be heavy, while the others remain light if appropriate.

* * *

De gustibus non est disputandum

Letters to: vates@pineapplepubs.co.uk

Dear *VATES*,

You included a poem by my father-in-law, Frank Lelièvre, in the first edition of *VATES*. I wonder if you could let your readers know that copies of his latest book, *Rarae Uvae*, can be obtained from me for £5.00 or US$10.00 (to include postage and packing), via my email address below. Congratulations on your venture and good luck.

Regards,
Richard Gibbon
richard.gibbon@gmail.com

* * *

MATTERS METRICAL

The poetical metres used in this issue's *Carmina*

- Heavy syllables are marked ¯
- Light syllables are marked ˘
- *Anceps* (heavy or light) are marked x

Elegiac couplet

This couplet consists of a hexameter line followed by a pentameter:

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | x

The pentameter is split into two halves, each of two-and-a-half feet, with a *diaresis* (break at the end of a foot) in the middle. In the first half spondees can replace dactyls, but not usually in the second half.

First Archilochian

A metre used by Horace in *Ode* 4.7, the First Archilochian is a couplet consisting of a hexameter followed by a shorter line known as the Lesser Archilochian:

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | x

Haiku

The traditional Japanese Haiku consists of three lines, the first and the last have five syllables, the middle seven.

Hexameters

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ x

In the any of the first five feet the dactyl can be replaced by a spondee, though the fifth and sixth foot typically form a characteristic dactyl-spondee cadence, in which word-accent and metrical stress coincide. A *caesura* often occurs after the first syllable of the third foot or the first syllable of the fourth foot.

Sapphics

Named after the Greek poetess Sappho, this metre was much favoured by Horace for light verse. Each four-line stanza consists of three lines in the following pattern:

¯ ˘ | ¯ ¯ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ | ¯ x

The fourth line consists of just two feet:

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ x

* * *

CONTRIBUTORS

L.A. currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has been a restauranteur, and has taught *World Religions* and *Classical Languages*. He has also taught courses on planning and zoning issues and construction and design topics as they relate to community based low income housing development. He was a proposal writer for not-for-profit community organizations involved in poor peoples' housing and in ex-offender training and reintegration, and he did stints as a community organizer, an advocate for the homeless, and Director of Technical Services for New York City's now defunct Division of Homeless Housing Development.

Barry Baldwin was born a true 'Lincolnshire Yellowbelly', but emigrated first to Australia, thence to Canada, where he is Emeritus Professor of Classics (University of Calgary) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He has published 12 books and c.1000 articles/reviews *apropos* Greek, Roman and Byzantine history and literature, Neo-Latin Poetry, Samuel Johnson, Modern English Literature, and the more arcane field of Albanian history, language and literature. Has also published c.70 short stories, mainly mysteries, and freelances on a farrago of subjects for various magazines. He remains a far-off fan of Lincoln City and Nottingham Forest.

Brian Bishop (a.k.a. *Brennus Legranus*) has taught Latin in schools and by distance learning up to English 'A' level. He was taught Latin as a dead, unspoken language; he heard it first with the liturgical pronunciation (which, he believes, still has an important function); he then learnt the restored pronunciation, including both stress and weight, now recommended in text-books. Listening to Virgil's storms and battles and Cicero's vituperations, he could hear that this was the appropriate voice of the language. He subscribes (and contributes to) Latin-language reviews and attends Latin-speaking weeks.

Stephen Coombs was born in Weymouth, read Music at Balliol College, Oxford, and has lived in Stockholm since the 1960s. Investigations into early Christian liturgy reinvigorated his interest in Latin, and on co-founding a free school in Uppsala for 13-16-year-olds he introduced a Latin-centred subject unique for this age-group in Sweden. He has recently retired from teaching.

David Money is Director of Studies in Classics at Wolfson College, Cambridge, where he is keen to encourage applications from mature students with an interest in Latin verse! He also teaches some Neo-Latin for the Modern Languages Faculty, and involves himself in international Neo-Latin activities, for example as a Visiting Professor at Leuven in Belgium; in April 2010 he was admitted as a Fellow of the *Academia Latinitati Fovendae* in Rome.

Paul Murgatroyd is a professor in the department of Classics at McMaster University in Canada. He is the author of ten books and over 60 articles on Greek and especially Latin literature, and is at present working on a critical appreciation of Juvenal *Satire* 10. He has also published original Latin poetry and translations, a collection of which was issued by the Edwin Mellen Press in 1991 as *Neo-Latin Poetry A Collection of Translations into Latin Verse and Original Compositions*.

Nathan Murphy is currently a student beginning a degree in Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at the University of Warwick, and is thereafter hoping for a career in the Classics.

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Mark Walker is the editor of *VATES*. He has an MA in Classics with Lampeter University and is the author of three books on 'Latin for Everyday Life'. He is currently working on a new translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Life of Merlin (Vita Merlini)*, to be published Spring 2011. He also teaches Latin for grown-ups in Buckinghamshire. www.pineapplepubs.co.uk

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Look out for the next issue of *VATES* in Spring 2011.

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