VATES

The Journal of New Latin Poetry

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Editorial

An unusually long hiatus followed the publication of the *Vates Anthology* (for which, see p. 48 below) way back in August 2015. For a variety of reasons I recently floated the idea that the current number might be the last issue of *Vates*. Immediately following this precipitous announcement I received an impressive variety of impassioned responses from our contributors. A handful of extracts summarise the rest:

> "*Vates* is a beacon of hope for budding Latinists and poets, and it is partly down to the knowledge gained through *Vates* that I am looking forward to studying Latin verse comp. further at university this autumn."

> "I admire your spirit and tenacity and all that you have accomplished, and I wish I had a magic wand to wave so that all the uptight people would just RELAX and learn to have fun with Latin. It only lives on because of a spirit of love and enjoyment … and that needs cherishing in every way possible!"

> "I discovered the journal quite late but I really enjoyed reading every issue! I even tried to write some Latin poems myself, encouraged by your journal. Although my Latin writing abilities are not so good that I would share my work, without *Vates*, Latin would still be a read-only language for me."

> "The purpose of a journal like *Vates* is not to offer philologically perfect classical *carmina*, but to encourage Latinists from all over the world to write (and publish) poems in Latin, thus carrying on a tradition 23 centuries old! I am aware that when I write in Latin I sometimes make mistakes and I am also aware that other Latinists do so, but if we stop writing in Latin until we are all sure that we know the language so well that we do not make mistakes, then Latin will really be a dead language … The authors of *Vates* come from different countries, have learned Latin with different methods and at different levels, so their Latin poems show different degrees of metrical and grammatical complexity. The fact that they are not all uniformly Vergilian poets is, in my opinion, a virtue, not a weakness, because it shows that Latin is still a living language, capable of dealing with new situations and metres."

> "*Vates* does position itself as a journal for everyone with an interest in Latin versification, amateur (in the original sense of the word) and professional alike. In that sense, it seems to me that you are doing exactly what you have always promised to do. Imperfections and non-Classical practices are likely to occur in such an undertaking. … I recommend *Vates* to students who take my Prose Comp classes and some of them do seem enjoy reading it – as do I!"
>
> "There are many of us who really appreciate the work you have been doing to keep Latin alive … It takes more effort and courage to put oneself out there. Latin is at a turning point, and its survival as a discipline in schools and colleges will depend on whether or not we can make a compelling case that Latin can be relevant and engaging for today's students, and not just for the tired old reasons of English vocab, mental discipline etc."
>
> "Please, we need *Vates* very, very much. *Nil carburundum illigitimis*."

The upshot of which can only be … *vivat Vates!*

* * *

As always I offer my deep gratitude to all the contributors. If you haven't yet contributed a poem, do please consider having a go. The purpose of this publication is to provide a platform for anyone to try their hand at this ancient art – and I really mean ***anyone*** – so I encourage you to do so. Don't forget: if you missed previous issues, please visit the ***Vates*** webpage or our Facebook group to download your free copies.

Vates on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/vates

Mark Walker, Editor
@vatesthepoet / @vatesjournal

Carmina Latina

Hiems

Paul Murgatroyd

Paul writes: The song *Stormy Weather* has long been a favourite of mine, and I thought that it might go well into trochaic verse. As my version is a poem rather than a song, I have reduced the repetitions between the third and fifth stanzas and between the fourth and sixth stanzas.

quare, quare hiems premit,
postquam meus vir me liquit?
sol non nitet, semper pluit.

vita est nunc nuda, maesta.
hiems premit. mente orba,
quam sum fessa, semper fessa.

postquam vir decessit meus,
statim me incessit luctus,
mox me rapiet senectus.

nunc mi nil est. hiems premit.
postquam meus vir me liquit,
semper pluit, semper pluit.

aberit si diu durus,
superabit me senectus.
solum fruar solem rursus!

mori vellem. hiems premit.

postquam meus vir me liquit,

semper pluit, semper pluit.

* * *

Translation:

Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky
Stormy weather
Since my man and I ain't together
Keeps rainin' all the time.

Life is bare, gloom and mis'ry everywhere
Stormy weather
Just can't get my poor self together
I'm weary all the time, the time
So weary all the time.

When he went away
The blues walked in and met me
If he stays away, old rockin' chair will get me
All I do is pray the lord above will let me
Walk in the sun once more.

Can't go on, ev'rything I had is gone
Stormy weather
Since my man and I ain't together
Keeps rainin' all the time
Keeps rainin' all the time.

When he went away
The blues walked in and met me
If he stays away, old rockin' chair will get me
All I do is pray the lord above will let me
Walk in the sun once more.

Can't go on, ev'rything I had is gone
Stormy weather
Since my man and I ain't together
Keeps rainin' all the time
Keeps rainin' all the time.

* * *

Filii Senioris Antiquitatis

Marco Cristini

Marco writes: What is Late Antiquity? It's not easy to explain this historical period, because there is neither a definite beginning nor a definite ending. As the saying goes, *verba docent, exempla trahunt*. So, instead of thinking up another erudite explanation, I prefer showing the meaning of Late Antiquity through its sons, i.e. through short portraits of eight men and one woman who shaped history during those centuries: Augustine, Genseric, Eudocia (born Athenais); Theoderic, Cassiodorus, Benedict; emperor Maurice, Gregory the Great and Agilulf. If any reader is keen of constrained writing and would like to brainstorm a little, my poem's scheme is: 1.a, 2.a, 3.a; 2.b, 3.b, 1.b; 3.c; 1.c, 2.c. A last advice: the position of the word *Roma* is not casual ...

Romae docet fautor Manis,
inquietum cor humanis,
lacrimarum filius.
dum rhetoricam ostendit,
tollens legens Deum tendit,
opus difficilius.

Augustino moriente,
Gensericus ducit lente
ad Ipponam funera.
memor duri gelu Rheni,
fati uates cras obsceni,
prendet Urbis munera.

Vandalis dum haec aguntur,
Hierosolymae scribuntur
sacra diuum pedibus.

sophiae lux Athenais,
Christum quaerens, orta Grais,
abit summis sedibus.

Theodericus, pars Imperi,
consul, rex, dux, petit heri
cum Gothis Italiam.
nunc Rauennae regnat ille,
Romae tutae domus mille
sunt ad gentem aliam.

regni nauis eget nautis,
sic Cassiodorus cautis
uerbis stylo subuenit.
quaestor, callidus senator
Christi legis adsectator,
libris pacem inuenit.

pacem cupit Benedictus,
cum sit proeliis perstrictus
omnis locus nobilis.
dirum Totilam moniuit,
Romae fatum expediuit,
fide uir haud mobilis.

aeuo Romae tum peracto,
imperator, ense tracto,
gentes pugnat gentibus.

Franci Langobardos caedunt,
et Maurici Graeci laedunt
fidem resistentibus.

barbarus Romam mox tendit,
uox Gregori spe succendit
corda cuncta grauia.
Dei consul fauet paci,
ope panem pertinaci
sine dat ignauia.

gentes Roma sic euadet,
Agilulfi cito cadet
sitis cruda caedium.
rex urbane papae scribit,
heres aquam Christi bibit
Saluatoris aedium.

* * *

Translation: *Sons Of Late Antiquity*

A follower of Mani teaches in Rome,
his heart is restless because of worldly concerns,
a son of tears.
While exhibiting his rhetorical skill,
taking, reading, he aims at God,
a laborious toil.

When Augustine is dying,
Genseric leads slowly
destruction towards Ippona.
Mindful of the frozen Rhine,
foreteller of an ill-omened fate,
he'll seize Rome's goods.

While such deeds are accomplished by Vandals,
in Jerusalem holy pages are written

with the verses of heathen gods.
Athenais, wisdom's light,
descended from learned Greeks, looking for Christ,
left the imperial palace.

Theoderic, part of the Empire,
consul, king, general, yesterday
made for Italy with his goths.
Now he rules in Ravenna,
Rome's thousand palaces are secure
against other foreign people.

The kingdom's ship needs sailors,
so Cassiodorus aids with cautious
words written by his pen.
Quaestor, experienced senator,
disciple of Christ's law,
he finds peace among his books.

Benedict longs for peace,
though every celebrated place
is surrounded by battles.
He warns dire Totila,
he discloses Rome's destiny,
he, whose faith is unshakable.

When Rome's time has come to an end,
the emperor unsheathes his sword
and fights barbarians with other barbarians.
Franks slaughter Lombards,
and Maurice's Greeks break
the pact with their enemies.

A barbarian marches towards Rome,
Gregory's voice kindles with hope
all oppressed hearts.
The Consul of God promotes peace,
he delivers food with unyielding might,
without cowardice.

So Rome'll escape the barbarians.
Agilulf's thirst for blood and massacre
quickly disappears.
The king writes politely to the pope,
his heir drinks the water of Christ
the Saviour's church.

* * *

Vimutium
uelut exemplum mundi hodierni stomachose consideratum

Stephen Coombs

Stephen Writes: In this poem the metrical pattern consists of a dactylic tetrameter (used by Horace in the even-numbered lines of Epode xii and Odes I vii and xxviii) followed by what one might call a cholotrochaic, obtained by docking the first foot and the first syllable of the second foot from a choliambic (or scazon, i.e. limping verse). The dactylic tetrameter has for me an inelegantly stumpy feeling which together with three unsteady trochees and a loss of balance at verse-end seems well suited to the tone of castigatory sarcasm. In the original English piece, appended here, a sense of ridicule is conveyed by a rhythm with connotations from the long lines of the limerick and also – fortuitously and fortunately – by the prevalence of the lisping sound at the end of the name Weymouth and its rhymes. The coinage *omnisacra,* all-holy, corresponds to the Greek *panagia,* a customary epithet of the Virgin Mary in the Eastern Church.

Vimutium diplomate Elisae
de duobus oppidis factum
e quibus unum erat ante uocatum
regis alterumque non regis,
nide atauorum et apex comitatus,
te uelimus altum et excelsum.
cur praestantiam aues tibi nullam?
nonne te pudet pigri moris?
iam stulte et stupidi loce cordis
sordide tenax et immitis,
curam aliquot per saecula habebas
rituum ac sublimium rerum.
quinque tui medii platearum
praesides uocamine in sanctos
dilapsam ad nihilum pietatem
denuo deus tibi donet:
nullus enim te iudice crasso
cultus atque honor die nostro
uirginis omnisacrae genetricis
filii dei, nec Albani,

Edmundi, Thomae licet atra
nocte clara Nicolaique
flammea signa accendere mentes
ciuibus tuis gelu duras.
amplior est caelestium amanti
caritas propinqua telluri:
ut quimus cognoscere in illis
non opertam imaginem diuam,
in paribus sic credere eandem
clam latere cogimur nostris.
dic igitur miseris ubi celes
funditus sitam uoluntatem,
Vimutium, qua religionem
cum benignitate restaures.
pol num fas erat inspuere in nos,
nos docere dedecus ferre
quamquam aetate etiam puerili,
nos domare territos saeuo
uerbere, suspicione uagata
uel mero furore culpare,
oreue de mendacis acerbo
denigrare copia fellis?
num fiducia oborta sinatur
sat recens ab hoste deleri?
nonne animos mulcare uetetur,
debiles relinquere et claudos?
Vimutium, neglegentia talis
mittit in periculum abiecte
omnia quis uitam toleratam
fors et aestimemus haud paruo.

* * *

Translation: **Weymouth considered ill-humouredly as a case in point of the modern world**

Weymouth, created by Elizabeth's charter from two towns, of which one had previously been called the King's and the other not the King's, nest of our forbears and crest of our county, we should like you to be high and exalted. Why have you no desire to excel? Are you not ashamed of your sluggish ways?

Now a stupid, numb-hearted place, vulgarly tenacious and unyielding, for several centuries you had a concern for observances

and things sublime. May God grant you once again a devotion that has fallen away to nothing, devotion to the holy protectors in name of five streets in your centre: for in your crass judgement there is no reverence and honour in our day for the all-holy virgin Mother of the Son of God; nor may the beacons of Alban, Edmund, Thomas and Nicholas, shining in the gloomy night, set on fire the hard-frozen minds of your citizens.He who loves heavenly beings gains in charity close to earth; just as we can recognise in them the divine image revealed, so we must believe the same image to be secretly hidden within our peers. Tell therefore your unhappy people, Weymouth, where you conceal the deeply seated determination with which you may re-establish religion together with kindliness.

For goodness' sake, was it acceptable to spit on us, to teach us to endure shame while still in childhood, to subjugate us in our terror with cruel beating, to fasten blame on us out of wandering suspicion or plain insanity, or from the bitter mouths of liars to denigrate us with an abundance of bile? Shall it be permitted that an enemy destroy quite freshly developed confidence? Shall it not be forbidden to cudgel spirits, to leave them weak and lame? Weymouth, such negligence meanly imperils everything that perhaps may enable us to put no small value on the life we manage to sustain.

Original verses of which the Latin are a reworking:

Merged under monarchical aegis
with Melcombe-cognominate-Regis,
my home town in no respect aimeth
at greatness: excuse thyself, Weymouth

What now is a numb-hearted borough,
obtuse and hard-headedly thorough,
in earlier times showed a bias
toward the sublime and the pious.

God grant the devotion that dwindled
away may be newly rekindled -
to sanctity fivefold that nameth
thy innermost arteries, Weymouth.

Saint Thomas, Saint Alban, Saint Mary,
Saint Edmund, Saint Nicholas - nary
a one of these beacons inflameth
thy latter-day citizens, Weymouth.

Attachment to saints hath a sequel –
esteem for our down-to-earth equal:
the image divine that is patent
in some must in others be latent.

So where is the depth that reclaimeth
thy faith, thy humanity, Weymouth?
Should upbringing treat us with spittle
and graceless intent to belittle,

excessive chastisement that tameth,
mistaken assumption that shameth,
the prejudiced hearing that blameth,
the callous untruth that defameth,

the blow to the ego that maimeth,
the strike at the psyche that lameth?
Such mean-minded negligence gameth
all that lives live upon, Weymouth!

* * *

De Aquila

Florian Waldner

Florian writes: After reading the haiku of Catherine Krause in the autumn issue from last year (#11) I tried to write one myself. It is the first time I tried to write something in Latin, but as you keep encouraging us in every issue by saying that everyone can contribute, I thought I'll send you my haiku.

ecce aquilam

alta nubila alis

lente tanguntur

* * *

The eagle

Look at the eagle
His wings are touching gently
the clouds high above

* * *

Death and The Maiden
an Acrostic Translation

Timothy Adès

Timothy writes: The poet Bethany W Pope is working on an acrostic project which involves "four deconstructed acrostic sestinas, twenty-four double-acrostic sonnets, and an acrostic specular. The story is orphic." *Death and The Maiden* is the acrostic specular at the centre of her project.

In Mortis aede mel dolor, fel gaudium.

Ne terreant te rictus, orbes, os grave:

Grande prehendas, pelvis ossa comprimas.

Instat libido putris in linis odor.

Recincta mens ut ossa aceto: ostenditur,

Ut excidit persona, pulchritudinis

Merum, et furoris, veritatis omina.

In his doloris gaudiis mens certior:

Miscentur ossi muscula et nuda omnia:

Udis sub ortus palliis cum lilio

Surgunt papillae quas premunt durae manus.

Nefanda sunt propinqua: vade ad limina!

Orbes recludens ipsum amatorem vide!

Cordis toros contorquet incitatio.

Tremunt beati ardoris artus artubus.

Et Mors voluptatem tremoris excipit.

Et Mors voluptatem tremoris excipit.

Tremunt beati ardoris artus artubus.

Cordis toros contorquet incitatio.

Orbes recludens ipsum amatorem vide!

Nefanda sunt propinqua: vade ad limina!

Surgunt papillae quas premunt durae manus.

Udis sub ortus palliis cum lilio

Miscentur ossi muscula et nuda omnia:

In his doloris gaudiis mens certior:

Merum, et furoris, veritatis omina,

Ut excidit persona, pulchritudinis.

Recincta mens ut ossa aceto ostenditur.

Instat libido putris in linis odor.

Grande prehendas, pelvis ossa comprimas.

Ne terreant te rictus, orbes, os grave:

In Mortis aede mel dolor, fel gaudium.

* * *

English original:

In the house of Death pain and pleasure are one.
Never mind the face he wears; those bare sockets, that sharp grin.
Grasp him, hard. Push against those jutting hip bones.
In this tangle of sheets (scented with sex and rot)
Reason dissolves like bone in acid, revealing something else
Under the mask. There is something beautiful,
Madness, perhaps, or possibly truth.
In the joyful agony of this moment a revelation blooms.
Muscles crowd in to cover the bone. Naked,
Under a sheen of silk and lily-dew,
Skeletal hands clutch fat, round paps.
Nearing the threshold of something unspeakable,
Open your eyes; behold your lover. Tension
Contorts the fibers of your heart.
Trembling limbs threaded together; a blissful arrhythmia.
Even Death can learn the pleasure of a shudder.
Even Death can learn the pleasure of a shudder.
Trembling limbs threaded together; a blissful arrhythmia
Contorts the fibers of your heart.
Open your eyes. Behold your lover; tension.
Nearing the threshold of something unspeakable,
Skeletal hands clutch fat, round paps.
Under a sheen of silk and lily-dew,
Muscles crowd in to cover the bone. Naked
In the joyful agony of this moment, a revelation blooms.
Madness, perhaps, or possibly truth.
Under the mask there is something beautiful.

Reason dissolves like bone in acid, revealing something else.
In this tangle of sheets (scented with sex and rot)
Grasp him, hard. Push against those jutting hip bones;
Never mind the face he wears. Those bare sockets; that sharp grin.
In the house of Death pain and pleasure are one.

[for more information on Bethany Pope's project visit:
https://bethanywpope.com/undisturbed-circles/]

* * *

Forum Cattorum

Michiel Sauter

Michiel writes: The Largo di Torre Argentina in central Rome, an ancient forum where Julius Caesar was probably killed, is now a stray cat colony.

Dictator, iactator,
Gallorum vexator
hic animam Caesar efflavit;
sed quis eum fleret
quis adhuc lugeret
quem Brutus ignave necavit?

Regnavit tum telum
sed nunc more felum
quadrupedes sole fruuntur:
nihil facientes
calore gaudentes
de Caesare numquam loquuntur.

Sint nobis exemplo
hae feles in templo
aeterna sint felibus fana,
ne quies cattorum
destituat forum
quo viguit vix pax humana.

* * *

Metre: Rhythmic amphibrach

Translation: Cat Forum

Dictator, loudmouth
vexation of the Gauls
Caesar here breathed his last;
but who would weep for him
who would still mourn him
whom Brutus cowardly killed?

Then the weapon reigned
but now, in their feline fashion
quadrupeds enjoy the sun:
doing nothing
rejoicing in the heat
they never speak of Caesar.

May they, who inhabit the temples,
be an example to us,
may the cats have their eternal temples,
lest the quiet of the cats
desert the forum
where scarcely flourished any human peace.

* * *

Nox Recreans

Lorenzo Viscido

Nocte si mentem recreare victam
Tu diurna optas agitante vita,
Aetheris tecta irradiata lychnis
Aspice laetis.

Luce persuavi removente curas
Tota paulatim penetrabitur mens
Atque nocturnum tibi tempus horas
Pandet amandas.

* * *

Metre: Sapphic

Translation: Relieving Night

If, at night, you wish to relieve the mind worn by tormenting day-time life, watch the sky's roofs irradiated by happy lamps.

The whole mind will be gradually penetrated by a very sweet light removing worries, and the night-time will disclose to you hours to be loved.

* * *

Carmen,
Demodocus Keye

Demodocus writes: This is a loose translation of a very beautiful poem by Milo De Angelis, a contemporary Italian poet born and bred in Milan; published in his latest collection *Incontri e agguati* (roughly, "Encounters and ambushes", 2015) it struck me when I first read it, as I was thinking of writing something similar at the time; since some of the elements in the poem were out of key with what I had in mind for my piece, I decided to ignore them while translating from Italian, and to alter some with other words and images I preferred, or changing the semantics to adapt them to my scheme; the English text translates the original and not my Latin. I thought a regular metrical form would be better for this translation, since the harmony I wanted to depict seemed to require a solid structure that free verse sometimes lacks - even though this harmony is lost and found and lost and found, again and again in a few lines. I spell as we would today if Latin were still in use as an official language (outside the Vatican, of course), as typographical evolution of texts has led to start every new sentence with a capital letter. My Latin is not that used by Quintilian or Virgil; as Poliziano wrote to a friend of his who accused him of not writing like Cicero: "Quid tum? Non enim sum Cicero; me tamen, ut opinor, exprimo".

Egredior. Noctu tendit lux, candida uena

cæli: iam egredior longæuo e marmore uiuo

ut munus narrarem ego postremum tibi uitæ

quem inspicio in grandi nocturno; teque ego uiso,

percipio et uacuum numquam extinctum, uacuum quod,

torrens et uehemens, tenditque agitatque rubescens

os tuum amore macer. Nunc reddit adhucque recurrit,

syllabæ adhuc cohibet chorum alacrem altamque choream:

rhythmicus accidis hic: clepsydram frange tuam unam.

Egredior circo e magno spectans barathrum ustum

quod per tempora nunc tua candida fluctuat atrum.

* * *

Italian original:

Questa sera ruota la vena
dell'universo e io esco, come vedi,
dalla mia pietra per parlarti ancora
delle vita, di me e di te, della tua vita
che osservo nei grandi notturni e ti scruto e sento
un vuoto mai estinto nella fronte, un vuoto
torrenziale che ti agitava nel rosso dei giochi
e adesso ritorna e ancora ritorna
e arresta la danza delle sillabe
dove accadevi ritmicamente e tu
sei offeso da una voce monocorde e tu
perdi il gomitolo dei giorni e spezzi
la tua sola clessidra e ristagni e vorrei
aiutarti come sempre ma non posso
fare altro che una fuga partigiana da questo cerchio
e guardare il buio che ti oscilla tra le tempie e ti castiga,
figlio mio.

English translation:

Tonight the vein of the universe
revolves, and I emerge (as you can see)
from my rock to talk to you again
about life, about me and you, about your life
that I observe within the great nocturnes; I look at you and feel
a never-faded void upon your brow, a torrential
emptiness that shifts within the red of your games;
and now it returns, and again it returns
and it staunches the dance of the syllables
where you where rhythmically happening, and you
are slighted by a monochord-voice, and you
lose the clew of the days, and shatter
your only hourglass, and stagnate; and I would like
to help you, as always; but all I can
do is escape partisanly from this circle,
and watch the darkness that wavers between your temples and
punishes you,
my son.

* * *

New Orders from HQ

Brad Walton

Brad writes: This is another episode from my narrative poem, the first part of which “After the Raid” appeared in *Vates #4*. The poem deals with the development and the demise of "Live and Let Live," a system of informal and illicit truces between the British and German troops, which prevailed over the Western Front during much of World War I. In the selection below, battalion, company and platoon officers are summoned to brigade headquarters, where the brigadier general outlines the measures that must be implemented to destroy "Live and Let Live." These measures removed certain decisions from the hands of battalion, company and platoon officers, and were centralized much higher up the chain of command. Lower officers would now feel much more like cogs in a big wheel, and war became more depersonalized.

ut tamen insidere cavis tenebrisque, cohortum

accersuntur ad alta duces praetoria, summus

qua ductor subitis adfatur vocibus illos:

"haec lutulenta, duces, ad quae devenimus arva,

hos tumulos novi lucosque cluere quietos.

hoc verum fortasse fuit. nunc illa peracta

tempora quis fas est inter se adversa tueri

agmina desidiosa, ut nulla falarica noctu,

nulla diu mittatur atrox. iam sunt nova iussa

summo ex imperio delapsa, ut mente citata

militibus digna, pugnace, feroce, superbas

heroum palmas clarosque feramus honores.

namque dehinc nulli fuerit permissa tribuno,

sive solet manui, sive imperitare maniplo,

sive et centuriae, statuendi copia saevis

quando greges feriant telis, et quando remittunt.

quisque suus ductor curabit ut impiger acrem

assiduo miles sclopeto exerceat hostem.

cumque caput, quidquidve refert caput, aggere tolli

conspicitur, certus nostratibus id scopus esto.

curator fossas invisens saepe cavebit.

ut praecepta greges servent.deinde, atque ubicumque

vel nimis ignavi Rhenana parumve feroces

aspergent caligae munimina glande, peritus

mittetur lentos posthac iaculator ad illos,

qui telescopici confisus horopteris igne

barbara letifero conciderit agmina plumbo.

plurima quinetiam loca ballistaria nostras

per sedes mansura locabimus, usque virorum

infestis complenda globis et collineanda

tramitibus plaustrique meatibus atque latrinis.

ignivomumque suum cedet grex quique focile

illius assiduo sacratis coetibus usu

arbitrioque ducis. nec qui mortaria tractant

haerebunt segnes quoad invitare tribunus

dignetur. statuent illis praetoria cursus.

haec etiam nostris statuent nova pensa regentque.

assidue nocturna feros deserta iubebunt

perlustrare greges, hostis cognoscere valla,

verba subauscultare, adoperta advertere facta,

sectaque fila referre audita probantia dicta.

denique quando, quibus cernent praetoria fossis

incursus fiant. dederint sua iussa. sequemur.

amplius hoc unum est. hostes nostrique loquuntur

inter se ex propriis longe clamore lacunis,

vel stationibus auritis, vel (flagitiosum!)

vastis sub gelida coram secessibus umbra.

vos monuisse, boni, liceat mihi, reddere castra

una nefas binis. haec qui mandata relinquet

ille in iudicium castrense vocabitur, atras

et dederit poenas. summum Germana furorem,

gens odium meruit summum. memor esto tribunus

obscenus quam sit, rabidus quam barbarus hostis.

insontum servet Belgarum pectore caedes,

millia vectorum demersis fata carinis."

missis Alfredo legatis Hugo profatur,

"sum dubius magis infensae magis atque feroces

an vires, acies, fossae, Mars noster et omnis,

speratum summis habeant ductoribus usum.

si iaculatorum turbas augebimus, hostis

augebitque suas. si nostra incendia missa

crebrescunt, in nos crebrescent illius ignes.

mens fortasse nova fiet violentior ira,

copia sed nostri minor ulciscente furore.

nostra manus donec teret hostica castra, teretur.

nec mihi delendae bombis crudele latrinae

consilium valde placet, immo videtur iniquum."

Alfredus mentem maesto sic ore recludit,

"sclopeti ignivomi nobis moderamen ademptum.

e latebris nostris adhibenda focilia, nostro

nec tamen arbitrio, pariter fremebunda catervae

extra consilium nostra mortaria sede.

prodibunt nobis in valla petuntque periti

Germanos plumbi nimbo, nec triste manebunt

supplicium, nostrique ferent solventque dolorem."

* * *

Metre: Hexameters

Translation:

But when they were settled in their dark dug-outs, the officers were summoned to battalion head-quarters, where their general addressed them with an unexpected speech. "I know, gentlemen, that these muddy fields, these hills and woods to which we've arrived, have a reputation as a quiet sector. Perhaps this *was* true. But now the time has passed when indolent armies may stare into each others faces, while not a single missile of destruction is fired night or day. Now, new orders have been delivered from high command, that we, with boisterous spirits worthy of soldiers, fierce and full of fight, may win a victory to be proud of and an honorable name. For, from now on, no officer -- whether of a platoon or a company or a battalion -- will have the power to decide when his troops shall mount or suspend an armed attack. Each general shall make sure that his troops shall constantly harass our bitter enemy. Whenever a head, or whatever looks like a head, is seen rising above the parapet, it shall be an undoubted target for our men. A supervising officer will inspect the trenches regularly and see to it that the men are obeying orders. Next, whenever the soldiers shower the enemy defenses with too half-hearted, or insufficiently fierce, a fire, an expert sniper, armed with a telescopic rifle, will henceforth be sent to those sluggards to cut down the lines of Huns with a deadly hail of bullets. In fact, throughout the trenches we shall place permanent firing stations, to be continuously staffed by aggressive bands of men, and aimed on their footpaths, wagon-ways, and latrines. And each company will give up its mortars to special groups assigned to their constant use, or at the discretion of the general. Nor will the mortar men stand lazily by until the company officer deigns to invite them. Headquarters will determine their rounds. Headquarters, too, will devise and direct new tasks for your men. It will command that groups will constantly patrol No Man's Land with a ferocious spirit. They will glean information about the enemy's defenses. They will eavesdrop on his conversations, take note of furtive operations, and bring back cut wire to prove their obedience. FInally headquarters will determine when and on which entrenchments raids are to be carried out. They have given their orders. We shall obey. Oh, and one more thing: The enemy and our men are having long-distance conversations from their own trenches, or from their listening posts, or (infamously!) face to face under the chill night in the vast recesses of No Man's Land. Allow me to warn you, gentlemen, that it is forbidden to form one camp out of two. Whoever departs from these commands will stand court martial and will bear a terrible penalty. The Germans have deserved the harshest suffering, the deepest hatred. Let the company officer remember how filthy the enemy is, how mad and barbaric. Let him preserve in his memory the slaughter of

innocent Belgians, the countless deaths of passengers on torpedoed ships."

When the officers were dismissed, Hugo said to Alfred, "I doubt whether our more hostile, more ferocious energies, battle array, entrenchments and our whole spirit of warfare will have the desired effect for high command. If we increase our complement of fire power, the enemy will increase his. If we fire more shells, he will fire more against us. Perhaps our spirit will grow fiercer with fresh resentment, but our numbers will dwindle by the enemy's avenging rage. While our troops wear away the enemy camp, they will be worn away. And I don't like the idea of bombing their latrines into non-existence. It doesn't seem sporting."

Alfred opened his own thoughts with said words. "They have taken away our control over our own guns. They will snipe from our parapets, but not at our discretion. Likewise they will fire their roaring mortars from our trenches, but not according to our strategy. Their sharp-shooters will come into our fortifications and go after the Germans with a cloud of lead, but they won't wait around for the retribution, and our men will suffer and pay for the grief."

.

* * *

Summer Epigrams

David Money

David writes: These are all slight and occasional poems, and all more or less extemporised. Their brevity and rapidity is part of the reason for sharing them here. To be involved in the immediacy of a particular moment, and to preserve it poetically, can be a significant part of what we are trying to achieve with modern Latin verse. Composing *ex tempore*, on the spot – in practice not always instantly, as it may take a couple of minutes to think about it, but quite fast nevertheless – therefore seems a habit worth cultivating, and the results, for all their limitations, worth offering for wider attention. The occasion for most of these epigrams was the *Inter Versiculos in Sicilia* verse-composition workshop (July 2016); please keep an eye on their website over the coming months, as it is intended to add a lot of material that may be of interest:
http://www.umich.edu/~rclatin/IV2Website/index.html

We began in Sicily with hendecasyllables; hence poems (i) and (ii). Participants were offered smart and brightly coloured new notebooks to work in; what should I put in mine? Surely I should have a go at the metre I was asking others to write. Poem (ii) is a wry but accurate observation on the two tones of redness produced when some Britons venture south. The third poem originated not in the notebook, but on the blackboard, being produced (on a topic suggested by a member of the group) to illustrate the elegiac couplet. It is also an example of how an *ex tempore* poem can be polished and corrected; our original opening was *passim per populos pipiantes ore uidemus* ['we see people throughout the nations tweeting with their face(books) …'] – which I have rejected here because the verb *pipio* ought to start with a heavy (long) syllable (see Catullus 3. 10). One might argue that, if we are going to use so rare a word in a modern context, we can also allow a flexibility in how we scan it; but I preferred to think of an alternative line.

Poem (iv) was produced for the *album amicorum* put together by participants to thank Dr Gina Soter (University of Michigan) for her work in organising the event. Her promotion to American divinity may be an exaggeration; but I think it is important to celebrate those who make an effort to preserve and advance the art of Latin verse. And I would like to add my thanks to her co-organisers, Karla Herndon and Paul Gwynne, and to the management and staff of the Baglio Fontanasalsa, near Trapani, where the workshop took place. Poem (v), by contrast, is a very different kind of commendatory epigram: produced in honour of a person I

happened to be sitting next to on a plane (Frankfurt to Nagoya, 23-24 July 2016), who teaches young children in Lübeck. Accidental opportunities can sometimes be taken to spread the word about Latin poetry.

Poems (vi) and (vii) may not look classical; but they are in fact in classical forms, adapted to fit the haiku syllable pattern. The first and third (five-syllable) lines are iambic half-lines; the second (seven-syllable) line is a dactylic half-line. This is an exercise we used in Sicily, both because it produces a small finished poem, and because practising these forms is useful for classical metres (the second line is identical to the end of a pentameter, for example). Note that there is elision in the first lines of both (vi) and (vii). We also had a competition for these metrical haikus; poem (vii) was composed as a very small prize for that contest, in the same form that contestants had been asked to use, and with a final line that could be adapted for second, third, fourth and fifth prizes (we had eighteen entries). See the *Inter Versiculos* website shortly for more details. I would like to add my thanks here in writing (having done so orally in front of our group in Sicily) to Stephen Coombs, whose concept of the metrical haiku we adopted. It may be that others have thought independently of the same, or similar, ways to Latinise the form: but I came across it myself through Stephen's work – examples can be seen in his *In Perendinum Aevum* (Portaloise: Evertype, 2015), pp. 162-67, 204. Those who like to write haikus in Latin might well consider adopting some metrical restrictions, as well as simply counting syllables: I feel it makes it a much more interesting exercise.

Poem (vi) is a version of a very famous Japanese haiku, written by the seventeenth-century poet Basho on his visit to a monastery in the Tohoku region (the northern part of Japan's main island), founded in the ninth century on a wooded hillside, and requiring from visitors a climb of a thousand steps. I don't pretend to understand more than a word or two of Japanese, and I am grateful to Professor Miki Iwata (Tohoku University) for elucidating the original; note that the final line is ambiguous (*semi no* could mean 'of cicadas' in the plural, or 'of a single cicada'; many readers have assumed the latter, while Prof Iwata plausibly argues for the former). This poem will seem over-familiar to those who know haiku poetry well; but I hope that it will come more freshly to Latin and English readers, as it did to me.

* * *

(i) A new notebook

Quo metro incipiam nouum libellum?
paruum, aptum his et idoneum diebus
sit, sed uix tenero notare versu
tam puros decet aut nocere chartas.
formis iam bene uiuimus Catulli
uiuamusque igitur bono colore.

* * *

Metre: hendecasyllables

Translation: In what metre should I begin a new little book? It should be slight, fit and suitable for these days; but it is scarcely decent to mark or harm such pure pages with tender verse. We are living well at the moment with Catullus' forms; and so let us live colourfully.

* * *

(ii) Sunburn

Solis sub radiis cutem rubesco
speratis male praeparatam ut albam
natiui speciem ferens Britanni
mutatus uidear ruber Britannus,
addit cui maculas culex facetus
crudeli magis arte rubriores.

* * *

Metre: hendecasyllables

Translation: Under the anticipated rays of the sun my ill-prepared skin reddens, so that bearing the white aspect of the native Briton I seem to be changed into a red Briton, to which the witty mosquito has added some redder spots with its more cruel art.

* * *

(iii) Twitter

Pipiat omnis homo, rapidarum more uolucrum,
partirique modis omnibus ulla uolunt.
quomodo rem teneant Romani nostra uidentes?
quidue homines pauidi participesue putent?

* * *

Metre: elegiac couplets

Translation: Every person is tweeting, in the manner of swift birds, and they all want to share anything in all kinds of ways. What might the Romans make of it, if they saw our activities? What would they think, would they be fearful, or would they participate?

* * *

(iv) For Gina Soter

Gina dea, admiror res factas, uocis amorem
antiquae: seruas carmina, Gina dea.

* * *

Metre: elegiac couplet

Translation: Divine Gina, I admire the things you have achieved, and your love for the voice of antiquity; you are saving our poetry, divine Gina.

* * *

(v) For Tomoko, who knows everything

Teutonicos pueros elegantius atque puellas
tam fauste ueniens ex Oriente doces.

* * *

Metre: elegiac couplet

Translation: You teach German boys and girls rather elegantly, coming so fortunately from the East.

* * *

(vi) Basho at Yamadera

Silentium altum!
in scopulos penetrat
cantus cicadae.

* * *

Metre: metrical haiku (iambic/dactylic/iambic)

Translation: Deep silence! Into the rocks penetrates the cicada's song. (*shizukasa ya / iwa ni shimiiru / semi no koe*)

* * *

(vii) A tiny prize

Stellarum in arce
haicua nostra nitent:
tuumque primum.

* * *

Metre: metrical haiku (iambic/dactylic/iambic)

Translation: In the citadel of the stars our haikus are shining: and yours is the brightest.

* * *

Miscellanea Ridenda

Barry Baldwin

TOP GEAR(Y)

Stupet Peck Quadrangulum: Christi super Aedem
Rapit helicopterus novum Ganymedem.
Magno mos miraculo vertitur mundanus.
Caelo in-Torquay-bitur humilis Decanus

("The Peck Quadrangle gapes: Above Christ Church a helicopter snatches a new Ganymede. Earthbound life is changed by a great miracle. The Dean will be swept up and away from the ground to Torquay")

This squib was recently sent to me by Christopher Stray, one of many benevolences. It describes the then rare event of a helicopter landing, at Oxford to transport John Lowe, Dean of Christ Church (1939-1959) and Vice-Chancellor of the University (1948-1951) - the epigram was entitled *VICE-CANCELLARIUS ALES*.

Lowe's son, Christopher Lowe, kindly informs me (*per epistulas electronicas*) that the take-off was originally planned for Peckwater Quad, but for fear of breaking windows it was moved to Christ Church Meadow.

Both Christopher Lowe and Colin Leach (the latter also *per ep. electr.*) confirm that the epigram was composed by F. C. Geary, about whose fecundity in Latin verse composition I wrote at length in *Vates #2*. It was first published in the *Oxford Magazine* of May 25, 1950, reprinted the same year in the *Christ Church Newsletter*.

Icing on the cake for me is that the airborne John Lowe (1899-1960) was born here in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, where I have resided, pontificated, and scribbled for the last half-century - That's the geographical Lowe-down.

A BAR FOR A LAR

I kicked off in *Vates #1* with an admiring survey of A. D. Godley's dextrous Latin verse compositions, exhibit A being his macaronic salute to the new Oxford omnibuses, quoted there in full, featuring both in Dorothy Sayers' *The Greatest Single Defect of My Own Latin Education* (now online) and KIngsley Amis' *The New Oxford Book of*

English LIght Verse (1978), also much resurrected in newspaper articles about Boris' 'Bendi-Buses'.

Here as a tasty addendum is the late Herbert Huxley's (editor of Virgil and prolific composer-publisher of Latin verses, e. g. *Carmina: MCMLXIII, An Anthology of Latin Verses Composed In Metres Infrequently Attempted*, 1963, & *Corolla Camenae*, 1969) macaronic salute to Godley, published in the *London Association of Classical Teachers' Newletter: Translations &Versions* (1975):

Est praedulcis esu Mars-Bar.
Nil est cibo tuo, Mars, par.
Tune vis beatum larem?
Habe promptum Martem-Barem.
Captus dono Maris Baris
Helenam liquisset Paris.
Dum natabunt ponto scari
Dentur laudes Mari-Bari!

(The Mars -Bar is exceedingly sweet to eat. Nothing compares to your food, Mars. Do you want a happy household god? Then Grab a Mars-Bar. If he'd been seduced by the gift of a Mars-Bar, Paris would have ditched Helen. As long as the parrot-wrasse swims in the sea, let praises be given to Mars-Bar!)

Clear case of The Mars the Merrier…

TAKING THE BISQUE

We all know the motto *Bis dat qui cito dat* (He who gives quickly gives twice); on its history, see James Burns in *Notes & Queries* 12, July 12, 1873, p. 32.

In *Final Demands* (2010), the last in his *Glittering Prizes* trilogy, Frederic Raphael, in the context of a stolen bowl of lobster soup, hits off one of his notorious puns, *Bisque dat qui cito dat*, described by the *Grauniad's* (April 18, 2010) James Purdon as " a hard-won one-liner."

What Purdon doesn't say is that this was either coined independently by Raphael or filched from A. A. Milne, who had long ago devised it in a golfing short story *Ten and Eight*, *bisque* in his context referring to a particular method of scoring in golfing tournaments called a Bisque.

SOME POETIC LEE-WAY

Speaking of Frederic Raphael, in one of his published e-mail letters *(Distant Intimacy,* 2013) to American author Joseph Epstein, he quotes Cambridge classicist Guy Lee's Latinisation of J. M. Keynes' reaction to being called 'Professor': "I cannot bear the indignity without the emoluments":

Piget vocari perperam professorem:
Iniuriosum est sine salario nomen.

Lee was another adept at Latin verse composition, *inter alia* winning a Papal prize (in the *Carmen Vaticanum* competition) for his description of space travel; not apparently accessible online, it appeared in the 1954 issue of the Vatican's house magazine *Latinitas.*

Raphael, himself an accomplished classicist, could not identify the metre - step forward, *Vates* versifiers ...

HORSE LAUGH

A blog by one BIjan Omrani comports this vainglorious headline:

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL ELECTION DINNER - THE HOME OF NEW LATIN POETRY

Two specimens are included - Judge for yourselves. The first one was written in 2013 at the height of the horse meat scandal:

Si findas, hospes, iam cultro suavia crusta,
Invenias Phrygium, nobile munus, equum.

(If you were now, guest, to cut open the tasty pies with your knife, you would find - an excellent gift - a Trojan Horse)

Their own translation, complete with this scholium: "Reading through one finds the pun – Findus horse pies, yum"

The second effort was inspired by a teacher complaining of being overworked, despite all their holidays:

Quare mihi, quaeris, semper tot festa magistro?
Tunc labor immanis conficiendus erit.

An English clerihew version is appended:

How can we dusty spoiled beaks
Take off from school for up to twenty weeks?
It's hardly games, I say, or sand or sun.
We might just hope to get our admin done.

THERE'S A KIND OF MUSH...

(Titular apologies to Herman's Hermits)

Thanks yet again to Christopher Stray, I have recently enjoyed his edition (1996) of *The Mushri-English Pronouncing Dictionary: A Chapter in 19th-Century Public School Lexicography*, an elaborate spoof recording the verbal and other eccentricities of Edmund Doidge Anderson Morshead (1849-1912), classics beak (1872-1903) at Winchester College.

Stray also provides a detailed account with bibliography of this engaging character - he has elements of Mr Chips and Mr King in Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*, far removed from Rattigan's Crocker Harris and Evelyn Waugh's KIngsford-Smith - in the *Dictionary of British Classicists* (ed. Robert B. Todd, 1994 - I'm glad not to be in this, the prime qualification being that you're dead). as do Yun Lee Too & NIall LIvingstone, *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning* (2007, pp. 30-34).

The following extract takes us into Morshead's classroom for a typical exercise in Latin Verse Composition. They are hammering out a version of the lines "The conscious dove/ Bears in her breast the billet dear to love" from the Sonnet to Ianthe by Walter Savage Landor, himself no slouch in Anglo-Latin composition; cf. Leicester Bradner's *Musae Anglicanae* 315-325. It makes amusingly instructive reading for VATES fans. For myself, although we had no master quite like him, it comports a certain nostalgic recollection of my own time in the Classical Sixth at The LIncoln School. Rather than spoil it with a drab paraphrase, I simply reproduce *verbatim*:

" In line 11 I have been a trifle too bold; I have not quite kept to the English; but I think the spirit of the passage quite requires some alteration, and this is just what a Latin would have said: *Pulchraque venustam portat rubecula florem*. Well, T-lb-t, please keep your remarks till the end of the version; I really can't get on with the bidzness (*sic*) at this rate. - *E* in *venustam* short? Is it so? Why, then, look it out. P-lt-r (Short sir!). *Formosam*! there can be no objection to *formosam* ((Please, sir, you said *venustam*!) I

take it I said nothing of the sort. (Yes you did, sir) Is it so? So be it, then! I must have said it from the teeth outward.(Please, sir). Why these interruptions? (Sir, *flos* is masculine) I am, I take it, quite aware of that: I said *formosUm* - I have put *rubecula,* redbreast, instead of pigeon, because it is so much more poetical, and the spirit of the passage seems to require it. Is it not so? - Mnyum-Mnyum! I take it, it is. I have also put *flos* instead of a letter, because it makes the picture so much more vivid. It is just what Propertius would have said. I had in my mind Virgil's line, *purpureos spargam flores*. Well-well! errumn! The idea of a robin carrying around some delicate flower, like a peony or hollyhock, is very beautiful. It reminds me of that splendid line, which could, I take it, be introduced here with peculiar effect: *Assuetae ripis volucres et fluminis alveo*. Let us now turn to the iambics…"

We will not follow him into the Greek Verse Composition side of the lesson, save to remark that this was the favourite activity of the Duke of Dorset in Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*. One scholium: *rubecula* is not in Lewis & Short or *The Oxford Latin Dictionary;* it looks like a *Gradus* word, albeit may well occur in mediaeval or later texts which I do not have to hand - my *Gradus* was one of many volumes lost when we were flooded out in 2013 - *claudite iam, pueri, rivos, sat prata biberunt* was painfully on my lips at that diluvial disaster…

OPTIMO MAXIMO

Apart from a letter to his school magazine *The Carthusian*, Max Beerbohm's first published work was an elegiac Latin poem of 14 verses hit off in his Sixth Form days at Charterhouse, poking fun both at a performance by piano teacher Arthur G. Becker and, in its concomitant cod commentary, at the pedantry of contemporary English and European classical scholarship.

Impressed by its elegant Latinate wit, another Charterhouse master, Mr A. H. Tod, arranged for 25 copies under the title *Carmen Becceriense* to be printed on rough yellow paper at Godalming, presumably (no printer or publisher is named) by those who produced *The Carthusian*, in which (no. 10, April 1912, p. 574) the poem was reprinted

The one extant copy is, naturally enough, in the Library at Charterhouse, whose on-line gallery of 400th Anniversary portraits includes one of Becker, who was (un)fair game for musical mockery: a surviving letter (May 17, 1881 - see the on-line Becker

Family Archive) from brother Wilfred Becker condoles over his having no private pupils.

This precocious effort by (as Shaw dubbed him) 'The Incomparable Max' was subsequently praised by no less than W. H. Auden as " Remarkably mature. A work of which an adult humourist could be proud." An on-line blurb (*Bookride*, July 9, 2009) compares it to the academic satire of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*; I would subjoin a similar *jeu d'esprit* in KIngsley Amis' *Take A Girl Like You,* where the protagonist is a school Latin master.

Despite this, and an early mention in John Lane's 1896 Beerbohm bibliography, the very existence of the piece was doubted down to the Bibliography compiled by A. E. Gallatin & J. M. Oliver and its reviewer in the June 1953 issue of *The Library,* until proven by a letter to the latter by a W. H. Bond and by Charles Evans, 'A Note on *Carmen Becceriense*,' *The Book Collector* 1 (1952, pp. 215-218), who provided a photographic copy of the original manuscript; cf. the review by John Waynflete Carter and subsequent correspondence from various quarters in the *Times Literary Supplement*, September-October, 1952.

The poem is modernly available in the annotated *Max in Verse* (1964, pp. 131-132) edited by Beerbohm specialist J. G. Riewald. Its provenance and some linguistic-literary details are discussed in: N. John Hall, *Max Beerbohm: A KInd of Life* (2002, pp. 11-12); S. N. Behrman, 'Profiles: Conversation with Max. V - The Menu,' *The New Yorker*, March 5, 1960, pp. 47-119; Beverly Joan Norby, *Max Beerbohm As A LIterary Critic* (University of British Columbia MA thesis, 1967, p. 7, on-line); Felicia Bonaparte, 'Reading the Deadly Text of Modernism,' *Clio* 27 (1998, pp. 353-361, especially note 11, on-line; Evangheila Stead, *Le monstre, le singe et le foetus: tératogonie et Décadence dans l'Europe fin-de-siècle* (2004, p. 236), crediting Sydney Castle Roberts, "son ami et commentateur," adding "le monstre a partie liée avec cette écriture de la rupture" - whatever that may mean; Christopher Stray in (edds. Yun Lee Tou & Neall LIvingstone, *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning* (2007, p. 36); Hans Hafkamp, 'Max Beerbohm en Enoch Soames: Verbelding of Werkelijkheid,' *De Boekenwereld* 22 (2005/2006, p. 216.

Carmen Becceriennse
Cum Prolegomenis et Commentario Critico
Edidit H. M. B.

Beccerius (dictu miserum) mortalibus aegris
Concertum quondam Becceriense dabat.

Ecce, salutatus nimio plausu puerorum
Blande subridensque editiora petit.
Incipiens, animi notos bene temperat ignes,
Mox tamen innumeras jactat ubique manus.
Usque graves gravibus superinjicit ictibus ictus,
MIxtaque cum mixtis sunt nota mixta notis.
Nos aures premimus dextris, ridetque Robinso,
Musicus instructor nam fuit alter. HIbus
Contremefacta sonis lacrumas Concordia fundit,
Et fugit ex Aula, diva repulsa, Nova.
Sic fugat impietate deam, fugat ipse sacerdos,
Sic caret Harmonia Carthusiana domus.

("Becker, sad to say, was once giving a concert for wretched mortals. Lo! greeted with excessive applause by the boys, he smiling gently sought greater heights. In his beginning, he effectively kept the well-known passions of his mind in check. Soon, though, he banged out loud notes upon loud notes, and note upon note upon note were all jumbled up. We covered our ears with our right hands, and Robinson - the other music master - laughed. Overwhelmed by the sounds, divine Concord dissolved into tears and fled disgusted from New Hall. Thus, thus does her very votary put the goddess to flight - to flight, I say - by his blasphemy, thus doth Charterhouse lack Harmony".)

This effusion is, as the subtitle promises, adorned with introduction and multifarious notes by its editor H. M. B. (no prizes for guessing who this is). As said, it parodies the standard philological commentaries of the age, along with ridicule of specific scholars, in particular J. E. B. Mayor, famous for his Juvenal editions, appallingly bad lectures, and diverse eccentricities, all catalogued in John Henderson's delightful *Juvenal's Mayor: The Professor Who LIved On 2D A Day* (1998), amplified by Paul Naiditch's review-article, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 98. 5. 19, on-line.

The other English classicist singled out is T. E. Page, complimented for his "admirable" scorn of excessive editorial emendation, "Some people would like to rewrite the classics, please, if they got the chance" - words still applicable today. Max was here being the diplomatic schoolboy, Page being his own classics master. I have a soft spot for (as NIall Rudd styled him in a 1981 mini-biography) this 'Schoolmaster Extraordinary', since he was a pupil at my own LIncoln School. Occupants of his House at Charterhouse were dubbed 'Pageites', just as those of the other music master Robinson were called 'Robinites'. In the wider world,

Page is remembered for his editions of Virgil and as co-founder of the Loeb Classical LIbrary.

John Conington, Virgilian editor and another LIncolnshire man, receives a plaudit for his "elegant" rendition of the verse singled out by Auden, "And mixed notes with mixed notes are mixed,"

Of the two continental scholars named, the Danish Madvig is praised for his "most learned note on Entertainments", whereas the German Karl Zumpt is castigated as "idiotic" for his interpretation of Robinson's laughter.

Throughout his commentary, Beerbohm maintains the conceit that this poem was written by Lucretius, against Mayor's attribution to Juvenal. Perhaps a double joke: Max would surely have known that neither poet wrote elegiacs. His comicalities misled a couple of the above-named discussants to see these Romans as prime sources for the poem's Latinity. It is, predictably, the usual schoolboy farrago of tags from different quarters, though one may doubt that young Max knew that his *dictu miserum* was anticipated in the 1738 anthology *Latin and English Poems. By a Gentleman of Trinity College, Oxford [B. Loveling; incl. poems by T. Gilbert and others]* and *nimio plausu* in stanza 6 of *Against the Lollards*, in Thomas Wright's 1859 *Politics; Poems and Songs Relating to English HIstory*. And, his claim that *contremefacta* is found only here, was doubtless made in ignorance of its occurrence (also with *sonis*) in v. 222 of Hieronymus Amaseus' (1467-1517) elegiacs addressed *Ad Cassandram Fidelem*.

Likewise, his statement that *mortalibus aegris* is a favourite of Virgil, albeit correct, neglects its first appearance in Lucretius 6. 1, perhaps - another joke? - oddly for the fancy that the latter was the present author. It was a common tag in Neo-Latin verse, notably Thomas Gray's *De Principiis Cogitandi* 4, also (e.g.) in the *Hyperion* (v. 4) of Henry Drury, contained in his *Arundines Cami, Sive, Musarum Cantabrigiensium Lusus Canori* (1846), overlooked by Leicester Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, despite two casual references (pp. 301, 328) to him as a notable Eton poet.

Vates enthusiasts can judge the poem's merits for themselves. Auden may overstate this case, but there is a case to be overstated. At least the poem describes an actual person and event, not feigned passion for some fictitious beloved boy or girl. One assumes it was Beerbohm's choice; it could hardly have been a prescribed exercise. As shown, it was the usual medley of tags from various sources. Juvenal and Lucretius were certainly not the main influences. The latter's archaisms did not extend to *hibus* - I wonder where Max unearthed that? HIs iterative verses (7-8, 13)

are effective in an Ovidian way. Incidentally, although not in a text any schoolboy would have known, his *graves gravibus* was used to describe Pindar's odic style by a Latin scholiast, accessible in the on-line digitalisation of an 1811 Pindar edition, p. 295, ch3 para 19. By amusing contrast, his *mixtaque cum mixtis sunt nota mixta notis* reminds me in a way of Emperor Joseph II's reaction to *The Marriage of Figaro* - "Too many notes, Mozart!"

As stated above, the poem was printed at the enthusiastic behest of A. H. Tod, an extraordinary character who deserves to round off this section; cf. the on-line biographical sketch by Eric Webb (October 2006) under the title 'Alexander Tod and the Charterhouse War LIst. Alexander Hay Tod (1857-1942), son of Captain George Tod of the 1st Madras Cavalry, was born at sea on the transport ship *Trafalgar*. He was a Charterhouse pupil before returning as a classics teacher and head of his old house Verites. A notable physical feature was his glass eye. Apart from teaching Greek and Latin, he laboured long and hard drawing up the list of Old Carthusians killed and wounded in The Great War. He may possibly be the author of some Greek elegiacs on the fallen published in *The Carthusian* (1915), although some slips in grammar and prosody militate against this, unless we take a *interdum dormitat Homerus* approach. In 1900, he published a history of the school. Nowadays, he'd be under investigation, if not worse, for his collection of photographs of nude boys, counterpointing Lewis Carroll's snaps of young girls, a hobby enthusiastically shared by boy scout founder Baden-Powell - There's a topic for some verses in any language!

Riewald printed four other Beerbohm Latin poems. One that will not here detain us is *Damnosa Senectus*, Englishing W. S. Gilbert's *'*The Coming Bye and Bye' from his *Songs of a Savoyard* (pp. 18-19). I note only, in view over the continuing kerfuffles over pentameter endings that seeped into earlier issues of VATES, that we will not grudge Max his one monosyllabic finale (*est* in v. 16). I've said it before, I'll say it again: Must we all be little Ovids all the time? GIlbert also inspired this couplet:

'Horrendum et dictu video mirabile monstrum'
Gilbertus culpas sentiit Ipse suas!!!!

("I see a shuddersome incredible miracle: GIlbert all by himself has realised his own shortcomings!!!!")

These lines, accompanied by a sketch, were scribbled on page 17 of Max's *Songs of a Savoyard*. As acknowledged by the quotation marks, the first one is lifted unchanged from Virgil, *Aeneid* 3. 26, describing blood oozing from an uprooted sapling. The capitalization in *sentiit Ipse* might conceivably recall the *Ipse dixit* reverentially used by his disciples to quote the words of their master Pythagoras.

Up at Oxford in his first term (1890), Max composed these disobliging lines on his old school which rather sportingly published the essay 'Old Carthusian Memories' where they appear at the beginning in *The Carthusian* (December, 1920, pp. 34-35 -it can be read on-line under the rubric 'Max on the Air' (1946):

FLORUIT innumeros Schola Carthusiana per annos,
Olim Londiniii pessima pernicies.
FLORET in aerio jam condita vertice montis
Quingentosque docet tristitiam pueros.
FLOREBIT, nec non Plutonis regna manebunt,
Altera ut agnoscam sum memor alterius.

("Charterhouse School flourished for innumerable years, once London's worst scourge. Now it flourishes on a mountain's towering summit, and teaches sadness to five hundred boys. It will keep on flourishing, just as Pluto's domain shall endure. I am mindful of the one that I may recognise the other".)

The tripled verb with its ascending tenses is effective and affective, the poem's finale rubbed in by their capitalization. LInes 1-3 reflect Charterhouse's physical relocation from London to Godalming. *Pessima pernicies* was a common tag, both classical (e.g. Grattius, *Cynegetica* 409-411) and neo-Latin. Purists will blench at the pentameter endings - not an Ovidian disyllable in sight.

Beerbohm had very mixed memories of the school, starting his essay thus: "The verses were an unpardonable libel on my views. I thought Charterhouse a very fine school really, but - no, I was not of the straitest sect. My delight in having been at Charterhouse was far greater than had been my delight in being there" - he elaborates these memories at some length; they include thanks to Mr Tod, not for his classical lessons, but for encouraging him to draw.

In *Zuleika Dobson*, the Duke of Dorset's favourite pastime was composing Greek iambics. However, the only specimen of his

classical talents on show is the following hexametric bit of advice, editorially titled 'Epistle by the Duke to his heir presumptive':

Vae tibi, vae misero, nisi circumspexeris artes
Femineas, nam nulla salus quin femina possit
Tradere, nulla fides quin -

("Woe to you, woe, poor wretch, unless you guard against the wiles of women, for there is no safety but that a woman can betray it, no faith that –")

A safe classical sentiment, equally at home in Greek and Latin literature, especially with the epigrammatists and satirists, but appropriate to the ducal character in the novel, whose Muse is invoked thus: "Disbuskined, dangerous. The spirit of Juvenal woke in him. He would flay. He would make Woman (as he called Zuleika) writhe. Latin hexameters, of course."

Of Course!

MARK ANTONIA WELL

In her recent memoir, *Growing Up* (2015), Antonia Fraser, known for her best-selling biographies and mystery stories, also as the widow of Harold Pinter, describes her years at the Dragon School in Oxford. Speaking of the Headmaster, A. E. Lynam, she recollects, " I would spy him in his window and recite gobbledegook Latin verse loudly to put him off the scent."

Observing that "Latin and Greek were the true dominants of the school," Fraser describes the regime of senior classics master L. A. Wilding, whose beginner textbooks for both languages are still available: "The ability to write Latin verse was something that was expected to be instinctive and, hammered home, did indeed become so. It remains with one for a lifetime, learnt early enough."

Upon receiving her courtesy title of 'Lady Antonia'. she was asked by distinguished lawyer Sir John Foster, " Did you realize that your new name is the ending of a Latin hexameter?"

Fraser riposted, " Down in a deep, dark dell sat Lady Antonia Fraser," describing this moment as "swiftly adapting the old Dragon lines we learnt to guide us about the rhythm of Latin verse which began ' Down in a deep dark dell sat an old cow chewing a beanstalk'."

The exchange continued: " Weak ending, of course,, said Foster, attempting to claw back victory; he referred to the fact that the

word Fraser consists of two syllables, the first of which gets heavier emphasis than the second, making it a trochee. A line could end strongly with the equal emphasis of a spondee: 'heartbreak' for example instead of 'happy'. I only wish I had had the guts to observe, quite correctly, So is Foster."

Moving on to the Godolphin School, Fraser found that her Latin and Greek were " far ahead of girls who were my contemporaries." She had also the advantage that her mother had read Classics at Oxford, and that the family's frequent visitors included the likes of Maurice Bowra, for whom Fraser (understandably) did not much care.

These Foster-Fraser exchanges might, of course, have come straight out of a Harold Pinter play…

LOOK BACK IN AINGER

I recently bought a copy of A. C. Ainger's *Clivus, Elementary Exercises in Latin Elegiac Verse* to replace my flood-lost original. Quite a change from the unprepossessing little blue volume handed out to us in the Classical Sixth back in the 1950s. This replacement comes broad sheet size, bedizened with bright colours and the picture of a fob-watch, perhaps suggesting *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis…*

But, as many – not least Mr Johnny Rotten in song – have observed, You Cannot Judge A Book By Its Cover. Inside comes a warning from Nabu Public Domain Reprints that this is a reproduction , warts and all, of the 1888 original text, warning it may suffer from blurred print, missing pages, and sundry other imperfections.

In fact, it looks all right, at first glance, the print being large and clear, posing no ocular problems, unlike many new books that require a Hubble telescope to decipher. Same goes, incidentally, for an identical revival by Lightning Source (UK) of Sidgwick and Morice's *An Introduction To Greek Verse Composition, With Exercises* - when shall we have a companion to *Vates* for Hellenic composers?

A delightful bonus from the *Clivus redivivus* is that it reproduces the old advertisements for classical books issued from the Eton College Press. A right bean-feast for wannabe Anglo-Latin bards. Under the rubric 'Latin Verse Books', comes a flow of manuals from the pen of The Rev. Herbert Kynaston, M.A., Principal of Cheltenham College, the lapel-grabbingly-named *Nucipruna: Exercises in Latin Elegiac Verse, grafted on 'Nuces'*, and for the

more adventurous *Lucretilis: an Introduction to the art of Writing Latin Lyric Verses, in Two Parts*. Somewhat unsportingly, but I suppose sensible, Keys to these were sold separately, so no turning to the back of the book for instant salvation.

A second rubric, 'Verse Rules' - one is tempted to add 'OK!', offers *Verse Rules For Beginners* (Kynaston again), *Rules For The Sapphic Stanza, Rules For The Alcaic Metre*, and *A Simple Prosody, intended chiefly for Beginners* – no author given, but suspect old Herbert was back again.

Prose Composition is not overlooked, thanks to the primly-titled *Hints for Latin Prose*, by an Eton Master. Also, a plethora of guides to Latin grammar, led by Kynaston's triple-decker *Nuces*, which we are assured was "used in the Fourth Form at Eton", a similar panoply for Greek, and a cornucopia of individual editions and anthologies of Greek and Roman writers - should ask Boris if he, David, and George benefitted from such riches…

Arthur Campbell Ainger (1841-1919), son of an Anglican priest from Blackheath, attended Eton (then Trinity, Cambridge), whence after various positions secular and religious) he returned to teach until 1901. As well as *Clivus*, he furnished that other god-send for versifiers, a *Gradus*. At other levels, he composed *Eton Songs*, including a *Carmen Etoniense* (text available on-line), and his *Memories of Eton Sixty Years Ago* (also electronically to hand).

This last, as well as an abundance of cricket – it often reads like Wisden's – provides glimpses of the Etonian Latin Verse Production line (especially in chapter 8). The weekly exercise was usually a prescribed theme, though occasionally translation from English poetry was instead demanded. From the other side of the desk is quoted the Rev. Russell Davis' (Lower Remove) rendering of Hamlet's To Be Or Not To Be, this coming out as *esse vel haud esse* nobis *est quaestio magna*, of which Ainger understandably did not think much, adding that these school exercises " ended up in the waste paper basket." Was the gubbins their *Vates*? - Perish The Thought!

He also mentions the predictably unpopular 'Holiday Tasks', these requiring 60 verses on a Biblical theme, subjoining that " the abler boys did these on the train to Eton to avoid holiday work": cue Hermione Granger on the Hogwarts Express….

CONTENT WITH CONTEMPT

Apropos of various themes in the last issue, *Vates* versifiers may chuckle wryly or frown at this Letter (January 25, 1745) from Lord Chesterfield to his son at Eton:

> "Do you still put the bad English or the Psalms into bad Latin? I hope you get out of the worst company in the world, the Greek Epigram. I recommend the Greek Epigram to your supreme contempt. Good Night To You."

LIkewise, at this, from Pentti Saarikoski (Finnish poet & ancient Greek enthusiast):

> "One man's death is another man's epigram."

And might want to take stock of this remark by Christopher Stray in 'Scholars & Gentlemen: towards a sociology of English Classical Scholarship' in *Aspects of Nineteenth-Century British Classical Scholarship* (ed. H. D. Jocleyn, Liverpool, 1996):

> "The romantic ideology of poetic creation was tied to the rules of grammar and metre to produce a sphere of literary production which was unthreatening to religion, and as religion failed, often became a semi-sacred practice. For this surely is how we must view the habitual recourse to verse composition in every quiet hour in the busy lives of men like Benjamin Kennedy and Montague Butler. It is like nothing so much as prayer: like Machiavelli's famous retreat from the world into his study. And it is this aesthetic conception of the beautiful classicist producing beautiful verses, of course, which throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian decades was challenged by the scientific scholarship of the archaeologist and the new grammarians."

* * *

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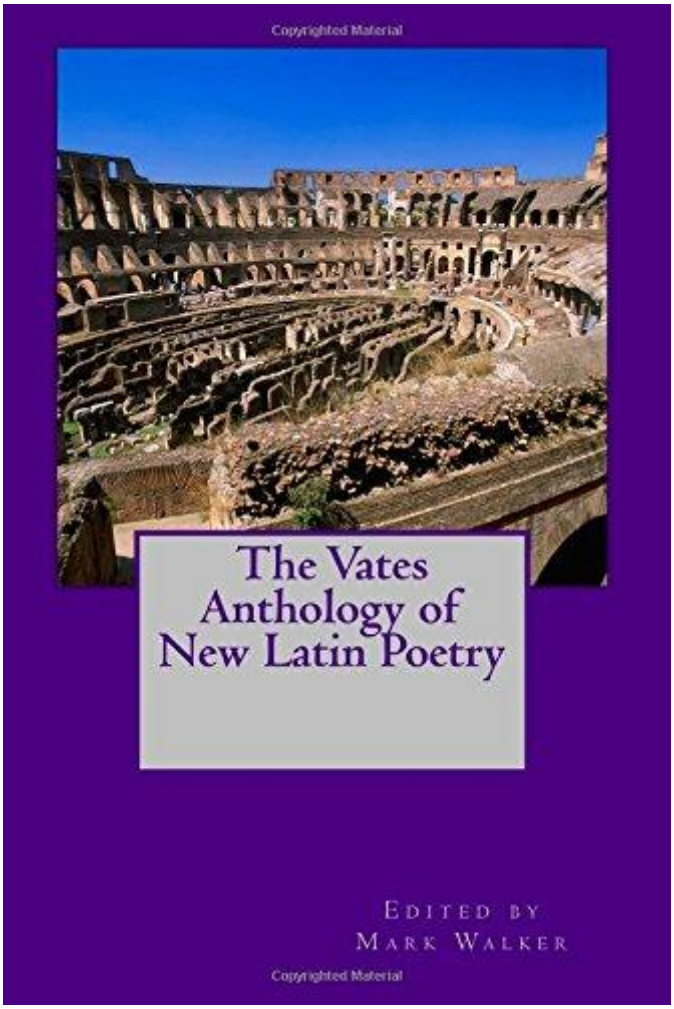

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Timothy Adès has degrees in Classics and International Business. He translates mainly French, German and Spanish poems into English, tending to work with rhyme and metre. His three books to date are: Victor Hugo, [poems from] *How to be a Grandfather*, Hearing Eye 2002; Jean Cassou, *33 Sonnets of the Resistance (composed and memorised in a Vichy prison)*, Arc Publications 2002; Cassou, *The Madness of Amadis*, Agenda Editions 2008.

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.

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Marco Cristini was born in 1992 in Brescia, Northern Italy (60 km far from Virgil's Mantua). He holds a Master of Modern Philology from Catholic University of Brescia. He loves reading Latin poetry and prose since high school. In 2013 he fell under the charming spell of *Latinitas perennis* and began to write Latin poems. He investigated the Latin Literature during the First World War, finding hundreds of *carmina* and texts. He is also interested in Late Antiquity (as his poems show...), especially in the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy. He wrote a novel about queen Amalasuntha and Cassiodorus (*I Cavalieri del Crepuscolo*, *The Twilight's Knights*, available on Amazon in ebook format). In July 2015 he published a collection of twenty short stories titled *Rerum Uchronicarum Fragmenta* (in ebook format, available by Meligrana Editore and on Amazon).

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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*.

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Lorenzo Viscido was born in 1952 at Squillace, Southern Italy. He obtained his Doctor's Degree in Classical Literature from the University of Salerno in 1976 and for a few years taught Italian and Latin in some High Schools. He also was a researcher at the Department of Classics of the same University from 1979 to 1980 and at the University of Calabria from 1980 to 1981. In 1981 he left Italy in order to teach Italian and Latin at the "Scuola d'Italia" in New York City. He is the author of several books on Cassiodorus and many articles about the same author, as well about Clemens of Alexandria, Saint Jerome, Paul the Deacon and Byzantine hymnography. Several of his Latin poems have been published in *Vox Latina*, *Meander*, and *Latinitas*. He received *publicae laudes* at the *Certamen Vaticanum* of 1983 and 1986, the Gold Medal at that of 1985 and the Silver Medal at the *Certamen Catullianum* of 1984.

Florian Waldner is a classics student living in Austria. During his studies at university the Latin language was presented as a dead one most of the time (except for those Finnish radio news). But he has been inspired by this journal to try his hand at Latin poetry.

Brad Walton lives in Toronto. He did a BA in Classics and graduate work in Theology, which seems to have been a dreadful mistake. His study of Jonathan Edwards (*Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion)* was published in 2002. More recently an attempt at Menippean satire, *Peripedemi Periegesis*, was serialized in *Melissa*. His play, "The Dialogues of Leopold and Loeb" is being produced in Toronto in 2016. His day-job is in the University of Toronto Library. In his spare time he plays theorbo for the Toronto Continuo Collective, directed by Lucas Harris.

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