

VATES

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Editorial

Vivat Vates ... well, intermittently at least. To all those who have been asking when the next edition is due, my apologies. But I think this is the new normal – *Vates* is likely to be an annual publication from now on. It's always been an *ad hoc* kind of affair to be honest, but, thanks partly to my own work and personal commitments and partly to the unpredictable supply of contributions, it seems to make sense only to produce an issue when both time and content are ripe. So please do keep your poems coming, even if you might have to wait a while before they appear in these pages.

* * *

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, you can now visit our Facebook group to download your free copies.

Vates on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/vates>

Mark Walker, Editor
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Carmina Latina

Cultor Stagnorum

Lucius Alter

Lucius writes: During a recent clean up of my personal library I found this elegiac couplet in the pages of a Homeric Grammar from which I had been teaching around 2000. The conceit of the couplet arises out of the figure of *salix Babylonica*, which is often called in English the weeping willow. *Salix Babylonica*, a misnomer arising, I think, out of a spurious association with the willows of the 137th psalm, actually originates in China, and the "willows" of the psalm apparently were poplars.

I remember a violent wind storm when, as a boy, I was staying with my Aunt Mary in the coal country of southwestern Pennsylvania. Aunt Mary exhorted my young cousins and me to prayer as she proceeded through the house sprinkling holy water on all the windows and doors. The next morning, after the storm had passed, we went outside, where, to our amazement, we found our house undamaged (undoubtedly due to our prayers and Aunt Mary's holy water), but part of a neighbor's house had been crushed by a large weeping willow that had been uprooted during the storm.

The white willow and black poplar were, as I recall, favourites of Persephone, who, as I suppose, has been, shears in hand, looking forward to taking a snip of my hair. But the couplet was probably scrawled on a bookmark, not out of any philological or botanical impetus, but rather out of a mild, recurring melancholy.

hae salices lacrimis uiridantibus, eheu,

me non aspergent, nec mea maesta luent.

* * *

Translation:

These willows, alas, will not sprinkle me with fertile tears, nor wash away my grief.

* * *

In Obitum Christopheri Bolton, Musicum Doctissimum, 1964-2016

Brad Walton

Brad writes: This may be the first Latin poem ever to be written in dactylo-epitrite metre. At least, I don't know of any other! Dactylo-epitrite was a favorite metre of Bacchylides and Pindar, and was also used in Greek tragedy. How it worked was unknown even to the Hellenistic metrists. The code was not cracked until the twentieth century.

The metre is basically made of cretics (-u-) and various dactylic cola. The most common dactylic cola used are the hemipes (-uu -uu -), three and a half dactyls (-uu -uu -uu -), and one and a half dactyls (-uu -) (a choriamb?). Between the dactylic cola and the cretics, and between one cretic and another, there is almost always a bridging anceps. Another common colon used, especially at the end of a strophe / stanza, is an ithyphallic (-u-u--).

A poem in dactylo-epitrite is usually (but not always) composed of a strophe and an antistrophe with the same metrical design, and an epode in another metrical design. The poet can create the metrical pattern of his own stanzas, but once he has established the shape of his strophe-antistrophe and epode, he has to stick to these designs for all subsequent strophes-antistrophes and epodes within the same poem. The trick, of course, is to organize the dactyls, cretics and ancipites so as to create a nice rhythmic flow.

Being a beginner in the metre, I decided to limit the length of this poem to a mere strophe, antistrophe and epode. Below is the metrical scheme I developed. I observed synaphaea throughout.

Strophe and antistrophe

-uu -uu - x -u- x
-uu -uu - x -u- x
-uu -uu -uu -
x -uu -uu - x
x -u- x -u- x -u- x
-uu -uu -
-uu -uu - x -u- x
-uu -uu - x -u- x -u-
x -u- x -u- x -u-
-u-u--

Epode

-uu -uu -
x -u- x -u- x
x -u- x -u-
x -u- x -u- x
-uu -uu -
x -u-u--
x -u- x -u- x -u-
x -uu -uu -
x -u- x -u-
x -u- x -u- x
-u- x x -u-
x -uu -uu -uu -
-uu -uu - x

blanda, canora, fugax ales, solebas

ducere sidereos longe uolatus

et socios hilarare tuos

raroque breuique regressu

dicax, iocosus, acer, excultus, uenustus,

dulcis, amatus, amans.

tu rapidis citharae neruis canebas

ac lachrimis grauidae subtilibus testudinis,

recentioribus sagax et pristinis

usibus Camenae.

turbida te nitidas tulere ad umbras

flamina; noctua te spissis amictum

nubibus ad mediae rapuit

*formosa papauera noctis.
salubribus sitim leuabas e fluentis
atque ueneniferis.
angelicumque legebas et cicutum.
conticuere fides. perita desiit manus.
risu tamen dictisque per tristes micabat
suauitas tenebras.*

*nos cineres, gelidis
nubeculam lymphis uolutam
vel aestuosa puluerem
uersum fauonio per arua,
Christophere, ingemimus.
tractamus inquieti
cauas silentium figuras barbiton,
nec dulce fides digitis
impulsa nostris increpat.
te non tuis uernus reducet
sol procul sodalibus,
desiderioque tui miseris
ad tua caela migrandum.*

Translation

On the death of Chris Bolton, a skilled musician (1964-2016).

Enticing, melodious, elusive bird, you stretched your starry flights great distances and gladdened your friends with returns both rare and brief; witty, funny, smart, cultivated, charming, sweet, beloved, loving. You played the impetuous guitar *and* the subtle, tear-pregnant lute, shrewd in modern and ancient styles of music.

The wild winds transported you to the glamorous shadows. The owl carried you off, wrapped in thick clouds, to the alluring poppy-fields of midnight. You slaked your thirst on wholesome, as well as poisonous, streams. You gathered both angelica and hemlock. Your strings fell silent. Your skillful hand ceased. And yet, through the grim shadows your sweetness glittered with good-humoured conversation.

Chris, we mourn your ashes, turning like a cloud in the chill waters, or like dust swept by the west wind through the sultry countryside. Disquieted, we handle the hollow shapes of your silent instruments. The spring sunshine will not bring you back to your friends from afar, and those who bitterly miss you will have to migrate to your climes.

* * *

De Amore

Jelle Christiaans

Jelle writes: Inspired by Catullus, I was determined to write my own poem.

*facis uiuere me mouesque risum
cum uagare salisque odore amoenis
floribus, fruerisque solis aestu
dulci, instasque celerrimis cuculis;
es pulcherrimus omnium catellus!*

* * *

Metre: Hendecasyllables

Translation: On love

You let me live and make me laugh
whenever you stroll around and jump among the flowers, lovely
because of their odour
and you enjoy the sweet warmth of the sun
and you pursue the quickest birds
You are of all, the most beautiful puppy!

* * *

Filiū Serioris Modernitatis

Marco Cristini

Marco writes: What can we call the age we live in? History books often label it “Contemporary History”, but this is, in my opinion, a quite absurd definition, since all ages are “contemporary” for people who live in them. Late Modernity is a much better name. In fact, as the most prominent feature of Antiquity was (for better or worse) the hegemony of the Roman Empire, the most prominent feature of Modernity has been (again, for better or worse) the hegemony of the Western World. Since the notion of “Late Antiquity” is now quite widespread, I propose to introduce, next to “Early Modern History”, the concept of “Late Modern History” or “Late Modernity” (if someone has already done it, I beg his or her forgiveness, if not, I claim copyright...). I am sure that historians will quarrel until the end of the time about its beginning (1914, 1989, 2001?), but I think that it is much more interesting to think about its sons and daughters, that is, about us.

proles aeui sumus seri,

orbis domini qui heri

latas gentes regebamus,

leges nostras putabamus

diis esse traditas.

nunc de cunctis dubitamus,

rebus quas tunc credebamus.

quid sit iustum disputatur,

quod tunc sacrum nunc mutatur,

annis clam labentibus.

*studia humanitatis,
tunc uexillum libertatis,
nunc uestigia uetusta
aestimantur et angusta,
omnibus plaudentibus.*

*“senis saeculi laudatores!”
clamant noui defensores,
prisca cito sed obliti,
rebus nouis usque triti,
quo moderni pergimus?*

*noui populi moresque
oriuntur principesque,
noua regna dominantur,
noua foedera signantur,
nobis at extranea.*

*est modernitas nunc sera,
aetas noua patet uera,
posteris cui dabunt nomen,*

filiorum factum omen

tunc remoti temporis.

* * *

Translation: Sons of Late Modernity

We are sons of a late age,
yesterday we were masters of the world,
we ruled numerous people,
we thought that our laws
had been given to us by the gods.

Now we have doubts about everything
which we once believed.
We argue about what is right,
what once was holy now changes,
as years go by.

Humanities,
once a flag of freedom,
are now considered old
and narrow ruins,
and all approve.

“Praisers of the past age!”
cry the defenders of the new,
but once we forget the old times,
once so many novelties wear us down,
where do we moderns go?

New peoples, customs
and leaders rise,
new kingdoms rule,
new treaties are signed,
but they are strange to us.

Now Late Modernity has come,
a truly new age is manifest,
to which after-generations will give a name,
embodying the destiny of all sons
of a time so remote from the far future.

* * *

Crustula Crudelia

Anja Oomis & Michiel Sauter

Michiel writes: In our *Circulus Latinus Noviomagensis* we were talking about Horace's poems and adoneus endings in the Sapphic metre (dum-diddy dum dum, e.g.: strawberry jam jar) upon which Anja jokingly suggested: "crustula nostra." The following exchange of stanzas lead to a *paraklausithyron*, a poem about a desperate lover on the doorstep of his beloved girl. Ironically, Anja started from the point of view of the lover whereas Michiel responded as the beloved lady. The lame puns in line 7, 14 and 15 are intended but by no means meant as ads for Oreo cookies, ladyfingers or fortune cookies (or biscuits for that matter).

(amans:)

ianua dura prohibente me usque

saeuius caram dominam uidere,

obsidens limen cupio appetita

crustula nostra.

(domina:)

iam satis questus, puer, es ibidem

crustuli micae mihi displicent, i!

o reo numquam tibi iure parcam;

ablue limen!

(amans:)

ast amo ambos, et dominam meam, te,

*et tamen uos, crustula; mene cogis
saeuam ob iram, femina, te unam amare?
uisne mori me?*

(domina:)

*nunc laborabis, puer, ante portas
siue matronae digitis ageris;
neue fortunam tibi crustula addant,
neu Amor adsit!*

* * *

Metre: Sapphics

Translation: Cruel Crumbs

(lover:) As the harsh door continuously and all too savagely prevents me from seeing my beloved mistress, dwelling on the doorstep, I long for our delicious cookies.

(lady:) You have been complaining enough, boy, in that very place I dislike cookie crumbs, go! Oh, I will never show you any mercy as a defendant in court; clean my doorstep!

(lover:) But I love both, both you, my mistress and you, cookies; do you force me, out of savage wrath, woman, to love only you? Do you want me to die?

(lady:) Now, you will suffer, boy, at my gates, or you will be expelled by this lady's fingers; may your cookies bring you no good fortune, may love be absent!

* * *

4 Poemata

Sietse Venema

Sietse writes:

(1) My first Latin poem ever about a shepherd who falls asleep:

*in siluīs ouis ūna nigra parua
errābat cupiēns sitim leuāre.
custōs agnae oculōs grauēs sopōre
paucās claudere cēnsuit per hōrās.
en! quaerēns catulīs dapēs ubīque
hanc praedam lupa mordet etprehendit.
rēctē nunc sapit ille segnis ante.*

* * *

Metre: Hendecasyllables

Translation:

A small sheep was wandering in the woods
longing to ease its thirst.
The guardian of the lamb decided to close
his eyes heavy with sleep for a few hours.
Look! A she-wolf looking everywhere for food for her pups
bites her prey and takes it away.
He who was lazy before is now a tasty mouthful.

* * *

(2) Written after a road trip from the Netherlands to Spain with Catharine.

*a Batauīs distat quantum ārida Ibērica tellūs,
tantum sentio nunc - ὦ Καθαρίνα καλὴ! -
hebdomadē istam obstāre mihi insuperābilem
amantī
quōminus aspiciam dēnuo dēsipiens
te - Καθαρίνα - soles quae me optime suauiolisque
argutisque iocis laetitia afficere*

* * *

Metre: Elegiacs

Translation:

As far as the dry Iberian land is distant from the Netherlands
in such a manner I feel - O hübsche Katrin !
- that this crazy week which can not be overcome by me, crazy of
love,
keeps me from seeing you again - Katrin -
you who love to kiss me, deride me wittily
and affect me with joy.

* * *

(3) Written for an older mistress

*lascīuus alacerque transit ardor
medullam penitus meam recentem,
cum tuam faciem manū appetente
rugōsam uetulamque tango nocte
aut cum sentio crūra claudicāre*

et crystallinum aquis lauās ocellum.

* * *

Metre: Hendecasyllables

Translation:

A lusty and joyful warmth flows
deeply through my fresh marrow,
when I touch with lustful hand your face in the night,
full of wrinkles and very old
or when I hear your limping legs
and you wash your glass eye in the water.

* * *

(4) Written by a lover who prefers his mistress above all gods and goddesses (the German rock band Rammstein included).

omnium pulcherrima Iūno pulchrīs

saeua sēlīgī cupiunt deābus

et Minerua torua Cyprisque fallāx,

quaeque superba.

sint amātōrēs etiam fidēlēs,

quī ferunt Mūsam sibi prorsus esse

suauīōrem καρχαρίαν canentem

plēnum ululātūs.

aureum mālum tibi dōno dulcī,

quae mihi orbibus uelut astra lūcēs

lūcidīs, festiūīs, lepidīs, honestīs,

Ō Catharīna.

* * *

Metre: Sapphics

Translation:

The cruel Juno wants to be selected
as the most beautiful of the beautiful goddesses
so do the austere Minerva and the fallacious Venus,
each of them haughtily.

Let there also be pious lovers,
who say that music about Haifische
full of tears and crying
is much sweeter to them.

The golden apple I give to you because you are sweet,
you who - similar to the stars - enliven me with your eyes,
shiny, handsome, full of joy, fine,
O Catherine.

* * *

Intervallum

Richard Sturch

Richard writes: This was written sixty or so years ago. I had just finished the first part of the Oxford classics course (“Honour Mods”) and the second half (“Greats”) was coming up after the vacation. It needed a bit of reconstruction where there were *lacunae* in the text, but I think it's pretty close to the original. The translation is brand new.

mi terror olim Maeonides erat

et quanta nobis Graeca relictæ sunt;

taetro laborabam Catullo

Uergiliumque odio tenebam:

‘nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero

pulsanda tellus’; nam Moderatio

finita tandemst nostra Honorum,

prospicimusque uacationem.

sed Magna caecis in tenebris latent

pandentque nobis retia callida;

qui fugimus Scyllam biforem

labimur horribilem ad Charybdim.

* * *

Translation:

At Homer I was very weak
And anything produced in Greek;
I thought Catullus was a bore
And hated Virgil even more.

Now is the time for feast and fun,
For Honour Mods are past and done;
The term is over, and we may
Look forward to a holiday.

But Greats around the corner lurk
With two more years and more of work;
We've slipped past Scylla's gnashing teeth
To find Charybdis underneath.

* * *

Carmina

Stephen Coombs

(1) Blasonia Versificata

Stephen writes: Blazonry is the defining of coats of arms in the special terminology of heraldry. English blazonry uses many words that are Norman French in origin and as in French often places adjectives after the nouns to which they apply.

There is also a certain restricted and largely overlooked tradition of blazonry in Latin, using a varied vocabulary. We find ancient words, often used in new senses, together with medieval inventions and adaptations of quite modern expressions. The standard work on the subject is John Gibbons' *Introductio ad Latinam Blazoniam* of 1682, republished in facsimile in 1963 (Achievements Ltd., Canterbury, England), an entertaining and very idiosyncratic little volume.

Latin blazonry is understandably less regulated and succinct than its counterparts in modern tongues. Gibbons includes examples of Latin blazons versified in hexameters, and having been heraldry nerd from boyhood I have found the challenge of treating my own arms in this way irresistible. Their blazon in the usage of the College of Arms (but here slightly simplified) is as follows. Arms: Per fess wavy Azure and lozengy Or and Vert in chief a winged Sea Sagittarius fesswise Argent. Crest: Upon a Helm with a Wreath Or and Vert A winged demi Youth wings displayed holding in each hand a Shawm Or. Mantled Azure lined Argent. Motto: NE QUID PEREAT PEREAMVE.

hic insignia habes Stephano tribuenda Coombi:

*transuerse clipeum persectum flexibus undae
caeruleumque supra rhombis et compositum infra
distinctis auro uiridique colore uicissim, cui capite
alatus centaurus itemque marinus arcum rite tenens
argenteus atque sagittam:*

*aurata et uiridis uitta est manteleque fixum caeruleum
argento duplicatum: crista uidetur dimidium esse
adulescentis quoque non sine pennis qui pugno
calamellum apprehendit utroque melodum:
quae cristam efficiunt praeclaris omnibus auro:
stant NE QUID PEREAT PEREAMVE epigramma sub
armis.*

* * *

Metre: Hexameters

Translation: A Blazon Versified

Here you have the insignia to be attributed to Stephen Coombs:
the shield transversely divided by the bends of a wave, blue
above and below composed of lozenges distinguished alternately
by gold and green colour, in its chief (upper section) a winged and
likewise marine (fish-tailed) centaur of silver duly holding bow and
arrow;

the wreath is gilt and green and the attached mantling blue
doubled in silver;

the crest is in the likeness of half of a youth also provided with
wing feathers, grasping in either fist a melodious calamellus*
(shawm) - all the components of the crest being resplendent in
gold;

the letters NE QUID PEREAT PEREAMVE form an inscription
under the arms.

*Calamellus can have several meanings; melodus indicates that the
musical instrument is intended.

* * *

(2) Aestas Holmiensis

*peregrinis male crebram mediam urbem fugienti mihi
plene placuerunt plateae ciuibus etsi uacuae paene
uidentur.*

*quot amoenis locupletes quibus uti licet ampla
bonitate aedis et horti spatiando sine turbis itaque
aestate fruendo.*

* * *

Metre: Ionic a minore.

Translation: Summer In Stockholm

Fleeing from a city centre terribly packed with tourists I am quite delighted with the streets even though they appear almost empty of citizens.

How many pleasant spots enrich (the lives of) those who can avail themselves of the excellence of buildings and gardens, strolling where there are no crowds and in this way enjoying summer.

* * *

(3) Ales

qualis auis reddar Ioue forte iubente uolare?

colore passer indiget

quo placeat nec tot fucis uestita decoris

mi carduelis congruit.

*chloridis aspectu miserente Diespitre doner
quam nuper inter ramulos
nil animaduersam pennae fecere repente
puro sagittam sulfure.*

* * *

Metre: First Pythiambic.

Translation: Winged

What bird should I become if Jupiter happened to bid me fly? The sparrow lacks colour to make it attractive and the goldfinch, clad in such a variety of beautiful hues, is not my kind of thing. Jupiter taking pity on me let me be given the appearance of the greenfinch, a moment ago altogether unnoticed among the twigs, whose wings have suddenly transformed it into an arrow of pure sulphur.

* * *

(4) Archetypí Antiquí et Elementa

*nec patitur nec agit VIRGO studiosa pudoris.
lucem AQUA nec mittit nec sorbet: ab aequore flectit.

FEMINA agit nunquam: patitur tamen actum et
agentem.

materies TERRAE lucem bibit atque reservat.

qui PUER est agit et patitur: bene dicitur anceps.*

accipit et lucem sinit AËR profluere ultra.

VIR negat ipse pati cui constat vita in agendo.

quomodo lucem IGNIS sumpsisset lucis origo?

* * *

Metre: Dactylic hexameter.

Translation: Ancient Archetypes and the Elements

Concerned for her innocence the GIRL is neither passive nor active. WATER neither sends nor absorbs light; it deflects light from its surface.

The WOMAN never acts, but experiences act and actor. EARTH's matter swallows up light and retains it.

He who is a BOY is active and passive; he is rightly described as double-natured. AIR accepts light and allows it to flow on further.

The MAN, whose life consists of action, refuses to play the passive rôle. How should FIRE have taken light to itself, being the origin of light?

Ancient Archetypes and the Elements

The GIRL nor acts nor undergoes:
the charge of chastity she chose.
WATER sends or takes in no light:
her surface bends the ray in flight.

To do is never WOMAN's place,
but deed and doer to embrace.
EARTH has light penetrate her skin
and keeps it ever bound within.

Active and passive both combined,
the BOY's well called of double kind.
AIR accepts light without restraint
and lets it flow on free from taint.

It is not MAN's aught to endure,
whose life consists in action pure.
How could FIRE seem light to admit,
being the very source of it?

* * *

(5) *Lingua Mortua*

*"mortua" discipuli quondam cecinere "Latina est
lingua, magis non esse potest emortua: priscis
Romanis interfectis nunc me necat illa".*

* * *

Metre: Hexameter.

Translation: A Dead Language

Once upon a time schoolboys sang:

"Latin is a language as dead as dead can be;
it killed the ancient Romans and now it's killing me."

* * *

Natura Musica

Natascia De Gennaro

Natascia writes: here there are three haiku of mine, both in Latin and in English, inspired by nature and music. Nature is ‘*musica*’ because as a Muse it has always inspired poetry and because in nature humans can find the same armony of the music. Indeed the first musician before all other is nature.

1.

uentus oritur

cum suis passis crinibus

cor uocem tollit

2.

ineunte uere

suaves notae resonant

florem modo natum.

3.

dum alis plaudunt

papiliones ut psaltriae

leuae aerem uibrant

* * *

Translations:

1.

As soon as wind blows
with his head of untidy hair
the heart starts to cry aloud

2.

As spring is coming
harmonious notes suggest
blossomed flower

3.

While flutter wings
graceful butterflies harp
and so slightly break the air

* * *

Contra Fidem

Mark Walker

Mark writes: Some years ago, when I was younger, less modest and more ambitious, I had half a mind to embark on an epic quasi-Lucretian diatribe. The short meditation below was intended to form the exordium for that putative *magnum opus*, whose central thesis was to be that blind adherence to dogma (religious or otherwise) – the kind of irrationality that gives rise both to so-called Creation ‘science’ and suicide bombers – is a debilitating shackle on human reason. But either the magnitude of the task or the limitations of my own resources defeated me in the end and (for better or worse) this is as far as I got. It was a good lesson in modesty at least: probably best that we all stick with Lucretius I reckon.

The final sentiment, however awkwardly rendered here, is Walter Savage Landor’s: “To increase the sum of happiness, and to diminish the sum of misery, is the only right aim both of reason and of religion.”

*ecce catenati nostris erroribus omnes
et uiuunt homines et qui uixere per aeuum,
iudiciis prauis mentes animique ligati,
humanas acies onerant inscitia saxa:
quin fallacia sit mortalis non dubitari.
sed patientibus et rapidis rationis ab undis
abluitur scopulus; lautus velut ab ueritate
quae sapientia fert, paulatim soluitur error.
cogitat ille probe secum qui cogitat arte,
libertate potest totas res quisque uidere
consiliis aequis, expersque superstitionis.*

*sed pietatis homo caelestis, funibus umquam
cingitur, ille nequit nodosis soluere sese
doctrinis fidei; defessis fluctibus aeui
conteritur numquam sanctumque immobile saxum.
uana Fides! dic – quae rationi imperuia semper,
ingeniisque animis semper quoque perniciosa –
quomodo, quassatrix hominum, tu uincere corda
ac mentes posses, possisque per omnia saecla
uaniloqua uentres complereque credulitate?
damnosumque nefas tanto quod corda uenenat:
iustior humani talis sit meta fidelis
et mentis qualis nobis augescere summa
gaudia uelleque res etiam decrescere nequam.*

* * *

Metre: Hexameters

Translation: Against Faith

Behold all men, all who live and ever lived, shackled by their own errors, hearts and minds bound to misguided judgments, the rocks of ignorance weighing down human understanding: truly is error our mortal situation. But the rocks are cleansed by the patient yet rapid tide of reason; as if washed by the truth that wisdom brings error is gradually wiped away. He thinks rightly who thinks systematically, can perceive everything independently, with impartial judgment and free from superstition. But the man of heavenly piety is ever encircled by ropes, he cannot loose himself from the knotty doctrines of faith; the unyielding holy rock is never worn down by the weary waves of the ages. O empty Faith! tell me—you who are always impervious to reason, pernicious to intellect and

understanding alike – how, o shatterer of men, are you able to conquer hearts and minds, and have been in every age able to fill our bellies with empty credulity? That which poisons hearts so much is dreadful and unholy: let the more righteous goal of human faith and reason be such as to desire to increase the highest happiness and to decrease evil.

* * *

Quomodo Istud?!

Barry Baldwin

Well, how would YOU translate HOWZAT?!

Back in *Vates* #3, I wrote about *In Certamen Pilae*, William Goldwin's description in Virgilian hexameters of a country cricket match. Apart from the obvious, a Maronian *mélange* was appropriate to the occasion. I long ago read in a British Sunday paper (can't supply exact reference, having lost all my files and much else in a catastrophic 2013 flood) that during the Great War somebody wrote to the London Times complaining that the only thing wrong with the *Aeneid* was the absence of cricket.

This variant on 'Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells' may have been inspired by Henry Newbolt's (in)famous *Vitai Lampada* (1892), a Lucretianly-titled poetic linkage of the glories of character-forming cricket with the glories of the British Empire. Who then knew that if the 'torch of life' were shone on Newbolt, a somewhat different picture would be revealed? Newbolt's wife had a long lesbian affair with one Ella Coltman who accompanied the Newbolts on their honeymoon. Newbolt was also Coltman's lover, suitably dying in her house - Howzat?

(Pause here to apologise to the ghost of Leicester Bradner for having given the impression that his canonical *Musae Anglicanae* missed Goldwin's epic. Not quite right: although his text has not one word on author or poem, its source, *Musae Iuveniles*, is listed, p. 367, in the register of Anglo-Latin collections.)

Since then, running between the literary wickets, I have come (sometimes stumbled) across other connections between cricket and Anglo-Latin Verse. One unsurprising source is James Pycroft, author of pioneering (1851) *The Cricket Field*. Its unabashed promotion of sport as a vital element of muscular Christianity naturally evokes Thomas Arnold, in turn recalling that in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* young swot Arthur is lauded by a master as "having taken in both Greek and cricket too."

Pycroft wasn't one for mincing his words: "Cricket is essentially Anglo-Saxon. Foreigners have rarely imitated us. English settlers everywhere play at cricket; but of no single club have we heard that dieted either with frogs, sauer-kraut or macaroni." Change the subject and it sounds like Mrs Thatcher in full throttle. Of course, were Pycroft to be transported in the Tardis to our time, there'd have to be an awful lot of word-eating.

In a cognate publication, *Ways and Words of Men of Letters* (1861, p. 133), Pycroft includes this anecdote: "Never mind if I do take a fancy to another's verses sometimes; everybody knows I make the best in the school." This was said by a now sedate and reverend Senior, who was famous in his day for making Latin verses and catching rats faster than any other boy in Winchester.

Charles Wordsworth (1806-1892), nephew of poet William, distinguished himself both as cricketer in games involving Eton v. Harrow, Winchester v. Harrow, and Oxford v. Cambridge, and Greek and Latin verse; cf. Bradner, pp. 325-327. For full details of his glittering, multi-faceted career, see John Wordsworth's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, wherein it is stated that "Latin Verse composition was his peculiar delight and solace to the end of his long life."

In 1839, his wife Charlotte died giving birth to her only child, a daughter - Goodbye, Mrs Chips. The concluding distich of his epitaphian elegy - inscribed in the antechapel of Winchester College - became famous:

*I, nimium dilecta, vocat Deus; I, bona nostrae Pars animae:
maerens altera, disce sequi.*

One Frederick Rule Englished this thus in *Notes & Queries*, Series 5. III, January 16, 1875, p.53: "Go, too much Loved One! God Invites! Go, Better Part of Me! May I, the worst, through grief that smiteth, learn to Follow Thee!"

Although probably a coincidence, Wordworth had been anticipated by a certain John Higginson (1616-1708) who at Salem, Massachusetts, on January 25, 1697, had written in his 'Appeal to a Pastor' *Non vocat ipse Deus. O nimium dilecte Deo ...* (full text and details in Leo M. Kaiser, 'A Census of American Latin Verse 1625-1825, p. 225, on-line). A common inspiration may have been the same invocation in verse 98 of Claudian's poetic panegyric on the Third Consulship of Honorius.

Overlapping with Wordsworth was Herbert Francis Fox (1858-1926), who before playing as a batsman for Somerset had been schooled in the Classics at Clifton College and Oxford where he tutored at Brasenose and edited a piece in the *Westminster Gazette* (1906, on-line) entitled 'Renderings into Greek and Latin Verse' which printed the best of readers' submissions - Well Played, Sir!

No place for Fox in Bradner. None either for the astonishingly versatile C. B. Fry, who, before his glittering cricket career and being courted to assume the throne of newly-created Albania, had at Repton carried off prizes for Greek and Latin Verse (also Prose)

composition, also securing the Headmaster's permission to abandon Maths - one of the few things he didn't excel at - for intensive study of Thucydides. As a three-times 'O Level' Maths failure, wish I'd been similarly indulged!

Also missing in Bradner from this gallery is Haldane Campbell Stewart (1868-1942) who combined playing cricket for Kent with excelling in classical music as organist and choir member at Oxford - candidate for early murder in a Morse novel - with classical tutoring and compositions. One of the several obituaries collected on-line is this in *The Lily* 16. 8, July 1942, from which I extract the following:

"It was commonly believed that he had never been in any other form than the Sixth. Perhaps this belief was fostered by the awe with which the less gifted used to watch him doing his Latin verses in Hall quite unperturbed by the babel and confusion of a rather unruly school tea, without either dictionary or grammar to help him."

Another necrology by Richard Cavendish (*History Today* 56, 2006, available on-line) records that, "Far into old age he wrote poetry in Latin and Greek," thereby recalling Wordsworth's equal poetic *viridis senecta* - an encouragement to all *Vates* fans.

I hope and expect to unearth more such specimens. Meanwhile, a double *envoi*. First, this extract from P. G. Wodehouse's *Shield's and the Cricket Cup*: "I've been and let the House in for a rollicking time," he said, abstracting the copy of Latin Verses which his friend was doing, and sitting on them to ensure undivided attention to his words.

'Plum', in a 1955 note to Richard Usborne, preserved in *The Letters of P. G. Wodehouse* (1990, p. 240), recalled that at Dulwich College "I did reams of Greek and Latin Verse, and enjoyed it more than any other work."

Second, more lugubriously, a *Spectator* article (November 19, 2011, p. 18) by Michael Henderson, 'Deadly Game', a repertoire of cricketing suicides, most notably a pair of Somerset stalwarts, bowler (and essayist) R. C. 'Crusoe' Robertson-Glasgow, and the great opening batsman Harold Gimblett. Whether there is any cricketing connection between self-immolation and Latin Verse composition is a question I leave open for *Vates* readers to explore

...

* * *

Wolverhampton Wanderings

Barry Baldwin

In the Classical Sixth at Lincoln School (1956-59), we were coached in Latin Verse Composition by the Reverend R. P. Baker, universally known as 'Bunny', as was, by remarkable coincidence, one of our lecturers at Nottingham University. He invariably appeared with his other bible, a black-bound copy of *Versus Wulfrunenses*, containing the Latin verses composed at Wolverhampton Grammar School, of which 'Bunny' was a proud alumnus. Our efforts were compared to these *exempla*, usually unfavourably. I recall being once stunned when a compliment came my way for hitting off the line *Depereunt pariter reges et gloria regum* ('Kings and their glory perish alike'), pronounced by him to be "not unworthy of Ovid." This one minute of fame was not repeated.

The 'Bunny Bible' comprised verses from the years 1897-1929, the latter marking its date of publication. From time to time, Amazon UK offers a copy for the preposterous price of 100+ quid. At the time of writing, it is "currently unavailable". At the other end of the pecuniary scale, a copy recently went on E-Bay for 99p + postage. You could probably get a copy directly from the School. When librarian Lynne Johnson kindly replaced my flood-lost one, she mentioned that there were lots of copies available. The Preface tells all:

"This volume contains the Latin Verse written in concert by the Sixth Form of Wolverhampton Grammar School during the mastership of Alfred Robinson. These compositions, with the exception of Mr Robinson's own versions at the end of the volume, are verses made to order, blackboard versions, the work of many hands: they cannot be expected to exhibit the unity of style and treatment that should characterize the work of the individual scholar working as the spirit moves him. But if these few versions, such as they are, can in any way serve to indicate the standard of excellence attained by that Sixth Form under the teaching of Mr Robinson, if they can in any way reflect his own untiring personal devotion during that period and serve as some memorial of his mastership, it will be enough."

As Simon and Garfunkel almost warbled, Here's To You, Mr Robinson An unusual opportunity, then, to witness both collective and individual at work, "licking their bear-cubs into shape," as Virgil said of his own work method. Various English poets are put into elegiac couplets, the only metre employed. The usual suspects: Shakespeare; Gray's *Elegy* – beginning *iam campana* as

almost all versions do; Tennyson; Yeats; and Matthew Arnold who gets the lion's share. Alongside these are a handful of translations from the Greek Anthology, a tradition going back at least to Sir Thomas More in England, also ubiquitous across Europe as the two books by James Hutton show in abundant detail. For a conveniently short example of the collective in action, here's Housman's *Epitaph On An Army of Mercenaries*:

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
And took their wages and are dead.
Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
They stood and earth's foundations stay;
What God abandoned these defended
And saved the sum of things for pay.

In Wolverhamptonian couplets this turned into:

*Hi quo templa die caeli concussa ruebant,
ima ubi terrestres dissiluerunt globi.
conducti pretio sua dum stipendia quaerunt,
et pretium et mortem mox meruere suam.
sed suspensa umeris caeli conversa tenebant,
sed stabant, tellus et stabilita manet:
quod di prodiderant falsi servare valebant,
proque suo reddunt omnia tuta lucro.*

You hardly need me to point up the elegant distillation of Virgilian, Lucretian, and Ovidian flavours. To this is appended *Qui legis, hi pro te prima perire iuventa/ crastina ne perdas haec hodierna dabant*, rendering "For your to-morrow they gave their today."

As specimen of Mr Robinson going solo, I choose this piece of Wordsworth:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.
A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye -
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.
She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

Mr R did this full justice:

*Te locus humano numquam pede tritus habebat,
amnis ubi primas Doviis haurit aquas:
per vitam nullis ibi commendata fuisti
grataque quam paucis caraque facta tuis!
flos veluti violas quae fallens lumina saxo
condita muscoso semireducta latet:
lux veluti stellae quae splendet in aethere lato*

*sola et sidereo non comitata choro:
talis eras, ignota viris dum vita manebat,
et pauci norant fata obiisse Chloen;
terra tamen te condit, et o quam vita superstes
iam mutata mihi dissimilisque meast!*

The volume concludes with Robinson's salute to the School, *Carmen Wulfrunense*, from which I borrow the line *Vivat crescat floreat* as salutation and valediction, both to this anthology and the memory of 'Bunny' Baker.

* * *

Contributors

Lucius Alter lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has been a restaurateur, 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.

Jelle Christiaans (born in 2000) is a Dutch grammar school student in Nijmegen. He is a member of both *Vox Vivax*, a group of Latin enthusiasts at his school and the *Circulus Latinus Noviomagensis* (see *Michiel Sauter*).

Stephen Coombs is the author of *In Perendinum Aevum*, reviewed in *Vates* #10. He was born in Britain but has been resident in Sweden since 1967, initially to teach English, then music. In 1994 he co-founded a 'humanistic-Christian' private school (*Katarinaskolan*, St. Catherine's School) in Uppsala. He is now retired.

Marco Cristini was born in 1992 in Brescia, Northern Italy. 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 and short stories. His main research interests, however, lie in Late Antiquity (as his poems show...), especially in the Ostrogothic Kingdom. He wrote a novel about queen Amalasantha 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).

Nataschia De Gennaro was born near Naples, Southern Italy, in 1991. She has degrees in Classics with a thesis about Ovid's *Ibis* and is at present working as a Greek and Latin school teacher. She always finds a little time during the day to write some verses in Latin, Italian, English. In her spare time she listens to classical music and strolls in nature. A few years ago

she began to write Latin haiku thanks to her university professor Arianna Sacerdoti.

Anja Oomis studies Classics at Leiden University in the Netherlands. As a student of the Stedelijk Gymnasium Nijmegen (Nijmegen Grammar School), she joined *Vox Vivax*, an extracurricular group of students studying spoken Latin; now she is a member of the *Circulus Latinus Noviomagensis*. Recently, inspired by the poetic exploits of her fellow *Circulus* members, she has tried writing some Latin poetry herself.

Michiel Sauter teaches German, Dutch, Greek and Latin in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He is the founder of both *Vox Vivax*, a group of enthusiastic Latin speaking students at Nijmegen Grammar School and *the Circulus Latinus Noviomagensis*.

Richard Sturch is a retired clergyman of the Church of England who read Classics at school and at University, but had only sporadic contact with neo-Latin thereafter. He has translated Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* into Latin as *Erus Anulorum*.

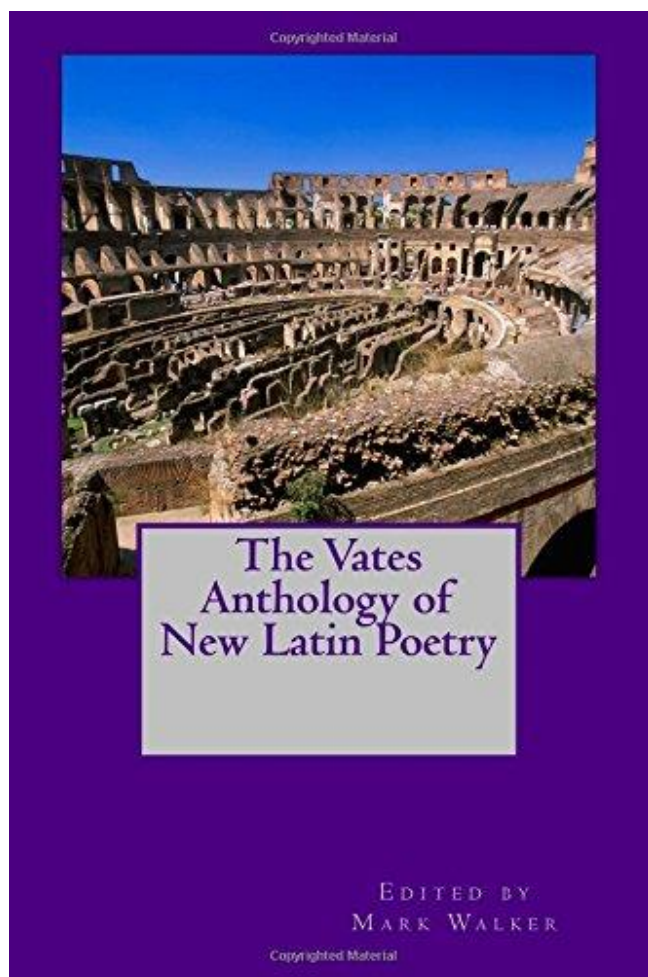
Sietse Venema teaches Latin, Greek and classical culture in Heeswijk-Dinther, the Netherlands. He is a member of the *Circulus Latinus Noviomagensis*.

Mark Walker is the founder and editor of *Vates*. These days he spends what little spare time he has playing bass guitar with the **BLUES DUDES**. www.facebook.com/bluesdudesuk.

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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