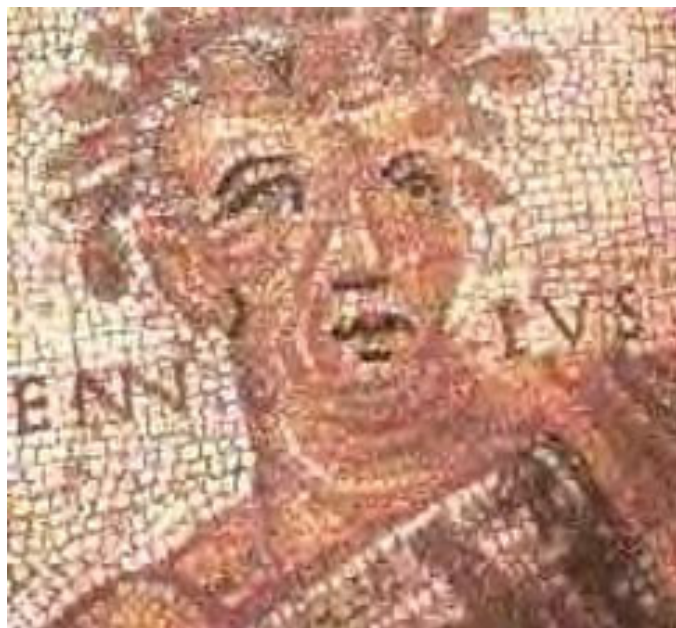


BELLARIA LXV



UMFAMILIAR LATIN POETS III

CALPURNIUS SICULUS

Introduction: *Eclogue 7*

Nothing is known about this poet, except for his seven pastoral poems. Three of his eclogues deal with Nero, praising his rule and the blessings of peace and plenty that he brings to Rome; the other four follow typical pastoral themes—country life, falling in love, musical competitions. We assume, then, that Calpurnius lived during Nero's reign and, even better, anticipates modern scholarship which insists that Nero was really an artistically very forward-looking emperor, cuddly and thoughtful except for the occasional failure of judgement for which he was foully traduced by 'biased' sources, as if some sources are biased and others not. After all, in 57 AD he was still in his 'good' emperor period.

Eclogue 7 begins with Lycotas welcoming Corydon back from his twenty-day holiday 'lingering' in Rome and demanding to know what he saw there. Corydon duly obliges with an impassioned description of the *Munus Neronis*, games initiated in AD 57 and staged in a specially constructed wooden amphitheatre. This allows the poet to contrast the pastoral world with the sophisticated brilliance of Nero's Rome. Note that Calpurnius does not describe gladiatorial games (Nero decreed no one was to be killed in them) but describes the animal hunts—good, wholesome fun for the Roman crowd and appreciated by countrymen.

The amphitheatre described

'I saw a theatre that rose skyward on interwoven beams and almost looked down on the summit of the Capitoline. 25 Passing up the steps and slopes of gentle incline, we came to the seats, where in dingy garments the mob viewed the show close to

the women's benches. For the uncovered parts, exposed beneath the open sky, were thronged by knights or white-robed tribunes. **30** Just as the valley here expands into a wide circuit, and, winding at the side, with sloping forest background all around, stretches its concave curve amid the unbroken chain of hills: so there the sweep of the amphitheatre encircles the level ground, and the oval in the middle is bound by twin piles of building.* **35** Why should I now relate to you things which I myself could scarcely see in their several details? So dazzling was the glitter everywhere.'

*The oval shape was created by two wooden theatres, each bigger than a semi-circle, revolving on pivots to face each other. The spectators *loved* the sensation! (Pliny)

*uidimus in caelum trabibus spectacula textis
surgere, Tarpeium prope despectantia culmen;
25 emensique gradus et cliuos lene iacentes,
uenimus ad sedes, ubi pulla sordida ueste
inter femineas spectabat turba cathedras.
nam quaecumque patent sub aperto libera caelo,
aut eques aut niuei loca densauere tribuni.
30 qualiter haec patulum concedit uallis in orbem
et sinuata latus resupinis undique siluis
inter continuos curuatur concaua montes:
sic ibi planitiem curuae sinus ambit harenae
et geminis medium se molibus alligat ouum.
35 quid tibi nunc referam, quae uix suffecimus ipsi
per partes spectare suas? sic undique fulgor
percussit.*

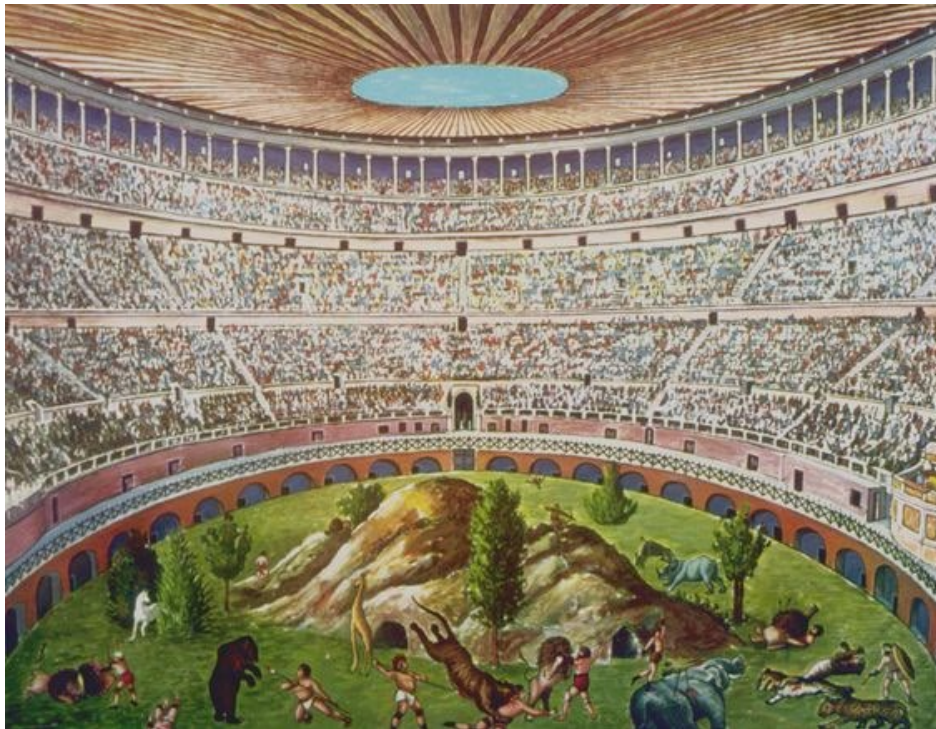
An elderly spectator expresses his amazement



'Rooted to the spot, I stood with mouth agape and marvelled at all, nor yet had I grasped every single attraction, when a man advanced in years, next me as it chanced on my left, said to me: **40** "Why wonder, country-cousin, that you are spellbound in face of such magnificence? You are a stranger to gold and only know the cottages and huts which are your humble homes. Look, even I, now palsied with age, now grey-headed, grown old in the city there, nevertheless am amazed at it all. **45** Certainly, we rate all cheap we saw in former years, and shabby every show we one day watched.'"

*stabam defixus et ore patenti
 cunctaque mirabar necdum bona singula noram,
 cum mihi iam senior, lateri qui forte sinistro
 40 iunctus erat, 'quid te stupefactum, rustice,' dixit
 'ad tantas miraris opes, qui nescius auri
 sordida tecta, casas et sola mapalia nosti?
 en ego iam tremulus iam uertice canus et ista
 factus in urbe senex stupeo tamen omnia: certe
 45 uilia sunt nobis, quaecumque prioribus annis
 uidimus, et sordet quicquid spectauimus olim.'*

Corydon admires the protection for spectators



Not the *Munus Neronis*...

'Look, the partition be-gemmed and the gilded arcade vie in brilliancy; further, just where the end of the arena presents the seats closest to the marble wall,* 50 wondrous ivory is inlaid on connected beams and unites into a cylinder which, gliding smoothly on well-shaped axle, could by a sudden turn balk any claws set upon it and shake off the beasts.** Bright too is the gleam from the nets of gold wire which project into the arena hung on solid tusks, 55 tusks of equal size; and (believe me, Lycotas, if you have any trust in me) every tusk was longer than our plough.'

*A balcony just above the arena for the emperor and invited guests.

** a revolving cylinder to prevent the beasts climbing up into the crowd.

*balteus en gemmis, en illita porticus auro
 certatim radiant; nec non, ubi finis harenae
 proxima marmoreo praebet spectacula muro,
 50 sternitur adiunctis ebur admirabile truncis
 et coit in rotulum, tereti qui lubricus axe
 impositos subita uertigine falleret ungues
 excuteretque feras. auro quoque torta refulgent*

*retia, quae totis in harenam dentibus exstant,
55 dentibus aequatis; et erat (mihi crede, Lycota,
si qua fides) nostro dens longior omnis aratro.*

Corydon describes the wild animals and other features



‘How shall I narrate each sight in order? Beasts of every kind I saw; here I saw snow-white hares and horned boars, here I saw the elk, rare even in the forests which produce it. 60 Bulls too I saw, either those of heightened nape, with an unsightly hump rising from the shoulder-blades, or those with shaggy mane tossed across the neck, with rugged beard covering the chin, and quivering bristles upon their stiff dewlaps. Nor was it my lot only to see monsters of the forest: 65 sea calves also I beheld with [polar] bears pitted against them and the unshapely herd by the name of horses [hippos], bred in that river [Nile] whose waters, with spring-like renewal, irrigate the crops upon its banks.* Oh, how we quaked, whenever 70 we saw the arena part asunder and its soil upturned and beasts emerged from the chasm cleft in the earth; yet often from those same rifts the golden arbutus [i.e. a garden] sprang up amid a sudden fountain spray (of saffron).’

*The sea creatures were a special feature of these games.

*ordine quid referam? uidi genus omne ferarum,
hic niueos lepores et non sine cornibus apros,
hic raram siluis etiam, quibus editur, alcen.
60 uidimus et tauros, quibus aut ceruice leuata
deformis scapulis torus eminent, aut quibus hirtae
iactantur per colla iubae, quibus aspera mento
barba iacet, tremulisque rigent palearia setis.
nec solum nobis siluestria cernere monstra
65 contigit: aequoreos ego cum certantibus ursis
spectaui uitulos, et equorum nomine dictum
sed deforme pecus, quod in illo nascitur amne
qui sata riparum uernantibus irrigat undis.
a! trepidi, quotiens sola discedentis harenae*

70 *uidimus inuerti, ruptaque uoragine terrae
emersisse feras; et in isdem saepe cauernis
aurea cum subito creuerunt arbuta nimbo.*

Corydon is asked to describe the emperor



L. O lucky Corydon, unhampered by palsied age; 75 lucky in that by the grace of heaven it was your lot to set your early years in this age! Now if fortune has vouchsafed to you close sight of our worshipful Emperor-god, if there and then you marked his countenance and mien, tell me, come, tell me, Corydon, what I may deem to be the features of the gods.

C. O would that I had not been clad in peasant garb! 80 Else should I have gained a nearer sight of my deity: but humble dress and dingy poverty and brooch with but a crooked clasp prevented me; still, in a way, I looked upon his very self some distance off, and, unless my sight played me a trick, I thought in that one face the looks of Mars and of Apollo were combined.

L. *o felix Corydon, quem non tremebunda senectus
impedit! o felix, quod in haec tibi saecula primos
75 indulgente deo demittere contigit annos!
nunc, tibi si propius uenerandum cernere numen
fors dedit et praesens uultumque habitumque notasti,
dic age dic, Corydon, quae sit mihi forma deorum.*

C. *o utinam nobis non rustica uestis inesset:
80 uidissem propius mea numina! sed mihi sordes
pullaque paupertas et adunco fibula morsu
obfuerunt; utcumque tamen conspeximus ipsum
longius; ac, nisi me uisus decepit, in uno
et Martis uultus et Apollinis* esse putauit.*

* Both gods popular with Augustus (Mars military, and Apollo arty)

REPOSIANUS



Mars, Venus and Cupid

Introduction

All that we know about Reposianus is that his sole work to survive is this (much told) tale of the love of Mars and Venus, in a *ms* composed in the 6th C AD. The poem has been variously dated from then somewhere back to the 2nd C AD. It clearly owes much to Virgil and Ovid.

Reposianus develops the theme of love as warfare and Mars the conqueror duly conquered, but his take on it is his own. There is a much greater emphasis on the physical love-making, Mars snoring (116) etc., which humanizes the gods and increases the fun. The affair is located in a rural setting, not in Vulcan's house; Cupid plays a part; Apollo not only informs Vulcan of the adultery but lights up the forest so that the two can be found; Vulcan does not set up a net but binds them while they are asleep; and Venus—a tough woman with a silky touch, who will not be worsted—far from being ashamed, at once plots revenge on Apollo, through his daughter Pasiphae (see note *ad loc.*).

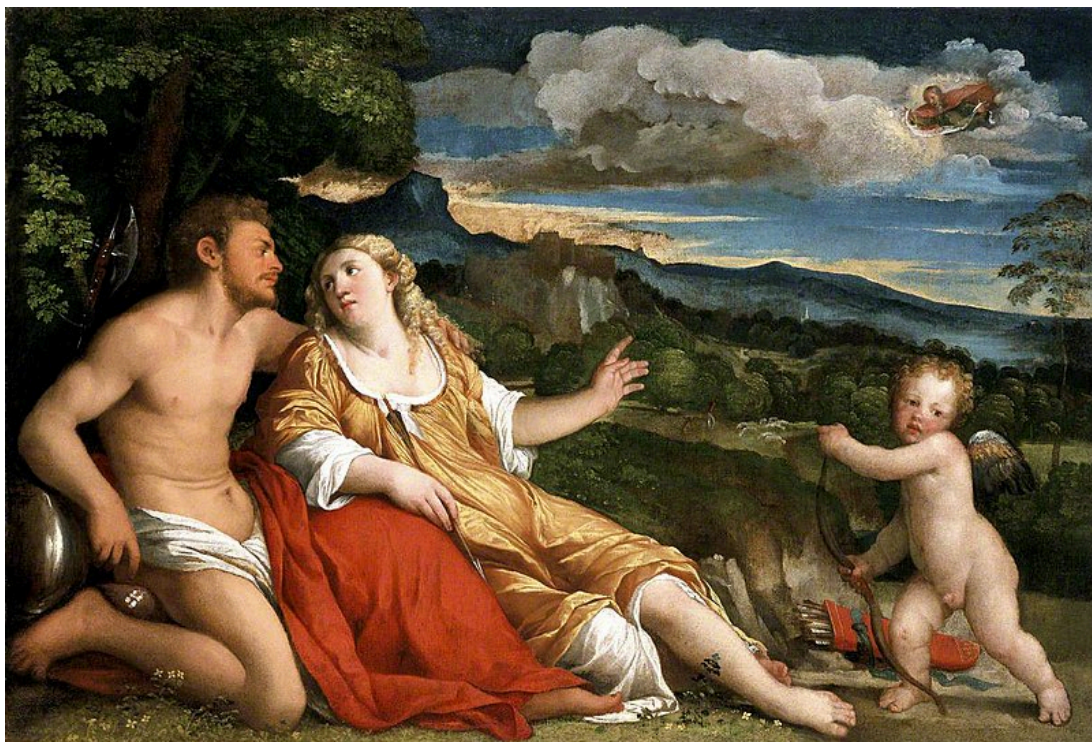
The moral note is sounded at once: **1** *discite secures non umquam credere amores* ('Learn that sexual adventures are never free from care'), which makes the arch observations all the more amusing. A luxurious scene is set, Venus' secret flowery grove specially designed for such adventures. Impatient, she awaits Mars' arrival and the moment he arrives, Cupid, the Graces and others strip him. At this point our extract begins, Mars clumsily wrecking the *mise en scène*.

The love-making begins

Mars had come to the couch and resting his hard weight upon the flowers disordered all their gracefulness. Fair Venus came, scarce leaving a footprint in her caution lest the prickly flowers should mar her tender feet, and, now **100** entwining

her tresses lest kisses might ruffle them, now letting her robes flow loose, can scarce confine them in her languor: she is not wholly hid nor wholly bares her charms. He in his covering of flowers with stealthy eye gazes agape at Venus, quivering in the full flame of passion. **105** The Paphian goddess sank upon the couch. Ah! Cupid the august, how coaxing the words, what the murmurs they then did utter there! What kisses did they then imprint upon commingled lips! How well did limb clasp limb in close embrace!

*iuerat ad lectum Mauors, et pondere duro
 floribus incumbens totum turbarat honorem;
 ibat pulchra Venus uix presso pollice cauta,
 florea ne teneras uiolarent spicula plantas;
 100 et nunc innectens, ne rumpant oscula, crinem,
 nunc uestes fluitare sinens, uix laxa retentat,
 cum nec tota latet nec totum nudat amorem.
 ille inter flores, furtiuo lumine, tectus,
 spectat hians Venerem totoque ardore tremescit.
 105 incubuit lectis Paphie. proh sancte Cupido,
 quam blandas uoces, quae tunc ibi murmura fundunt!
 oscula permixtis quae tunc fixere labellis!
 quam bene consertis haeserunt artibus artus!*



Mars, Venus and Cupid (Jacobo Palma, il vecchio 1480-1528)

Mars falls asleep

Then Mavors drew his right hand from the Paphian's breast and **110** lest his weight should hurt the left arm twined around her neck, sets white lilies and rose-wreaths underneath. Oft the leg's light touch stirred the lover into flames by the goddess fanned. At last, it befell, the languor of repose had mastered the weary limbs of Mars; **115** yet did not all love's rapture, yet did not all the flame, quit the god's breast: amidst his slumber he heaves sighs and from the depths of his lungs hot passion still pants love.

stringebat Paphiae Mauors tunc pectore dextram
110 *et collo innexam ne laedant pondera laeuam,*
lilia cum roseis supponit candida sertis;
saepe leui cruris tactu commouit amantem
in flammis, quas diua fouet. iam languida fessos
forte quies Martis tandem compresserat artus;
115 *non tamen omnis amor, non omnis pectore cessit*
flamma dei: trahit in medio suspiria somno
et uenerem totis pulmonibus ardor anhelat.

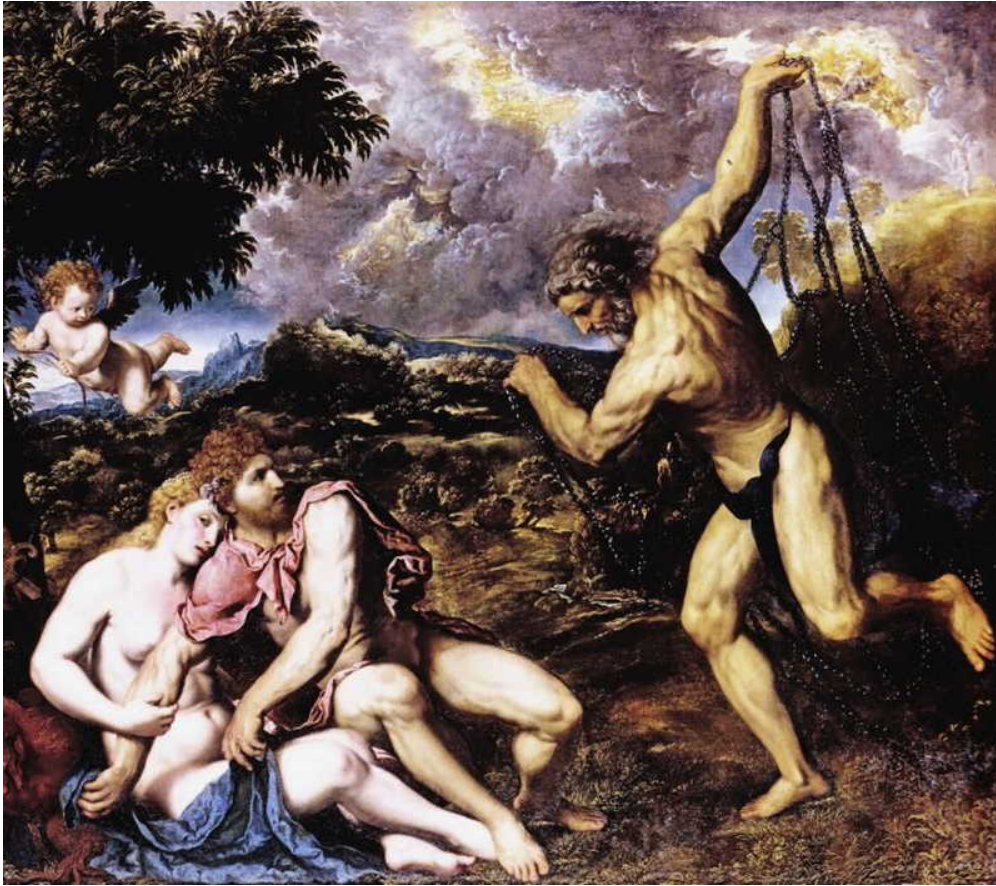
Venus, still afire, falls asleep

Venus herself then, even then, enkindled with glowing poison, is afire and burns: she wins no restful dreams. **120** How winning the sight! How fit the slumber that has o'ercome the naked limbs! A fair neck rests on snowy arms: the breast swells as if with a pair of stars. Not wholly on her back is she reclined, but with a gentle bend of the body where side meets side. **125** Looking at Mars, she drops her eyes in sleep, charming as ever, comely. In front of the grove meanwhile Cupid is handling Mars' weapons: and after scanning them one by one, breastplate, shield, sword, plumes of the threatening helmet, he binds them each with flowers; then tests the spear's weight, **130** marvelling that his own arrows have been allowed such power.

ipsa Venus tunc tunc calidis suspensa uenenis
uritur ardescens, nec somnia parta quiete.
120 *o quam blanda quies! o quam bene presserat artus*
nudos forte sopor! niueis suffulta lacertis
colla nitent; pectus gemino quasi sidere turgit.
non omnis resupina iacet, sed corpore flexo
molliter et laterum qua se confinia iungant;
125 *Martem respiciens, deponit lumina somno,*
sed gratiosa, decens... pro lucis forte Cupido
Martis tela regens; quae postquam singula lustrat
loricam clipeum gladium galeaeque minaces
cristas flore ligat: tunc hastae pondera temptat
130 *miraturque suis tantum licuisse sagittis ...*

[Apollo as sun-god spots them, informs Vulcan and lights up the lovers' location.]

Vulcan forges chains and binds the lovers



Mars and Venus surprised by Vulcan (Paris Bordone, 1500-1571)

In his rage Vulcan makes for cavern in Etna. Orders hardly given, all laid hands to work, resentment adding much to skill. **165** How quickly everything is achieved by skill, god, fire, husband, anger, pain! Scarcely at the moment of ordering had he explained the reason, before the avenging husband was already bringing the chains. He reaches the grove, unseen by Love himself, unseen by any Grace: to his art he had entrusted all his rage. **170** Then with light soft touch he bound the chains upon the sleepers' hands, linking their arms with gentle movement.

*antra furens Aetnaea petit: uix iusserat, omnes
incubuerunt manus: multum dolor addidit arti.*

165 *quam cito cuncta gerunt ars numen flamma maritus
ira dolor! nam uix causam tunc forte iubendo
dixerat, et uindex coniunx iam uincla ferebat.
peruenit ad lucos, non ipsi uisus Amori,
non Chariti: totas arti mandauerat iras.*

170 *uincla tunc manibus suspensio molliter ictu
inligat et teneris conectit brachia palmis.*

The lovers awake

Mars shakes himself free of sleep: so too the fair Cytherean. Gradivus [Mars] well might burst asunder the strong bonds, but Love restrained him lest he hurt Venus' arms. **175** Then did you lurk hidden beneath Mars' helmet, then did you lurk among his weapons, cruel Cupid, in cowardice. Mavors stands sullen of look, chafing because he is an adulterer caught. But the Paphian feels no grief that her guilty deed has turned awry: instead, she thinks of what revenge is hers, revolving point

by point, and **180** feels it were fit penalty if Phoebus fell in love: and now, hastening forward her guile, she set to ornament the horns of the bull which would mean Pasiphae's guilt and the wrath involved in blended lust.*

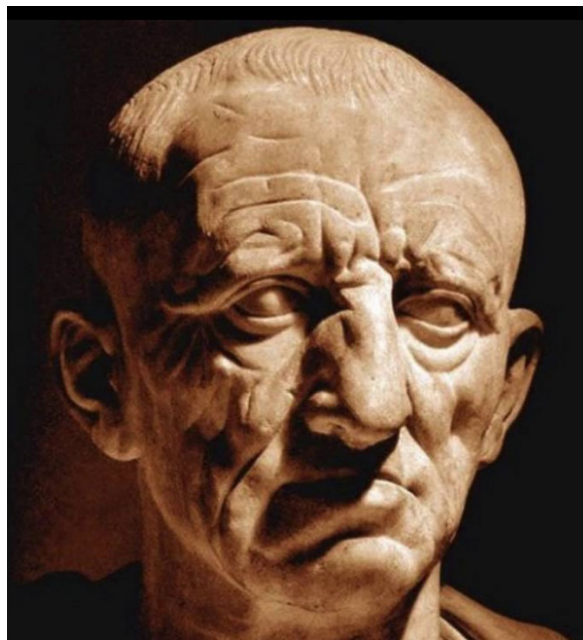
*Pasiphae, Minos' wife, fell in love with a bull. Daedalus built a framework shaped like a cow into which she inserted herself: the result was the Minotaur.

*excutitur somno Mauors et pulchra Cythere:
posset Gradiuus ualidos disrumpere nexus,
sed retinebat amor, Veneris ne bracchia laedat.*

175 *tunc tu sub galea, tunc inter tela latebas,
saeue Cupido, timens. stat Mauors lumine toruo
atque indignatur, quod sit deprensus adulter;
at Paphie conuersa dolet non crimina facti,
sed quae sit uindicta sibi tum singula uoluens*

180 *cogitat et poenam sentit, si Phoebus amaret.
iamque dolos properans, decorabat cornua tauri,
Pasiphaae crimen mixtique cupidinis iram.*

CATO'S MONOSTICHS



Cato the Elder (at least what he *should* look like)

Introduction

The collection of *gnomai* (proverbs and moralizing quotations) published under Publilius' name (*Bellaria* LIV) are matched elsewhere by those of Cato (*delenda est Carthago*) the Elder. His reputation was such that collections of his (and certainly many other people's) top one- and two-liners were made and published in his name for the moral education of the young. Many of them survived to become mainstays of a boy's education well into the 18th C. These ones are (apparently) dedicated to his son. There will be more where these came from.

Their purpose, like Publilius', was ethical: they tell you something about the world and what to do and not to do in it. Well over a thousand such *gnomai* survive in assorted ancient anthologies, on top of the e.g. 866 one-liners extracted from Menander's works in Greek and quoted all over the place (often translated into Latin).

Preface

When I noticed how very many go seriously wrong in their manner of living, I concluded that I must apply a corrective to their belief and take counsel of the experience of mankind in order that they may live most gloriously and attain honour.

Now I will teach you, dearest son, in what way you fashion a rule for your life. Therefore, so read my precepts that you may understand them, for to read and not to understand is equivalent to not reading.

cum animaduertentem, quam plurimos grauius in uia morum errare, succurrendum opinioni eorum et consulendum famae existimaui, maxime ut gloriose uiuerent et honorem contingerent.

nunc te, fili karissime, docebo, quo pacto morem animi tui componas. igitur praecepta mea ita legito, ut intellegas, legere enim et non intellegere nec legere est.

<i>deo supplica.</i>	Pray to God.
<i>parentes ama.</i>	Love your parents.
<i>cognatos cole.</i>	Cherish those of kin to you.
<i>datum serua.</i>	Guard that entrusted to you.
<i>foro parce.</i>	Shun the market place.
<i>cum bonis ambula.</i>	Walk with the upright.
<i>antequam uoceris, ne accesseris.</i>	Attack not until you have challenged.
<i>mundus esto.</i>	Be neat.
<i>saluta libenter.</i>	Salute freely.
<i>maiori concede.</i>	Yield to him who is older than you.
<i>magistratum metue.</i>	Respect the magistrate.
<i>uerecundiam serua.</i>	Preserve your sense of shame.
<i>rem tuam custodi.</i>	Guard well your own interests.
<i>diligentiam adhibe.</i>	Practice diligence.
<i>familiam cura.</i>	Care for your family.
<i>mutuum da.</i>	Return like for like.
<i>cui des, uideto.</i>	Consider well to whom to make presents.
<i>conuiuare raro.</i>	Indulge rarely in banquets.
<i>quod satis est, dormi.</i>	Sleep enough.
<i>coniugem ama.</i>	Love your wife.
<i>iusiurandum serua.</i>	Keep your word.
<i>uino tempera.</i>	Be moderate with wine.
<i>pugna pro patria.</i>	Fight for your country.
<i>nihil temere credideris.</i>	Be not easily imposed upon.
<i>meretricem fuge.</i>	Shun the harlot.
<i>libros lege.</i>	Read books.
<i>quae legeris, memento.</i>	Remember what you read.
<i>liberos erudi.</i>	See to the instruction of your children.
<i>blandus esto.</i>	Be kind.

irascere ob rem grauem.
neminem riseris.
in iudicio adesto.
ad praetorium stato.
consultus esto.

Be angry when the affair requires it.
Ridicule no one.
Attend the law court.
Frequent the residence of the praetor.
Be conversant with the law.

uirtute utere.
trocho lude.
aleam fuge.
litteras disce.
bono benefacito.
tute consule.

Practice virtue.
Play with a hoop.
Eschew the dice.
Learn to read.
Show favour to the good.
Give sound counsel.

maledicus ne esto.
existimationem retine.
aequum iudica.
nihil mentire.

Be not abusive.
Hold to your opinion.
Judge fairly.
Never lie.

iracundiam rege.
parentem patientia uince.
minorem ne contempseris.
nihil arbitrio uirium feceris.
paterere legem, quam ipse tuleris.
benefici accepti esto memor.
pauca in conuiuio loquere.
miserum noli inridere.
minime iudica.
alienum noli concupiscere.
illud adgrederi, quod iustum est.
libenter amorem ferti.
liberalibus stude.

Keep your temper.
Win over your parent with patience.
Despise not your inferior.
Do nothing under the pressure of force.
Respect the law you yourself have made.
Be mindful of favour received.
Say little at banquets.
Deride not the unhappy.
Never pass judgment.
Covet not the possessions of another.
Seek that which is right.
Feel affection freely.
Strive after noble things.

Next week: Hadrian, Florus etc.