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Verse Composition in Schools

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The Classical Review / Volume 31 / Issue 08 / December 1917, pp 193 - 196

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00009343, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00009343

How to cite this article:

A. D. G. (1917). Verse Composition in Schools. The Classical Review, 31, pp 193-196

doi:10.1017/S0009840X00009343

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have previous transcribers. In the second (and this is the main point) the version of the glossary which these transcribers transmitted seems to me to have been a compressed or reduced version. Look at an item like Philox. 182, 46 *Seria*: necessaria, σπουδαία, ἀναγκαῖα, πρίων, καὶ μοχλὸς θύρας, καὶ ῥηματικῶς πρίσον. It seems to me a compression of something like this:

SERIA: necessaria, σπουδαία, HOR. (with quotation
ἀναγκαῖα. of *Sat.* 1, 1, 27).

SERRA: πρίων. ?

SERA: μοχλὸς θύρας. ?

SERRA: πρίσον. ?

And the mere presence of the word ῥηματικῶς is enough to make me refuse to believe that these four items were merged in one by the mechanical process of transcription (e.g. through the omission of all the lemma-words except the first). They must have been deliberately compressed into the reduced form by some 'editor' or (I would rather say) some corrector, the head of some scriptorium who wished to bring the huge bulk of the original and genuine Philoxenus Glossary into handy compass. And the evidence of Cyrillus suggests how very much has been sacrificed in the process, quotations of authors, etc. Investigation will provide material for a more certain reconstruction of the text's history; but I may be allowed to make a mere guess, which will at least show my meaning more clearly. I would guess that, while 'Philoxenus' had arranged his *GLOSSAE PER ELEMENTUM* (cf. 212, 56) by A- (only the first letter of the word

being taken into account), this corrector rearranged them by AB- (e.g. in the A-section, first the ab-words; then the ag-words; then the ad-words; then the ae-words; then the ah-words, if any; then the af-words; then the ai-words; then the ac-words; then the al-words, etc.); and, along with his re-arrangement by AB-, he carried out a sweeping reduction of the size and number of the items. Just as he has betrayed his interference by the word ῥηματικῶς in the item *Seria*, so by the phrase ἐπ' ἄλλῳ 'in another case' in the item *Exacta* (63, 31 *Exacta*: ἀνυσθέντα, ἐπ' ἄλλῳ ἀνυσθείσης). The phrase should not be twisted into the sense 'in another glossary.'

The investigations to which volunteers were invited in the previous article will provide materials for testing this theory. If it stands, then 'Philoxenus' was a mere Italian monastery-teacher, and his Greek must be valued accordingly. His Early Latin words were culled from (1) Festus, (2) *Idiomata* of Charisius, etc. They are often designated by ἀρχαίως, e.g. 188, 52 *Stlites*: δίκαι ἀρχαίως (cf. Fest. 411, 1 *stlitem antiqui pro lite dicebant*); and if 'Cyrillus' misunderstood this symbol when he wrote (381, 1) *Oἶνος παλαιός*: hoc temetum, we must read (*Glos. Serv.* 528, 14) *Temetum*: οἶνος ἀρχαίως. Whether any morsels of Greek medical or botanical or ornithological lore survive in any bilingual items, investigations will show. But I greatly doubt it.

W. M. LINDSAY.

VERSE COMPOSITION IN SCHOOLS.

THE art of versification in Greek and Latin—an art which, for the last 150 years at any rate, has been especially English—has for a long time past been compelled to justify its existence as a form of education. Its days of fame are no doubt over. In the golden age of the *Sabrinae Corolla* and the *Arundines Cami*, its professors may have unduly exalted themselves: they may have forgotten sometimes that their compositions were a means and not an end: at any rate, when some fifty years ago the

battle was first joined between Classical and 'Modern Side' education, verse composition entered upon a period of fiery trial. Satire had already found out the elegant scholar. Those who still read Thackeray will remember his unsympathetic picture of an ex-Fellow, bemused by constant fuddling, yet still able to turn you a copy of Greek iambs, and to consider himself the intellectual superior of those who couldn't. The sporting parson in 'Friendship's Garland,' untouched as he

was by the fierce intellectual life of the century, derived the reputation of a scholar from his celebrated 'copy of longs and shorts on the Calydonian Boar.' Arnold and Thackeray of course knew very well how far they should be taken seriously; but they inevitably provided weapons for the hands of lesser men: the public (naturally thirsting for vengeance on those who seemed to have tortured its youth to no purpose) was apparently invited to conclude, not that the objects of satire did at least possess one redeeming accomplishment, but that Greek iambs had somehow wrecked a promising career, and that Latin elegiacs had completed the brutalisation of the Rev. Esau Hittall. With such great examples in view, it was, of course, the easiest of games for anyone, who liked to see himself printed by the halfpenny Press, to trace national decay to the practice of making Latin and Greek verses—a thing obviously divorced from success in commercial enterprises. Nor was it only the Philistine who was to be feared. There have for long been enemies even in the seats of unpractical learning. Many professed champions of classical studies share the contempt, if not the violence, of the great organs of democracy. Metrical exercises (they say) lack solidity: they are not for the genuine student, they have nothing to do with Research: somehow, their practice is the mark, or even the cause, of an enfeebled mind. Moreover, the female sex, which takes its classical education very seriously indeed, may sometimes condescend to Latin and even to Greek prose: but, for the most part, definitely draws the line at versification.

Such a consensus of opinion is at first sight overwhelming: and the speedy extinction of classical composition, or at least its elimination from respectable curricula, has been confidently predicted by the judicious at any time in the last half-century. Yet somehow it survives, and on the whole flourishes, if not quite with the efflorescence of old days when elegant versification was the supreme achievement of English scholars, and even led to places of emolument. It is of course undeniable that sixth form teachers are not, now, generally selected because they can turn 'In Memoriam'

into alcaics, or Browning into Pindaric Greek. When they are chosen for intellectual qualifications, as is often the case, it is much more likely that they have chronicled a year's work among pre-Minoan relics, or said the last word on the Ravenna MS. of Cluvienus. Such studies naturally avert the mind from metrical *tours de force*—even in places where the great tradition might be supposed to be least assailable. Yet verse-making does still hold its own in public schools. Nor is it nearly extinct at the Universities. The newer seats of learning, indeed, seem to have little time for such toys: but Oxford and Cambridge—till 1914 ended everything for the time—could still show an annual crop of decent versifiers. It was certainly the exception for a candidate to obtain a University scholarship without verses: and even in College scholarship examinations verse-papers were always set, and he who made no attempt thereat was usually expected to justify his existence by possessing some 'extra' qualification, such as a good knowledge of a modern language. In short, to be a versifier made for success. That, in the higher region of Irelands and Hertfords and Cravens, is not surprising. After all, as long as the Classics are studied linguistically, a craft which demands considerable knowledge of a language and considerable power of handling it cannot be neglected. It is not possible to deny the claim of the versifier, as a candidate for prizes which are offered mainly for linguistic knowledge. Prize or not, the scholar who competes creditably in fields like these has attained to a degree of excellence which is in itself worth having. It was worth his while to continue at verse-making, and his existence does not surprise. But, how about the youths who never can attain to these Parnassian heights—who cannot be in the running for classical prizes or scholarships, yet who continue to 'do verses' at school? We are sometimes told by respectable authorities that they ought not so to continue: yet the fact remains that they do. Are we to suppose that they are kept at a much-criticised occupation out of mere conservatism, or to make the running for the budding Jebbs and potential Butlers? Were it not for them, no doubt, the art even in its highest manifestations would

decay. For it is in the field of what is 'recognised as schoolwork' that juvenile excellence is most likely to grow and flourish. Among boys, the solitary striver in a sphere of his own is likely to be at a disadvantage: the potentially brilliant composer needs the stimulus of competition—or at least of a not wholly unintelligent gallery. That is doubtless true. But it is hardly by itself a sufficient reason for keeping the rank and file at their 'longs and shorts,' in the face of so much criticism. Nor can the reason be sought in 'indolent tradition.' Modern teachers of sixth forms in public schools attach little weight to that. It may have been often a *vera causa* down to the end of the last century. But the teacher of these days has passed through the fire of public criticism: it has been forced upon him that he must not follow mere tradition—even if he wished to do so. What he retains, he retains for some other reason than mere conservatism: you may be sure that there is something more than that in it.

There *are* real reasons. The danger is, that in these days schoolmasters may be terrified against their better judgment into disregarding them: and it is a considerable danger: the more considerable, because the reasons for school-boy versification are in themselves good and substantial, being based on human nature. Schoolmasters, as a class, may be credited with knowing their business: if they do not, retribution in some form or other is pretty sure to fall on them. They may be terrorised or cajoled, like anyone else: but even if they follow the worse, as a class they see the better. They know, then, that the boy in the higher forms of schools for whom they make their rules—whom they especially have in view—is neither the exceptional student with real intellectual interests, nor the equally exceptional dunce with none at all. When they frame plans of teaching, it is mainly for the average boy of fairly good abilities. That is a boy to whom not all the manifestations of the Higher Scholarship immediately appeal. His pastors know that he is very seldom really interested and able to profit by hearing literary judgments (I do not say that he has not often a nascent and immature feeling for good literature), or expositions of

archaeological speculations. Very few boys indeed are able to estimate evidence and so appraise at their proper worth theories about the Minoan period or the origin of the Romans. These matters of high dispute will interest some of them later, when they are grown up and able in some measure to judge for themselves: at present, the discussion of such speculations ought to be outside the sphere of school education. It can only be 'got up': and if cramming facts is for the most part an unprofitable business, cramming theories is much worse. So with literary criticism: to invite pupils to admire the beauties of great literature is much more educational for the teacher than for his class: it does not really arouse an intelligent interest in most boys. Literary criticism generally either goes in at one ear and out at the other, or (what is worse) is remembered and repeated by rote. Verse-making, on the other hand, has its genuine attraction for the crowd. What does interest the human boy—in the classical as in every other field—is the feeling that he is making something: in the same spirit in yet earlier years he has built him sand-castles on the seashore, or made some simulacrum of a boat: let the boy have constructed the worst hexameter that ever limped, yet it is his and not another's: a poor thing (he will say) but mine own: it is not as good as the work of Jones major who tried for a Balliol scholarship, nor even as Virgil (at his best); yet it will serve. And if he is trying to make what is better than someone else's, he will be the more likely to use his brains. Moreover, versification is a game which must be played by rules; and boys are great sticklers for the rules of the game: girls, I understand, less so: which may explain the lack of feminine interest in verse-construction.

Hard things have been said about competitive effort. To succeed at the expense of someone else's failure is (we have been sometimes told) anti-social, even brutalising, a reversion to the rule of 'Nature, red in tooth and claw.' When the exponents of the great doctrine of Equality of Opportunity go so far as to say that congenital lack of ability is an unfair handicap, it is clear that they can never be pleased by com-

petitive examinations. What the world will make of these twentieth-century philosophers is not yet clear. For the present it is the undoubted fact that the average boy knows no stronger stimulus to do his best than the battle with a rival: to be matched against a competitor in the business of producing something will incite him to effort when appeals to finer and higher motives leave him cold. Verse-making provides such a stimulus: and this is one reason, I take it, why it is still encouraged by schoolmasters. May one go a step further and claim that schoolmasters may have an answer even for the strictly utilitarian critic who dismisses versification as a thing of no practical value? To such an one they may surely reply, Is there anything more useful in most lines of life than the power of expression: and can this be better taught than by actual practice in the arrangement of the proper words in the proper form? What ever teaches verbal expression is good and useful for the business of life. Students of natural science are beginning to realise that, dimly: they are beginning to see that the reason why they have been comparatively little in demand for administrative posts is not to be sought in mere jealousy or con-

servatism, but in the simple fact that many of them have not been trained in the art of making themselves intelligible. Academic critics, again, might consider whether practice in Greek and Latin versification does not impart some measure of taste and literary judgment. A good teacher will show his pupils more of the essentials of style by the correction of copies of verses than they could ever learn from a course of lectures on the Sublime and Beautiful. Is it not possible that with such consideration in view verse-composition might even compete in utility with some 'modern' subjects? However, perhaps it is too presumptuous to urge that. It would be a dangerous enterprise to suggest that the practice of a delightful art can really compete, as a preparation for the business of life, with a serious training in biology or medieval history. All that the present writer is bold enough to propose is, that when schoolmasters are terrified into throwing some part of their classical curriculum overboard, they should respite verse-making for the moment and jettison something else first. There are several other possible Jonahs.

A. D. G.

REVIEWS

LIVINGSTONE'S DEFENCE OF CLASSICAL EDUCATION.

A Defence of Classical Education. By R. W. LIVINGSTONE. Crown 8vo. Pp. xi+278. London: Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.

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