Among the several though hardly numerous contributors to what might be called the 'classical tradition' in New Zealand poetry, four stand out as established poets on whom classical studies in the traditional sense (thus including language acquisition) have had a substantial influence. These four are, in chronological order, R.A.K. Mason, Denis Glover, James K. Baxter, and Fleur Adcock. The classics careers of the second and fourth of these covered both Greek and Latin, but it is the first and third - who thus had Latin but no Greek - whose penetration of Roman poetry (Mason) and Greek legend (Baxter) went the deepest, not only in poems expressly derivative or imitative of classical models - though there are also plenty of these - but also in the formation of a mind-set that expressed itself in a number of other poems that are not visibly classics-related.

The effect of classical studies on Mason and Baxter has been examined at length in print already, and needs no repetition here. But as Horace reminds us in Ars Poetica 359, even the best of poets is capable of a slip, or an error, or an inclarity; it is the purpose of the present paper to point out some of these as far as the classical background of these poets is concerned, and to shed light on obscurity where possible. This is done in no point-scoring spirit, but rather as a tribute both to the universality of literary values and the training in accuracy which a classical education is supposed to instil. In particular the caveat is entered that where 'translated' poems are in question (the speech marks indicate that no poem can ever be adequately translated in its fullness) poetic licence and literary variation are to be fully respected; where critical mention is made it is

1 For one possible assortment, see the list of contributors to Classical New Zealand Poetry, Department of Classics, University of Otago, (1985).

2 For Mason, see in particular chapter 4 of Charles Doyle, R.A.K. Mason, Twayne World Authors Series, (1970), 'In the Roman Fashion'. Much of this chapter is acknowledged to be the reworked version of an unpublished M.A. essay by Grant Hemus at the University of Auckland, written in 1964. For Baxter see three papers by John Davidson: 'James K. Baxter and the Classics' in Islands 15 (1976), and 'Odysseus, Baxter and New Zealand Poetry' in Landfall 134 (1980); also an M.A. thesis by John Goulter at the University of Canterbury, 1980, entitled 'A Guide to the Use of Classical Mythology in the Poetry of James K. Baxter'.
because the poet in question seems genuinely to have nodded in a moment of inattention rather than to have wished deliberately to vary the message.

R.A.K. Mason

Wayfarers is an attractive but puzzling poem. The present writer was once given a copy of it by one of Mason's boyhood friends, later to be professor of classics at Auckland University, namely E.M. Blaiklock. This fact is of interest because the copy differs at several points from the published version: the copy refers to "Otahu" and "Papatio" (reflecting the then common pakeha pronunciation of these place-names), contains what seems to be a bowdlerisation ("boisterous" for "bloody"), and entirely omits the second stanza. Blaiklock's comment on this stanza was that he couldn't understand it; this suggests that both here and elsewhere he knew what Mason had written but that he (EMB) had chosen to make the alterations himself. The second stanza runs as follows:

Ignorant that I have heard and seen Christ break
the bondage of his tongue-tied sightlessness
have walked with firm-faithed Mary to the stake
and kissed the hem of martyred Flora's dress.

It is commonly assumed that 'Mary' in line 3 must be Christ's mother, but this is not the only possible interpretation. The addressee of another poem involving 'Mary', namely Ad Mariam, is manifestly not the mother of Christ, and the most likely Mary with whom to identify her is surely Mary Magdalen, ex-prostitute ("wanton", "defiled", "in the dark you work", "vile adulterous beacon"). The same identification is perfectly possible in Wayfarers, and finds support not only in the gospels - both Mark (15.40) and John (19.25) expressly mention Mary Magdalen's presence at the crucifixion - but also in the mention of Flora in the next line.

There is no Flora in the New Testament but there is some evidence that the name was a common one among practitioners of the world's oldest profession, possibly in connection with the excesses associated with the floralia, or flower festival in honour of the goddess of that name, for which see Ovid: Fasti 5.195. We know from Plutarch (Pompey 2) that one of Pompey's mistresses was called Flora, and Suetonius (Vesp. 22) suggests that the masculine name Florus was associated, albeit wrongly and mischievously, with ϕλαύρος (=φαύλος, = 'vulgar').

Though Mason did not know Greek he may have had occasion to read Anth. Pal.5.132 (Philodemus) in translation: an openly pornographic poem whose heroine, if that is the right word, is called Φλώρα, and is to boot rustic and uneducated (εὶ δ’Οπιχή καὶ Φλώρα καὶ οὐκ ἄδουσα τὰ Σαπφοῦς if she is Italian and her name is Flora and she does not sing Sappho). the phraseology (καὶ Φλώρα inserted between her provincial origins and her lack
of literary accomplishments) suggests that the name Flora was not one to be proud of. If this view is correct then 'firm-faithed' is undoubtedly true of Mary Magdalen after her conversion, while 'martyred' is an easy embellishment of both Mary Magdalen and 'Flora', and the cure effected by Christ of the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5.25-34, Luke 8.43-48) shows the association between touching the hem of a garment (τις μου ἥψατο τῶν ἴματιῶν) and firmness of faith (ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε).

How much of this was known to Mason is less clear, but we know his extracurricular reading to have included Suetonius, and erotic epigram in translation would be quite consistent with his literary interests, as would a Christ-figure in close association with sinners, repentant or not, with his religious ones.4

"The bondage of [Christ's] tongue-tied sightlessness" in line 2 is a more difficult nut to crack, but in view of the above it is just possible that Mason's Christ is "tongue-tied" and "sightless" in respect of his rigid sexual morality, at least as transmitted by his church, whereas Mason himself would welcome a less restrictive code yet in a Christian key, like James K. Baxter after him; much of their poetry revolves around the poles of God and sexual love, and for Mason at any rate the link-theme was death. Before leaving this poem one further speculation is possible: whether in "Ausonian" in the last line Mason wished the reader to hear an echo of 'Australasian' as this term was then in vogue in New Zealand (more than in Australia) in the early part of the century; 'Ausonia' was the term for Greek-speaking (and therefore Southern) Italy, though extended by Vergil to the whole peninsula; such an interpretation matches the mood of the poem as a whole.

One theme briefly mentioned in Wayfarers is considerably expanded in Herostratus at Ephesus, namely the exploit of a firebrand in perpetrating arson as a way of achieving notoriety. A problem arises however in words supposedly from Quintus Curtius Rufus, quoted by English and prefixed to the poem. These words are:

"The temple of Diana in Ephesus was burnt to ashes...[dots in published version] by a profligate villain, who confessed that he had no other object in doing it but to preserve his memory."

3 E.M.Blaiklock, Between the Valley and the Sea, (1979) 67; also Doyle, op.cit., 56. By all accounts Mason, who became Blaiklock's "perverse and irregular student", read considerably more widely outside the syllabus than within it.

The author is given as 'Quintus Curtius' only. Given Mason's predilection for Latin tags and titles\(^5\) it is slightly surprising that the text of Rufus should not be quoted in Latin, but it transpires that there is no Latin text to quote. Rufus' *History of Alexander* is in fact defective (Books 1 + 2 are entirely missing, and parts of 6 + 7) and the story of Herostratus is part of an imaginative reconstruction by the German scholar Johann Freinsheim in the 17\(^{th}\) century, drawing on Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and other historians of the period.

Freinsheim's reconstructions were compiled in Latin, but 19\(^{th}\) century German editions of Q.Curtius Rufus quote or summarize them in German; one such (by Heinrich Wilhelm Reich, Leipzig 1895) gives the relevant passage as: eines der sieben Wunderwerke des Morgenlandes, des von Herostratus angezündeten Artemistempels zu Ephesus (one of the seven wonders of the East, the temple of Diana at Ephesus, which Herostratus set fire to) and further annotates the name Herostratus as follows: ein Ephesier zündet, um sich einen Namen zu machen, den Artemistempel an (an Ephesian sets fire to the temple of Diana to make a name for himself). It seems that Mason must have read either Freinsheim or Freinsheim's sources - though neither seems at all likely; for one thing, Mason knew neither German nor Greek - or else an English summary of him, or them; if the latter, the Loeb edition must be excluded, as it was not published till 1946, and in any case does not contain the quoted sentence explicitly. The theme of instant notoriety ('non omnis moriar') had a clear appeal for Mason, who treated of it in several poems\(^6\) but his portrayal of the ignominy awaiting the hapless Herostratus ("spit at me scorn me spurn me strike me down", "this outcast reviled mocked and despised fool") derives neither from Rufus nor from Freinsheim but from his own fervid imagination, and similar wording is elsewhere used of Christ.\(^7\)

Mason's *O Fons Bandusiae* is justly famous, not least for the youth of its author at the time of composition (he was fifteen). This may explain some minor

---

\(^5\) Seven of the *Collected Poems*, or just 10% of the total, have Latin titles. According to A.R.D. Fairburn, Mason "...would greet us/With some damned tag from Epictetus./ His belly was so full of Latin/He fouled the very chair he sat in." (A.R.D. Fairburn, *Collected Poems* 1966, 155.) Clearly Fairburn, though himself involved in Greek myth, was blissfully ignorant of, or perhaps indifferent to, which of the classical languages Epictetus wrote in.

\(^6\) The best is a case of treatment-by-denial in *The Lesser Stars* (*Collected*, p.30), a poem that also takes a side-swipe at Horace's *monumentum aere perennius*. Both this expression and *Non omnis moriar* are from *Odes* 3.30.

\(^7\) See, as well as *Footnote to John ii 4* discussed in the body of this paper, also *Ecce Homunculus* and *Arius Prays* (*Collected*, pp. 59 & 108).
infelicitics, though even these may be argued to add to the tone of the poem. Points worthy of note are as follows:

- "which clearer art than glass"  
  What the Romans knew as vitrum was hardly the high quality material we are familiar with today; besides, Horace (Odes 3.13) compares the spring with the shine or glitter of glass (splendidior) rather than its transparency.

- "unmixed wine"  
  Merum is indeed just this, but in a society that then scarcely consumed wine at all, and has never known the practice of diluting it, the epithet is quite superfluous, and tastes of schoolboy translationese.

- "flock"/"flocks"/"oxen"  
  The vocabulary immediately locates the poem out of New Zealand, since in NZ sheep come in mobs and goats in herds but neither in flocks (mob/herd/flock: all = grex), while draught animals, where they still exist, are horses.

- "ilex"/"silex"  
  By using these two Latin words as if they were English, Mason is promoting them to the status of technical expressions. Ilex is no less alien in NZ than holm-oak, while silex does not occur in Horace's Latin text at all.

The figure of Christ in Footnote to John ii 4 is in some respects a very untraditional one, and there is not reason why it should not be so, especially when compared with Mason's other Christocentric poems (see footnotes 4 & 7), but the tone of Footnote seems to assume a particular interpretation of the gospel text it refers to (viz. John ii 4) that owes more to anti-Marian polemic in the pre-ecumenical era than to biblical scholarship.

The text of John ii 4 has Christ say to his mother at Cana: τί εμοί κοι σοί γυναι, (woman, what do you want with me?) and was in Mason's time a favourite weapon of some Protestant Christians in the English-speaking world.
with which to attack Roman Catholic devotion to the mother of Christ. The same formula (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί) recurs at Mark 5.7 and Luke 8.28, and τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί (what do you want with us?) at Mark 1.24, Mathew 8.29, Luke 4.34; all synoptic occurrences are the context of diabolical possession.

In such a context a hostile tone is understandable, but this is not always the case in Old Testament occurrences of a similar expression in Hebrew (Judges 11.12; 2 Samuel 16.10 & 19.23, 1 Kings 17.18), and the New Testament phrase is a Hebraism rather than a genuine Greek expression. Vocative γυναι occurs addressed to Christ's mother at John 19.26, where it is obviously in no sense a reprimand, and to other women at Matthew 15.28, Luke 13.12 & 22.57, John 4.21 & 20.13, all (excepting only Luke 22.57) in contexts where no hostile or reproachful intent can possibly be imagined.

Denis Glover

Glover's most closely classics-related published poem is undoubtedly Pastoral from the Doric, written not long before Glover's death but published only after it in Islands 8.3 (October 1980), and not widely available until republished in the 'Selected' of the following year; unfortunately it came to the notice of the present writer too late for inclusion in the compilation referred to in footnote 1. Since a detailed analysis of this poem and its Greek model has recently been published in these pages,® only a summary will be given here.

Briefly, the poem purports to be a free version of Theocritus' eighth Idyll, line 53-56. The Greek poem is clearly sited in Sicily, while Glover's is indeterminate, but can easily be interpreted in a South Island vs. North Island key. The idyll is most probably not genuinely by Theocritus, and while it is in Doric the quatrain selected by Glover as his model contains only one feature (viz. accusative το) that is specifically Doric as against generally non-Auic. Glover had claimed to be attracted by the 'roll' of Doric Greek ('rolling' being a favourite concept of his®), whereas in fact this part of the idyll is in elegiac couplets and thus arguably 'rolls' less than does hexameter verse.

Glover either misses or chooses to ignore the point that the love relationship alluded to (ἀγκας ἔχων το / you in my arms) is in all likelihood homosexual in the Greek poem; this assertion rests not on the wording itself but on the probable identification of speaker and addressee of this quatrain within the poem. That said, it must be acknowledged that Glover's poem is of remarkable fidelity to the mood of the Greek, despite the lapse of nearly half a century between his termination of classical studies and his decision to take on one of the trickier idylls of Theocritus (or Pseudo-Theocritus).

® cf. p.xxiii of Allen Curnow's introduction to Denis Glover's Selected Poems.
Other relevant poems of Glover are few, involve Latin, and are basically light-hearted. *The Centennial Baths* is a parody of Horace *Odes* 3.13 (i.e. the *Fons Bandusiae* ode again), in which close correspondence cannot be expected, though Glover hits the right note with 'gleaming tiles' (for *splendidior vitro*). His 'virginal togs' are a puzzle: is it the wearer who is virginal? Or are the togs being worn, or wetted, for the first time? Horace's goat is virginal in fact but presumably not in intention (*cui frons...venerem...destinat*). 'The restless crowd in the street' - a very Gloverian expression - is a far cry from Horace's plough-weary oxen (*fessis vomere tauris*), less for reason of lexical divergence than because of its socio-political tone, common elsewhere in Glover but quite opposed to anything in the Horace who could write *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* (*Odes* 3.1.1) (I abhor the unhallowed throng and hold it aloof). A similar difference of outlook can be detected in the allusion to Horace's much-sung Sabine farm in the introductory poem (namely *Explanatory*) to the 1964 collection *Enter Without Knocking*.

Overall Glover’s picture of the Centennial Baths is a more fulsomely laudatory one than squares with memories of those baths in the decade following their construction, on the part of the present writer during a Dunedin boyhood in which swimming figured high among life’s values, and Latin poetry not at all. As for *Rome the Eternal City*, with every allowance made for the obvious levity of the poem, it is hard to find a face-saving excuse for grammatical blunders as *ultra Tiberum* or *millia*, or the misuse of *februum*, or requiring Latin *colles* to rhyme with English *follies*, though this last is more understandable for one who knew the "old" pronunciation of Latin.

*James K. Baxter*

Baxter’s explicit imitations of Latin poems nearly all concern Catullus, and most of them are contained in the section subtitled 'Words to Lay a Strong Ghost' in the posthumous *Runes* (O.U.P. 1973), but one - and that perhaps the best - is very much earlier: *Catullus at the Grave of his Brother*, written when Baxter was not quite 20. This is clearly modelled on Catullus 101, yet with two significant departures: Catullus weeps copiously for his deceased brother (*fraterno multum manantia fletu*) whereas Baxter remains dry-eyed ("my lids tearless") and Catullus' brother is cremated (*cinerem*) while Baxter's is buried ("wedded to the sand"); the latter point might be legitimate cultural transfer, but one suspects that "sand" which is hardly the best medium for burial, is more for convenience of rhyme (with "land") than anything else. More important than either is the fact that Baxter's poem is a purely literary exercise not occasioned by the loss of any member of the immediate family, whereas everything points towards Catullus' poem being a genuine funeral elegy for the death of a real, flesh-and-blood brother.

The poems "after Catullus" in *Runes* show us a very different Baxter with a very different relationship towards the Roman poet, varying from intensely human to
downright bawdy in their theme of the "black knot in the thighs" (as in *The Hollow Place*), and reaching rock bottom - if the pun may be permitted - in *The Counter-Lunch*, which takes its choice obscenity from Catullus 97. What Baxter does in these poems is to take leading themes from the *erotica* in the Catullan collection and recombine them fairly freely to suit his own purposes. Thus in most cases there is not a one-to-one correspondence of poem.

Catullus' Lesbia however has become 'Pyrrha' for Baxter, the name being one of several used by Horace for his female acquaintances, and best known from *Odes* 1.5; Baxter's *The Change-Over* draws in part on this ode, as well as on Catullus 6. However in view of the lexical meaning of the name (πυρρός = tawny, reddish, redhead) it is unfortunate that Baxter should twice allude to Pyrrha's black hair: "your black hair on my pillow" (*The Earth*), and "storm-black curls" (*The Change-Over*), even though the latter is in its own way a reformulated echo of the blackness of the storm-whipped sea in Horace's fifth ode (*aspera nigris aequora ventis*). Not all of the *Runes* subcollection are particularly successful, nor is it obvious that all of them are really "after Catullus"; if the last, namely *At the Grave of a War Hero*, is really meant to be an 'adaptation' of Catullus 101, one can only say that not only is it difficult to recognise it as such, but that it nowhere near measures up to the standard of Baxter's much earlier imitation, written half a lifetime before.

It must have been under the influence of Mason's famous poem that Baxter chose to open one of his adolescent poems, namely *The First Forgotten*, with the first three words of Horace *Odes* 3.13, namely *O fons Bandusiae!* (sic, with exclamation mark). The English poem itself has no relation whatsoever to the Latin one; it concerns the early settlement of New Zealand, and is nostalgic, wistful, interrogative, apprehensive in tone. Any resemblance that Baxter saw, or thought he saw, between Horace's poem and his own is very much on the surface: both poems concern the countryside, but that is all. Vincent O'Sullivan has commented on the poem's opening line as follows: "That Latin tag...has behind it a classical and inherited rustic ideal which Horace helped to place in the European mind as an emblem of harmony and order". This however, if true at all, is more an assertion about the reception of Horace dating from the rise of pastoralism than about Horace himself; the very fact of thinking of the address to the spring as a "tag" is indicative of this. Horace wrote no tag but a dedicatory address to the recipient of a religious rite, which is a far remove from Baxter's poem. *The First Forgotten* is not a bad poem, but could only have been improved by not being saddled with an inappropriate opening line that effectively owes more to R.A.K. Mason than it does to Horace.

---

More important than Baxter's brushes with Latin was his deep involvement with Greek myth, and at least one university thesis has been written on this topic (see footnote 2). His acquaintance with it was acquired entirely through translation, without evidence that he felt the frustration of not being able to read Greek directly; early attempts to learn Greek had failed ignominiously.11

Just one area of myth will be discussed here, though a central one, namely the legend of Odysseus. This, with numerous secondary legends deriving from it (Circe, Calypso, The Sirens, Penelope) forms the kernel of quite a number of poems. The best known, and arguably the best, of the Odysseus poems is The Homecoming, which takes the bold step of making Penelope Odysseus' mother, not his wife. The transformation is matter-of-factly discussed by John Goulter in the university thesis mentioned above, with reference to comments made by Baxter elsewhere on "the independent male and his wife, who is also very much a mother-figure", without adequately explaining why Baxter chose to make this quite radical alteration; it is not discussed by Davidson (see footnote 2). It certainly fits the poem, since its hero is destined never to marry, and fulfils the role of the country lad grown to adulthood, keeping the farm going, tasting the sale day drink and the smell of saddle leather, while his memories of wild oats sown during a brief period of sexual fulfilment linger on but remain unrepeatable, indeed unrepeatable. Thus there is something of the central figure of Farmhand in Odysseus as portrayed in this poem, though the farmhand in the poem of that name is quite innocent of sexual experience.

Other Odysseus-related poems (Odysseus, stanza 10 of Letter to Noel Ginn, Back to Ithaca) paint a similar picture of Odysseus, not without sexual experience but unable to find the contentment of 'settling down' with a single, permanent partner when he returns, as duty requires, to the "fatherless clay acres". Penelope does not appear very often: in The Sirens, where she is beset by suitors, she is clearly his wife, while in Odysseus her relationship to him remains unspecified; the wife in Back to Ithaca is presented as a figment of Odysseus' imagination whose sole function is "to brush his boots" while his soul remains "as flat and hard as a bean". We may note in passing how Baxter switches from Roman names for classical deities (Ulysses, Diana, Venus, Proserpine) to Greek ones (Odysseus, Artemis, Aphrodite, Persephone) according to no very regular pattern; names which are substantially the same in both languages generally have latinised spellings; thus Icarus, Daedalus (and not Ikaros, Daidalos). However Baxter was not entirely consistent here: both 'Ithaca' and 'Ithaka' occur, as do 'Hecate' and 'Hekate', and doubtless other doublets have been standardised by Baxter's editors: J E Weir alludes briefly to this on p.xxvi of the Collected.

More in general Baxter was not a good speller; some forms that are simply plain

---

11 In this respect he was later to feel very differently about Maori, where his inability to learn irked him considerably: see Poem for Colin II in Jerusalem Sonnets.
wrong (Anadyamone for Anadyomene; Dei Genetrix the pre-Christian spelling of the Catholic liturgical Dei Genitrix) seem to have got through Weir's net, while Weir's standardisation of icon/ikon to the 'k' form is itself dubious: is one then to write 'ikonoklasm'? Baxter's Latin expressions are indeed tags and are not always either apposite or even correct: it would seem that res habita in the Odysseus section of Letter to Noel Ginn is meant to be res habitata, since res habita (a thing had) is so vague as to be practically meaningless, while res habitata (a thing lived in/inhabited land) suits both this poem and Baxter's attitudes on "where man may live" (as in Poem in the Matukituki Valley) generally.

One other poem by Baxter deserves mention. Seraphion is not one of the better known poems, and concerns a topic little known to most New Zealanders. Baxter may be pardoned for not being informed in detail about the monasteries of Mt. Athos, or the Orthodox Church, but in fact the poem contains several factual inaccuracies. Kneeling is not a common posture in Orthodox devotion, nor is flagellation practised, not even on the Holy Mountain. The hermits of the south end of the peninsula are indeed isolated, lonely souls but happily enjoy each other's company as often as the occasion arises, and indeed that of the quite numerous visitors, including the present writer, who make their way there. Their kellia, while hardly luxurious, are not quite as simple or as stark as Baxter would have us believe ("a stone couch, one ikon and a lamp"), and the ban on female animals, though once enacted, is today ignored; cats in particular are commonly bred by hermit-monks. The ban on women is however enforced, and rumours therefore circulate, but the temptations of Seraphion should not be allowed to create the impression that homosexual practice is widespread; a large number of personal contacts in situ on the part of the present writer do not support this contention. The poem is in any case about events in the mind, or the soul, not in the body; the protagonist's past on the other hand is clearly another matter.

Fleur Adcock

A study of how the linguistic training imparted by the study of Greek and Latin has influenced Fleur Adcock's style and diction is outside the scope of this paper, and would indeed be a paper in itself. However, there is influence of a more pedestrian kind in that some poems concern not just themes from the ancient world but also the study of classical languages as such. One of these, Purple Shining Lilies, gives a brief lesson in nuances of colour words in Latin, and in particular luteus, ater, albus, candidus, and purpureus are dealt with, while the reference to Chloreus (=priest of Cybele) clad in "rust and shell-fish" (ferrugine clarus et ostro: Verg. Aen. 11.772) conveys the welcome message that the latter
half of the Aeneid is still read by New Zealanders. Most colour terms are accurately described: thus *aer* is 'grim', *albus* is 'thick and eggy' (in modern Italian although 'white' is *bianco*, 'egg-white' is *albume*), while *candidus* is likened to the incandescence of a candle-flame. The comment on *luteus* ('with its vaguely medical air') is however a little puzzling, and one could be tempted to wonder whether Adcock had not confused the colour word (*luteus*) with the word for 'muddy' (*luteus*), since the Romans knew mud to have medicinal properties; the poet has however assured the present writer that she had in mind the medical term *corpus luteum* (egg-yolk) where the vowel is long. Thus the thick eggy whiteness of *albus* is matched by the viscous eggy yellowness of *luteus* as in Pliny N.H. 30.141.

*Purpureus* is more difficult; the actual hue covers anything from scarlet (which Adcock gives) through purple (which she rejects) to tawny, brown or even black, which she does not mention in this place (but see below). In fact the Latin word implies a gleam as well as a hue, and while this is not stated in the exposition contained within the poem it is implicit in its last line, which also provides the title: lilies are 'purple' because they shine.

One other poem containing a 'language lesson' is entitled *Declensions*, in which Dr William Smith's First Greek Course is opened at the chapter on third declension nouns. However it transpires that in the three "antique model sentences" given for translation into Greek only a minority of the nouns contained (at most, three out of seven) are readily translated by third declension nouns in Greek: those for *vine, husbandman, citizen* and *entrance* are all first or second declension: *άμπελος γεωργός πολίτης είσοδος*; further, all but one of them have peculiarities of gender rather than of declension.

It is of course possible that Adcock is simply reproducing a non-sequitur contained in the textbook itself, or even that the "antique model sentences" are taken from another chapter. The tone of "antique model sentences" rings true: ancient land workers were not, it seems, farmers but 'husbandmen', while it seems that urban agitators engaged in 'strife and faction' rather than demonstrations or riots.

Adcock has produced two fine renderings of Propertius, though their enumeration as originally published is misleading: they comprise the poems known since E.A. Barber's 1953 O.C.T. edition as 2.11 and 2.26a. The latter of these is interesting for another reason, in view of remarks on *Purple Shining Lilies* above. Propertius' poem contains four colour expressions, two of them involving words discussed in *Purple Shining Lilies*. These are *purpureus* used of seawater (*qualem purpureis agitatam fluctibus Hellen*), and *candidus* used of the

---

12 A study of books 7-12 of the Aeneid by K W Gransden (C.U.P. 1984) carries the title *Virgil's Iliad*. If students of Homer do not limit themselves to the Odyssey, why should devotees of Vergil read only books 1, 2, 4 & 6 of the Aeneid?
Nymph Nesaea (candida Nesae, contrasted with caerula Cymothoe). Purpureis fluctibus is rendered as "the dark waters" without transmitting either the winy darkness of those waters (Homer's 'wine-dark' sea) or the glint of light on them that the Latin adjective implies: the 'shine' rightly alluded to in Purple Shining Lilies. Nesaea in Adcock's version is "pale"; while a candle-flame may also be so described, this is not the point of the comparison in the earlier-mentioned poem, where it is the glow implied by candidus that matters. Clearly there are limits, not of Adcock's making, as to how faithful any verse translation can be.

Another Propertius-related poem, now known as Note on Propertius, opens Fleur Adcock's Selected Poems of 1983. Of interest here is the fact that it was originally published as Note on Propertius 1.5 (the first book of Propertius is free of the problems of enumeration alluded to above), but that while the opening lines do indeed recall that poem in their mention of the locked-out tear-sodden would-be lover (= theme of the 'paraclausithyron'), most of the rest of the poem is unrelated to 1.5 in particular; there are several echoes of 1.3 as regards the play of moonlight ("Plenty of moonlight entered that high room"/donec diversas praecurrens luna fenestras), the fear of a hostile awakening ("Her waking...with less idyllic themes", "Then gently roused her sleeping mouth to curses"/expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae), the gift of apples ("until the poet tumbled in with apples"/nunc furtiva cavis poma dabam manibus) and even, implicitly, the poet's drunkenness ("brought from a party...wine-scented roses"/ebria cum multo traherem vestigia Baccho...hac Amor hac Liber, durus uterque deus), while the ending, rather more cheerful than most of Propertius, is more reminiscent of a love encounter described by Ovid in his well known love elegy beginning Aestus erat, and it may be no coincidence that this poem has long been numbered 1.5 in Ovid's Amores.

Variations on a Theme of Horace is Adcock's one poem of note with roots in Horace (Acris Hiems has a Horatian title, but is quite un-Horatian, and either ignores or misses the point that Horace's Odes 1.4 is concerned with the disappearance of winter: solvitur acris hiems) and - whether intentionally or not - is arguably rather unfair to the Roman poet, who is portrayed as a "timid enjoyer", almost (though not quite) to be despised. Adcock's poem does not directly state that the clear, cold man impervious to Moorish bows or marauding wolves is in fact Horace himself, nor that it is the same poem of Horace (Odes 1.22) that presents both this self-portrait and Lalage, who is mentioned as "his Lalage", though she occurs only here; the Lalage of Odes 2.5 is not the same girl, and is the sweetheart of another man. Adcock's "slings and arrows" are clearly Shakespearian rather than Horatian, but her "needn't fear" derives from neither Shakespeare nor Horace, though (perhaps only fortuitously) it rather resembles a common mistranslation of misunderstanding of the Roman poet; what Horace actually writes is that the upright man has no need of (non eget) weapons to defend himself, as the body of the poem then goes on to illustrate with the story of the Wolf that Ran Away.
Further, Adcock’s line "on whom the dreaded tree never did quite fall" rather suggests that a tree known to be dangerous never actually fell, whereas the tree of *Odes* 2.13 did indeed fall, though it missed the poet. Of course straight translation is not Adcock’s objective, and her poem is precisely *Variations on a Theme of Horace*. That Horace was an "enjoyer" is undoubted, though whether either his enjoyment or his person can be called "timid" is less obvious and must contend with the tone of *Odes* 1.17, 1.27, 1.37, 2.6, 2.16 and the first six poems of book 3 (the 'Roman Odes'), among others. There is a quiet retiring Epicurean side to Horace, but it is not the whole picture, and what modern readers can easily assume to be timidity or complacency also had a moral and religious dimension, visible not only in *Odes* 1.22 itself but also in 1.17 (*di me tuentur, dis pietas mea...cordi est*) (the gods protect me, to the gods my devotion is dear) 1.34 (*Parcus deorum cultor...iterare cursus cogor relictos*) (I, a stingy worshipper of the gods am compelled to retrace the course I had abandoned), 2.17 (where the Tree That Missed is ascribed to Faunus), and doubtless elsewhere.

Quite apart from counter-evidence in the Odes, a reading of the Epodes and Satires in particular can help to redress the balance in the formation of a total picture of Horace. The Sabine farm has been overplayed; Horace’s very attachment to it serves as an indication of his basically urban mentality, since country dwellers are seldom country lovers, and cf. the opening of Horace’s *Ep.* 1.10 or the close of Baxter’s *Poem in the Matukituki Valley*. While Adcock’s poem is indeed about 'variations' on a theme of Horace, namely the preoccupation with death, it is not obvious that this topic must necessarily be morbid, nor that the unnamed subject of the central part of the poem (whose portrayal is morbid) shares Horace’s attitudes towards either life in general, or its inevitable end.

More extensive than anything based on Latin is Fleur Adcock’s quite substantial contribution to *The Greek Anthology* edited by Peter Jay, published by Allen Lane (Penguin) in 1973. The work is subtitled "A Selection in Modern Verse Translations" and thus, unlike much of the work discussed hitherto, does lay claim to providing translations of selections from the Palatine (or 'Greek') Anthology. Adcock’s versions comprise verse translations of thirty-one Greek poems, mostly by Marcus Argentarius, though five are by Leonidas of Tarentum, two by Moero by Byzantium and one by Agathias Scholasticus. She has a near-monopoly of Marcus Argentarius, as out of twenty-five poems rendered only two versions are by another hand, and she well captures the various moods, mostly both vigorous and smutty, with which he entertained, or was entertained by, his girlfriends, as well as a number of the non-erotic pieces. Particularly successful among these are (Palatine Anthology references throughout) 5.32, 5.89, 5.113, 5.116, 7.403, 10.18, also the two Moero poems (6.119, 6.189), and of Leonidas 7.452 and 7.657.

Some minor criticisms however mar even these: the name Cleomynus in 6.119 is a misspelling (or misprint?) for Cleonymus, and "on the flowing surface" quite misrepresents βένθη, which means 'depths', and is correctly rendered in
7.395 as "ocean...bed". The opening word of 5.113 (νεφάσθης) is passive; Adcock's "You loved Menophila" conceals the point, which is central to the poem, that that love was then reciprocal, μύρον καὶ τερπνὸν "Adonis in the same poem is rendered by a hendiadys as "Honey, Darling, and Sweetheart" but the magic of the name Adonis, and the association between its owner and μύρθη (Adonis' mother was Myrrha) is thereby lost.

Menophila figures again in 5.116, but it is doubtful whether "her brother" adequately represents the girl's name with masculine termination (Μηνόφιλον), not only because of the unlikelihood of siblings with names differing only in gender, but also because such an expression presupposes a sodomitic interpretation of the poem, which is not in fact the only possible one.

Outside this delicate area κυάνεον ύδωρ in 7.384 is poorly given as "muddy water"; the word κυάνεος means 'dark blue', and is used of water to describe the colour of the deep sea at Eur. Iph. Taur.7 (κυανέαν ἀλά), and by extension at Hom. Od. 12.242-3 (γαῖα φάνεσκε ψάμμα κυανή); the point of the word is the clarity and azure quality of the 'deep blue sea', blue precisely because it is deep and clear.

In the same poem of Leonidas, "husband-murderer like me" misses part of the point of παρθένιον γὰρ ἀπώλεσα, since παρθένιος is presumably 'husband still virginal' (the speaker compares herself with the daughters of Danaus, who killed their husbands on their wedding night), though the word used as a noun can also mean 'first husband' as at Plut. Pompey 74, or 'son of an unmarried woman' as at Hom.II. 16.180.

In the matter of Greek proper names Adcock opts on the whole for latinised spellings: Lysidice, Bacchus, Priapus, Callaescharus, Cleanthes, Zeno, Psyllus, but on occasion prefers Greek ones: Mousonios, Euboulos, while Cleitagoras and Heracles are surely neither fish nor fowl and should be either Clitagoras & Hercules, or Kleitagoras & Herakles. Where names for deities differ substantially, Greek ones are used: Aphrodite (covering both Αφροδήτη and Κύρης), Bacchus (=Βάκχος, Βρόμιος and Διόνυσος), Persephone and Zeus.

13 μύρον καὶ τερπνὸν" Adonis in Marcus Argentarius is itself a hendiadys, if that poet had in mind Bion 1.78 τὸ σὸν μύρον ὀλεττόνιος. So is Adcock presenting us here with a hendiadreis?

14 Despite a brief allusion to Adonis' father (91: τὸν νιέα τῷ Κινέραο), Bion does not mention his mother, presumably because of the shameful (because incestuous) circumstances of his birth. The begetting, birth, love life and death of Adonis are described at length in Ovid, Met. 10.298-739.

15 A more innocent interpretation of 5.116 seems at least as likely as the common one, in that its ideal is expressly εἰς φιλήν σεμνός...νόεσ, and the advice is presented as a remedy (φάρμακον) against homosexual desires. Support is also found in 5.54 (=Dioscorides), where the relationship is heterosexual from the beginning.
There remarks are not meant to be exhaustive, nor are the four poets dealt with the only ones. Other names are J E Weir ("Six Epigrams from the Greek Anthology" in *The Iron Bush*) and C K Stead ("Clodian Songbook" in *Geographies*). John Davidson\(^{16}\) has remarked how Catullus and Horace are "alive and well and living in New Zealand"; this study has confirmed that but shown that it is not the whole truth, as other poets of the ancient world are also in evidence. There are however gaps, of which the most notable is surely Vergil, though he is not altogether unrepresented (see footnote 1). Richard Mulgan\(^{17}\) has acutely pointed out how classical studies in New Zealand are taking or rather have already taken a turn away from the British model towards that of Germanic scholarship or (within the English-speaking world) that of North America, but insofar as New Zealanders still regard themselves as in some sense British there is an appositeness in the study and imitation of Vergil in New Zealand, at once the Ausonia and the Ultima Thule of nineteenth-century Oxbridge-educated colonial administrators, and recognizable (with due allowance for imagination) in Vergil's First Eclogue, lines 64-66:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros} \\
\text{pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen} \\
\text{et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.}
\end{align*}
\]

But we must leave here, some for thirsty Africa \\
others for Scythia and Oaxes' chalky flood \\
And the Britanni quite cut off from the whole world.

\((\text{Guy Lee})\)

\(^{16}\) In the first paragraph of the second of Davidson's articles mentioned in footnote 2: *Catullus, Horace and Baxter*, 86.

\(^{17}\) 'Reflections on a non-British Classicist' in *Essays in Honour of Agathe Thornton*, Department of Classics, University of Otago, 1985.