

# MUSAE ANGLICANAE:

A HISTORY OF ANGLO-LATIN POETRY

1500-1925

BY

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"Forsan iudices nos operam haud inutilius collocare,  
qui recentiora scripta publici juris facimus, quam editores  
isti, qui quotidie veterum lectiones recudant, vexantque, et  
de rebus leviculis minutiisque acerrime contendunt."

*Examen poeticum duplex*, 1698

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## PREFACE

THIS BOOK is an attempt to give a reasonably concise account of one section of the very extensive literature in the Latin language produced in Europe during the three centuries following the revival of the classics. I have had constantly before me the need of supplying information about a little-known field to those scholars and students who wish to approach this subject. Critical judgments I have tried to work in by the way, but they have not been the main purpose of the work. Until we have more studies in the Latin literature of the other European countries, such as are supplied in part by Georg Ellinger's volumes on neo-Latin verse in the German Renaissance, and know more about the extent to which such literature circulated outside of the country in which it was produced, we shall not be able to judge intelligently the works of individual writers. By miscellaneous reading in the immense field of Continental Latin poetry I have managed occasionally to indicate influences and connections. On the other hand, I have constantly felt the handicap of having to work on the writers in England without any adequate account of the general background to rely upon. If this work should in any degree assist the labors of scholars working in Continental Latin literature, it will have served at least one useful purpose.

I am painfully aware that in a pioneer work of this scope there must probably be many errors which a longer consideration of the subject or a fuller knowledge of classical literature might have corrected. Nevertheless, I feel that the elusive dream of perfection, of writing such a history as would answer all my own doubts and questions, must perforce be put aside in favor of the practical need to satisfy the desire now being expressed for guides and bibliographies of neo-Latin literature. Had any classical scholar shown an inclination to deal with my subject, I should only too gladly have retired in his favor; but so far as I know, the interest in this literature is restricted, with a few notable exceptions, to students of the modern languages. Finally, as an American, I feel especial trepidation in dealing with a subject so intimately connected with the English public schools and universities. Here again I can only plead the excuse that no English scholar appeared to be in the field.

A word is necessary about the treatment of the texts in my quotations.

I have preserved the original spelling of my sources, since it often varies from the standardized forms now in use and throws interesting light on the usages of the different periods covered. For instance, double consonants frequently occur where they are not now used, and the medieval practice of equating *e*, *ae*, and *oe* continues in many authors to the end of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, many poets used archaic spellings which probably reflect their interest in the language of early inscriptions. Punctuation I have changed only where it was necessary to make the sense clear. I have corrected obvious misprints, but have not made any effort to correct metrically imperfect lines unless the correction was one which would at once recommend itself to any reader as having been the author's intention. I have omitted the accents which are found in many early books, because, with the exception of the circumflex, I have been unable to satisfy myself as to their purpose. Usually they contribute nothing to an understanding of the text.

One of the pleasantest parts of any piece of extended research is the contacts one makes with other scholars. In the course of this work I have profited by the cordial interest and assistance of so many people that I cannot hope to mention them all here. A number of them will appear in the footnotes. To a few my debt is so considerable that I cannot forbear to mention them at greater length. To Professor Tucker Brooke I owe my first introduction to Anglo-Latin poetry in a course in the Yale Graduate School. Since that time he has constantly encouraged and assisted me in my work, has read all of the chapters in manuscript, and has read the proof. In particular, he called my attention to the importance of William Gager's poems and allowed me to use the material in his forthcoming edition of Gager's works. Professor John W. Spaeth has also read all of my book in manuscript and has saved me from many errors in the Latin texts. To the members of the department of Greek and Latin at Brown, past and present, I am immeasurably grateful for the cheerful patience and generosity with which they have answered my many calls for help. Without their aid this book could not have been written. Professor Richmond P. Bond not only read my manuscript but gave me richly of his counsel during many long talks when he and I were sharing the rigors of a New Haven winter. To Dr. L. W. Sharp, of the Edinburgh University Library, I owe much information derived from the manuscript resources of that library. His interest in my work added much to the chapters on the Scottish poets. Finally, in the field of rare books and bibliography, I count it a

special blessing that near the beginning of my work I made the acquaintance of Mr. William A. Jackson, whose aid has enriched the following pages in many places.

Largely through the interest of my former chief, the late Professor Lindsay T. Damon, an arrangement was made in 1933 with Brown University whereby I was granted leave of absence to spend half a year in England gathering material. To his memory and to the University I return grateful thanks for this important opportunity. Yale University, by the award of a Sterling Fellowship, made it possible for me to devote the year of 1937-1938 to finishing the writing of the book. It is especially gratifying to me that the university from which I graduated and the university with which I have now been associated for fourteen years should both have assisted in the carrying out of my work. Its publication by the Modern Language Association has been made possible by a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies.

I wish to thank the Oxford University Press for allowing me to quote from A. D. Godley's *Reliquiae*, the Cambridge University Press for permission to quote from A. B. Ramsey's *Inter Lilia* and *Ros Rosarum*, and Elkin Mathews and Marrot, Ltd., for permission to quote from Lionel Johnson's *Poetical Works*. I am also indebted to the Macmillan Company, American agents for the last two publishers, for permission to quote from Ramsay and Johnson.

I cannot close these acknowledgments without recording my debt to the succession of scholars and antiquarians of the past whose libraries have found their way into the Bodleian, where most of my own research was done. Again and again, sitting in the same room where they had sat, I found myself making use of the collections and annotations of men who had striven in their own day to make available the knowledge of the past, and, called to their reward, had left their books for the encouragement of later men. It is comforting at the present moment to reflect upon the continuity of scholarship and upon the humanizing touch lent to research by this contact with those who have gone before us. The scholar as well as the poet may, in his humble way, say of himself "non omnis moriar."

*Brown University*  
*August 21, 1940*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

TO MANY, even in academic circles, the production of a volume of some four hundred pages on the history of Anglo-Latin poetry will seem the height of pedantry. What useful purpose can be served, they will ask, by raking up the dull classical imitations of second-rate scholars of the past or the juvenile productions of schoolboys forced to the unnatural task of fitting long and short syllables into metrical schemes unknown to their native tongue? And in the present state of knowledge on this subject no intelligent person can be blamed for asking such a question, for of course if the writers of Anglo-Latin poetry had been mainly second-rate scholars or precocious schoolboys there would indeed be no excuse for a serious examination of their efforts. The object of the present book is to show that men of all sorts wrote Latin verse, that much of it was not dull, and that, far from being an unnatural literary occupation, the writing of such verse was a reasonable product of their education and the literary atmosphere in which they lived. Not only was Latin verse written by learned poets like Milton and Gray, but also by men like Crashaw and Marvell and Calverley, and by men like Thomas Watson and Mark Alexander Boyd, who would as soon draw a sword in a quarrel as take up a pen to indite a poem.

The charge that these writings have no value of their own because they are mere imitations of classical models will not stand comparison with the facts. Even in the Renaissance, when the doctrine of imitation was at its height, poets can easily be found like Sannazaro, Buchanan, or Watson, who were much more affected by contemporary literary fashions than by classical works and were expressing their own feelings or interests in their Latin verse. Milton was greatly attracted in his youth by Ovid, yet his poems in the Ovidian manner are extremely personal and characteristic of Milton himself. The same relation may be found in the eighteenth century between Alsop's odes and Horace's. That age, in fact, saw the appearance of a whole body of Latin poetry completely English in its content and spirit. In recent times the depreciation of neo-Latin verse can readily be explained by the fact that this

verse has so often been approached by classical scholars who were interested in it only as an illustration of the reputation and *Nachleben* of the Roman poets. The professional interest of these scholars in vocabulary and metrics has led them to seize upon every variation from classical standards as a heinous fault if found in a Renaissance or modern poet, whereas they would regard similar variations in an ancient writer as interesting "exceptions." Thus their attitude usually prevents them from approaching a body of material such as we are to treat in this book with an eye to its independent worth as poetry in its own right. No doubt an excellent history of Anglo-Latin poetry could be written from their point of view, a history which would have great significance for classical scholars, and for English scholars too, but it would be a history of the extension of the Latin language and of the Latin classics into modern times. What is proposed here, on the other hand, is to treat Anglo-Latin poetry as a branch of the literature of England and to try to assess its value as such. Mr. Tillyard has already shown the way in his treatment of Milton's Latin poems, especially when he remarks, after quoting lines 57-61 of *Epitaphium Damonis*, "the last four words may not be good Latin, but they certainly are good poetry."<sup>1</sup>

Even a slight knowledge of the classical education offered by the English schools from the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century is sufficient to refute the objection that there was anything unnatural or unusual in the writing of Latin verse by those who had completed the curriculum with a fair degree of success. Latin verse had always been taught in medieval Europe, and certain meters, such as the hexameter and the elegiac couplet, had never entirely dropped out of use. In this respect the English schools, after the Norman conquest at any rate, would not have differed from those of the Continent. In the Renaissance, however, two things happened to the study of Latin: first, an insistence on the classical purity of the tongue as against the medieval forms previously in use; and second, a much fuller and more reverential study of the classical Latin poets, some of whom had only recently been recovered. Great attention was given to speaking and writing classical Latin, with the result that neo-Latin drama and neo-Latin poetry were developed and encouraged by educators. To this end the teaching of the composition of Latin verse began in most schools with the fourth or fifth form; but long before this the young schoolboy had had his ears accustomed to the movement of the hexameter, for most of the Latin

<sup>1</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton* (London, 1930), p. 101.



grammars were composed largely in verse to aid in memorizing their contents. For instance, in Lilly's *Brevissima institutio, seu ratio grammatices cognoscendae*, first composed with Erasmus' aid for use in St. Paul's School and generally used in England for more than two hundred years, the rules for the gender of nouns and for the conjugations of verbs are set forth in verse. The first of these, beginning

Propria quae maribus tribuuntur, mascula dicas:  
 Ut sunt divorum: Mars, Bacchus, Apollo; virorum,  
 Ut Cato, Virgilius; fluviorum, ut Tybris, Orontes;  
 Mensium, ut October; ventorum, ut Libs, Notus, Auster.

has stuck so firmly in the memories of generations of Englishmen that casual references to its phrases are common. When the boys had mastered the rules of grammar and elementary prosody, they were set to composing verse-themes with the aid of various dictionaries of synonyms and epithets. The most famous of these, used everywhere in England after its appearance on the Continent in 1687, was Paul Aler's *Gradus ad Parnassum*.<sup>2</sup> Other aids to composition were volumes like the *Synopsis communium locorum*, published at Oxford in 1700, in which excerpts from the Latin poets, both ancient and modern, were arranged under various moral and sententious headings.<sup>3</sup> By the eighteenth century the amount of original verse composition required of the upper forms was so great that it astonishes a modern student. At Eton the sixth form had to compose each week not less than ten elegiac couplets, one four-line epigram, and a poem of five or six stanzas in one of the lyric meters.<sup>4</sup> The verse-tasks at Westminster and Winchester varied from this in character only, not in amount. We must not forget that while this training was going on the boys were of course being thoroughly soaked in the works of the Roman poets. The great public schools generally took their pupils through Vergil, Ovid, Horace, parts of Catullus and Martial, and a few modern poets such as Baptista Mantuan. The study of these authors included detailed attention to their striking phrases and poetical ornaments, which the students were required to note care-

<sup>2</sup> I cite the *Gradus* because of its fame. There were many earlier works of this sort. See the list in Appendix C of D. C. Allen's *Francis Meres' Treatise "Poetrie"*, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XVI (Urbana, Ill., 1933).

<sup>3</sup> An earlier *Loci communes*, which I have not seen, was published in London in 1583. See Allen's list, referred to in preceding note.

<sup>4</sup> H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *History of Eton College*, 4th edition (London, 1911), pp. 311-312.

fully. The more ambitious boys kept commonplace books in which these things were put down for future borrowing or imitation. In addition to the regular school tasks, other verses were required from the upper forms on special occasions during the year such as New Year's Day, All Saints' Day, and Guy Fawkes' Day. These occasions were particularly numerous at Eton,<sup>5</sup> but the custom was in use everywhere. Usually there was a competitive element involved, the best specimens being awarded some kind of prize or distinction.

This system of education, which held sway in England for three centuries, was doubtless a thorn in the flesh of many students, but it was well designed to produce an uncommon facility in the use of the Latin language by any promising boy. All his training in literature, both reading and writing, was in Latin or Greek, and he came to regard the expression of his own thoughts in Latin as quite natural, even though at first it was attended with some difficulty. He found also that excellence in Latin verse was one of the most direct ways to the favor of the masters and to academic rewards and advancements. This was true in the university as well as in the public schools, for tutors regularly assigned verses to be composed, and on public occasions, such as the Acts at both universities and the Encaenia at Oxford, skill at such composition brought distinction to the author. Best of all was the prospect of publication in one of the anthologies published by the universities to celebrate royal births, marriages, accessions, and deaths. It must always be remembered, however, that the public schools were the real source and cause of the existence of Anglo-Latin poetry as an active branch of English literature for three centuries. A large majority of the poets discussed in the following pages received their education at Eton, Westminster, Winchester, or the Charterhouse. The extraordinary influence of the first two is evident from Elizabethan times onward, although it did not reach the highest point until the eighteenth century. The Westminster method of teaching the epigram even seems to have produced a definite school of Latin poets at that time.<sup>6</sup>

This intensive training in school and university not only produced Latin poets; it produced also a body of potential readers whose education had prepared them to appreciate fine points of classical style. If we admit that the learning of many graduates may have been imperfect, such men were at any rate interested in verses written by their former school-

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell-Lyte, *op. cit.*, pp. 145, 146, 152, 496.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 281 ff. and 268 ff.

mates in a language intimately associated with their school days. The popularity of the Westminster, Eton, and Oxford collections shows that these forces operated, especially in the eighteenth century. Until the latter half of the seventeenth century very few books of Latin verse printed in Great Britain had reached second editions. John Owen's popularity was quite exceptional. After 1660 the educated reading public grew rapidly. Cowley's *Poemata* went through two editions, and Newport's *Votum candidum* reached four. This, nevertheless, is as nothing compared to the sales of Holdsworth's satire, *Muscipula*, which went through five editions in Latin and four in English translations during the year of its appearance, 1709, not to mention later printings. The willingness of Edmund Curll, notorious piratical publisher in the early eighteenth century, to include a number of volumes of Latin verse in his output is the best possible evidence that such literary wares were popular and commercially successful. A little later Vincent Bourne's poems established an enviable record. First printed in 1734, they had by 1840 achieved eleven editions. The *De animi immortalitate* of Bourne's contemporary, Isaac Hawkins Browne, attained five editions between 1754 and 1833. These figures, and others which might be compiled from the chronological list of titles at the end of this book, show conclusively that Latin verse was not an obscure, esoteric movement in England, but a recognized part of English literature, appealing to a considerable body of readers.

The relation of this poetry to the classics was two-fold. Modern Latinists found in the classics models of style on the one hand and models of kinds of poetry on the other. Writers of epic, pastoral, or amatory verse had before them the distinguished precedents of Vergil, Ovid, and Catullus. Epigrammatists looked back to Catullus and Martial; expository poets to Vergil and Lucretius. For odes Horace was almost the only Roman example. When modern poets turned their attention to subjects not treated by the ancients, they were constrained to find models in the vernacular literatures of their own time or to create a fresh tradition, as happened in the poetry of country life and sports in England. But in treating these new subjects the poet was expected to maintain a style based upon classical usage and idiom. As a storehouse of style, Vergil was by far the favorite, with Ovid second and Horace third. At least one gets this impression after reading the works of the Anglo-Latin poets; no statistics have ever been compiled. As a model for imitation in the kinds of poetry and in subject matter Ovid took first

place. He offered inspiration for love-poets, for narrative writers, and for letter-writers (whether personal or heroic). These categories appealed to a wide range of poetical talent, whereas Vergil was imitated only by pastoral and epic poets and by the few who undertook scientific exposition. This latter field he was to share with Lucretius, particularly in more recent times. Catullus and Martial exerted an extensive influence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but since then they have not been widely imitated except in occasional borrowings of phraseology. Horace did not come into his own among Anglo-Latin poets until the end of the seventeenth century. From then on he was one of the great influences, both on ode-writers and on composers of dialogues and satires. Ausonius, a fourth-century poet little regarded today, seems to have been well known in the Renaissance. His poem on the Moselle was probably a precedent for the river-poems of Leland and Camden, and his two series of epigrams, on the Caesars and on heroes, served as models for Scaliger, John Johnston, and Arthur Johnston.

Until the nineteenth century most admirers of Latin verse in England had some acquaintance with the neo-Latin poets of the Continent as well as with the classics. In the sixteenth century the eclogues of Baptista Mantuan were taught in the schools, but other Italian Latin poets were known to more mature readers. Chief among these were Pontano, Sannazaro, and Vida. Also some copies of Gruter's great collection, *Delitiae CC. Italorum poetarum*, published in Frankfort in 1608, must have reached England. In 1684 Francis Atterbury issued his collection of the principal Italo-Latin poets under the title 'Ἀνθολογία, sive poemata selecta Italorum, a volume whose popularity was attested by new editions with minor changes in 1744 and 1808. Of the Franco-Latin poets not so many were read in England. Only Beza, probably because of his prominence as a champion of Protestantism, had a considerable circulation there. Of the others, one finds occasional references to the Latin poems of Jean du Bellay, Nicolas Bourbon, and Jean Bonefons. In the eighteenth century Cardinal Polignac's *Anti-Lucretius* attracted a good deal of attention in England. The Dutch Latinists were better known. Joannes Secundus had a great vogue among readers of amatory verse, but later, more serious poets, such as Heinsius, Grotius, and the two Douzas, were also read across the Channel. Of the Germans only Conrad Celtis and Eobanus Hessus attracted attention, and they were apparently known only to men like Leland and Watson who had studied abroad. On the other hand, Casimir Sarbiewski, the Polish Latin poet, was widely read and highly admired. Most of these Continental writers had

little direct influence on the Latin poetry produced in England. Pontanus, both in his *Urania* and in his miscellaneous poems, was of real importance, as were the piscatory eclogues of Sannazaro and the single marine eclogue of Grotius. The example of Joannes Secundus' *Basia* must have been significant, but it is difficult to disentangle it from the general influence of Catullus. Vida's *Ludus scacchiae*, on the game of chess, certainly inspired a passage in Watson and probably was known to the writers of poems on games and sports in the latter part of the seventeenth century. All of these, of course, are scattered connections. No new tradition in Latin verse was created by any of these poets. The nearest approach was Sannazaro's invention of a new sort of eclogue, the piscatory, in which the pastoral conventions were given a new setting. After his pioneer example it was an easy step to extend the field from fishermen to sailors and to vinegrowers.<sup>7</sup>

The influence of Greek poetry on Anglo-Latin writers, though small compared to that of Latin, was not unimportant. It is found mainly in the field of the epigram and the lyric, and secondarily in the mock heroic and the irregular ode. In the pastoral, Theocritus hardly counts, although Landor cited him as one of the precedents for his heroic idylls, because the Renaissance pastoral was a direct descendant of the personal-allegorical convention established by Vergil. Of all Greek writings the Anthology exerted the greatest and most pervasive influence on neo-Latin poets.<sup>8</sup> The variety of material contained in it offered an appeal to many sorts of minds, with the result that translations and borrowings crop up in all places and at all times. In the Renaissance it was, however, especially popular, as the examples of More and Leech, to name only two, amply show. Here, as in other cases, we find the same situation in the vernacular literatures of the period as in the Latin writings. In the epic there is little direct imitation of Homer, for almost all the Homeric elements could be had more conveniently at second hand in Vergil. On the other hand, the pseudo-Homeric *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* was the unique source and example of the mock-heroic poem. Though it was often translated into Latin as an exercise by young poets in the Renaissance, it assumes a much greater importance to us as the prototype of the prolific burlesque poetry of the Augustan age in England.<sup>9</sup> Finally

<sup>7</sup> See the discussions of John Leech and Phineas Fletcher.

<sup>8</sup> For the use of the Anthology in Italy see J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the year 1800*, Cornell Studies in English, XXIII (Ithaca, 1935).

<sup>9</sup> See R. P. Bond, *English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750*, Harvard Studies in English, VI (Cambridge, 1932).

there remains the influence of the Greek choral odes on the irregular Latin verse of the seventeenth century. Here the poets seem to have turned to Greek models for examples of freedom from rigid metrical and stanzaic patterns which were not to be found in Latin verse. This incentive to metrical variety, although not the most important Greek contribution to Anglo-Latin poetry, is by far the most interesting.

In the use of meters, curiously enough, the Anglo-Latin poets showed much more variety than did the Romans. The verse-forms of classical Latin poetry were an importation from the Greek. The hexameter and the elegiac couplet became completely domesticated in Rome, but the lyric meters were never used with any enthusiasm except by Horace and Catullus. The same statement might be made about England during the sixteenth century, since with a few exceptions the Latin poets of that period seem to have found the lyric forms too difficult to handle easily. But in the succeeding periods the increased efficiency of the teaching of Latin verse in the schools removed this obstacle. Although all the commoner lyric meters were used with considerable frequency during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the sapphic and alcaic stanzas found particular favor with Anglo-Latin writers. These two forms became exceedingly common and were written with great facility. Indeed, throughout the whole time covered by this book some of the finest achievements have been in the field of the ode. Since all the metrical forms used can be found in any complete Latin grammar or in any college edition of Horace, it is not necessary to give examples of their scansion here. In regard to the length of syllables in Latin words the practice of poets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often differed from modern practice. Although such differences were sometimes merely the result of negligence or ignorance, they were often caused by errors in the reference books then used and by the lack of the more accurate knowledge of quantities which several centuries of research have provided for scholars today. Modern readers of Anglo-Latin verse have a very superior attitude in this matter, which often causes them to assume that the poet is at fault without making a careful study of the passage. In most cases the poet's acquaintance with the classics was much wider than that of the modern reader and his work is entitled to some respect.

The relation of Anglo-Latin poetry to English poetry is quite as interesting as its relation to the classics and is more important. Since no writer escapes entirely from his environment, we find that in general

Latin verse written during any given period has a great similarity to the English verse. It is true that in the early sixteenth century, when the English language was still in a state of change, Latin poets achieved creditable results earlier than those who wrote in the vernacular. More's Latin epigrams are superior in their command over style to any English verse of his time. Nevertheless, by the time we reach the end of the century the Ovidian school of Latin poets was matched by the English Ovidians, and the English epigrammatists appeared on the scene simultaneously with their brothers who wrote in Latin. With minor exceptions this parallelism continued until the early nineteenth century. As the Renaissance theory of imitation of the classics gradually wore off during the seventeenth century we find Anglo-Latin poetry becoming more and more characteristically English. This trend reached its height in the eighteenth century. In that period the prevalence of satire and mock-heroic, the cultivation of Horatian elegance, and the growing vogue of moral and philosophic verse all invite direct comparison between English and Latin poems. Furthermore, in the works of Addison, Alsop, Bourne, and some of their minor contemporaries we have a larger body of excellent poetry in Latin than can be found in any other period of English literary history. Thus the age of Swift and Pope, which we have been accustomed to call the Augustan age, was even more deserving of that title than we have previously realized. It may, indeed, be regarded as the golden age of neo-Latin poetry in England. Then, more than at any other time, did the Latin poets most truly catch the national character and hold up a faithful mirror to life.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HUMANISTS

#### 1. *The transition from the middle ages*

IT IS NOT EASY to determine just how much the Latin verse of the early humanists in England differed from that of their immediate predecessors. The fifteenth century was a singularly bleak period in poetic production. Little has been preserved to us of whatever writing was done in Latin verse in that period until the reign of Henry VII; and by that time the effects of contact with the humanism of Italy were apparent, even though the poems which show it are devoid of literary grace.<sup>1</sup> In a transitional writer like John Skelton (1460?-1529) we see both the old and the new influences. Although he disapproved of the new learning and wrote his Latin verse mainly in the rhyming medieval forms or in the hexameters and elegiac couplets equally congenial to the middle ages, yet we find him in one of the passages in *Speke parrot* using the first archilochian couplet, a form not used since classical times. He mentions various ancient authors with respect in his English poems, but it is obvious that his acquaintance with most of them was superficial. One looks in vain for any classical influence in his Latin poems.

In general there are two criteria which serve, in the absence of more complete knowledge, to distinguish humanistic from medieval Latin poets. The first is the use of classical metres not used in the middle ages, or at least, as we shall see, not since the twelfth century, and the second is the scorn of the true humanist for the rhyming verse of the middle ages. In regard to the classical metres it is to be noted that the situation during most of the middle ages was characterized by lack of use rather than by ignorance of the forms themselves. The hexameter and the elegiac couplet were frequently used, and in the great literary revival of the twelfth century several of the lyrical metres of Horace were essayed with varying success. Horace's odes, usually neglected in the middle ages, were read at this time, as can be seen in the works of

<sup>1</sup> See W. F. Schirmer, *Der englische Frühhumanismus* (Leipzig, 1931).



the monk Reginald and in the *Ars rithmica* of John of Garlandia.<sup>2</sup> The latter, indeed, showed his metrical proficiency by composing examples of each of the Horatian forms. The sapphic stanza, the favorite among religious poets, seems to have persisted at intervals throughout the whole medieval period, probably because of its use by Prudentius. Alanus de Insulis was especially adept in using classical lyric metres, five different ones occurring in the poetical sections of his *De planctu naturae*. On the other hand, the available texts of the two following centuries show no such versatility. The interest in classical verse-technique shown by the poets of the twelfth century was apparently only a passing fashion, of which little or nothing remained at the end of the medieval period. Consequently, one service rendered by the revivers of classical Latin was to make available once more a variety of verse-forms for poets writing in that language. Nevertheless, the new knowledge was slow in making itself felt in any general movement toward lyrical metres on the part of English writers of Latin, who were much slower in this respect than those of the Continent.<sup>3</sup> Only one sapphic ode, and that a hymn to the Virgin, is to be found in any work published in England before 1550, and no alcaic odes appeared. In spite of this neglect of the ode, we do find in the verses of More, Constable, and Whittington examples of such metres as the iambic, hendecasyllabic, and glyconic, which were almost unknown in the middle ages. The invention of printing, spreading texts of Horace and Catullus over England, was an important element in making the new poetical forms more familiar to the educated classes. As the sixteenth century went on it was only a question of time and of the appearance of more ambitious poets until the whole of the classical repertory should be revived.

The humanists not only went back with growing enthusiasm to a wide range of Latin quantitative metres; they also felt that it was necessary to condemn the accentual rhyming metres of their predecessors in the past and of their present foes, the monks and scholastics. A medieval writer had no objection to composing Latin verse with or without rhyme, quantitative or accentual. Not only leonine hexameters, but even sapphic odes with interior rhymes in one stanza, exterior in the next,

<sup>2</sup> See T. Wright, *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets* (London, 1872), II, 259, and J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry* (New York, 1920), pp. 125 and 232.

<sup>3</sup> For Germany and Italy see G. Ellinger, *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1929-1933), and for France D. Murarasu, *La poésie néo-latine et la renaissance des lettres antiques en France* (Paris, 1928).