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MINOR LATIN POETS
VOLUME II



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MINOR LATIN
POETS

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WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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MINOR LATIN POETS

II

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FLORUS

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INTRODUCTION

TO FLORUS

THERE is considerable plausibility in the arguments which have been advanced in favour of regarding three apparently different Flori, namely the historian, the rhetor and the poet as one and the same person. The acceptance of these arguments commits us to taking the correct name to have been P. Annius Florus, as the rhetor was called, and to explaining as confusions the "Julius Florus" or "Annaeus Florus" found in the MSS. of the historian.^a We no longer possess the rhetor's dialogue discussing the problem whether Virgil was more an orator than a poet (*Vergilius orator an poeta*), but from a Brussels manuscript containing an introduction to the lost theme important facts about the author's life are recoverable.^b He was born in Africa about 74 A.D. While at Rome in his younger days under Domitian he entered for the Capitoline competition in poetry, but owing to jealousy was denied the wreath of victory. This injustice so rankled in his heart that he left Rome for distant wanderings which ended with his settlement at Tarraco in Spain. One day in Trajan's

^a One MS. has "L. Annei Flori."

^b F. Ritschl, *Rhein. Mus.* I. 302; O. Jahn, *Flori epitome*, Leipzig, 1852, p. xli; edn. by K. Halm, Leipzig, 1854, p. 106; edn. by O. Rossbach, Leipzig, 1896, p. 183. See J. Wight Duff, *A Lit. Hist. of Rome in Silver Age*, p. 644.

INTRODUCTION TO

reign a friend twitted him with his long absence from the capital, telling him that his poems had won appreciation there. By Hadrian's time he was once more in Rome, enjoying the Emperor's regard in virtue of his literary abilities and possibly because of some common links with Spain also. The intimacy was so close that it emboldened Florus to address Hadrian in a few extant trochaic lines of persiflage upon his craze for travel—*Ego nolo Caesar esse*—to which we have the imperial repartee *Ego nolo Florus esse*.^a Happily there is more poetry in his hexameters upon spring-roses and in some at least of his trochaic tetrameters. This is the quality which has lent support to the conjecture hazarded by certain scholars, that Florus was the author of one of the most romantic poems in Latin, the *Pervigilium Veneris*. Certainly that poem would have been signally appropriate during the principate of Hadrian, who resuscitated the cult of Venus on a scale of great magnificence.^b We cannot, however, be sure that the *Pervigilium Veneris* belongs to the second century: and a rival hypothesis claims it for the fourth century, laying stress upon its resemblance to the manner of Tiberianus.^c

In the codex Salmasianus of the Latin *Anthologia* (Parisinus, 10318) twenty-six trochaic tetrameters appear under the superscription *Flori de qualitate vitae*. The codex Thuaneus (Parisinus 8071) has, instead of *Flori*, *Floridi*, a corruption due to a mistake in the succeeding word. Five hexameters in the codex Salmasianus also bear the heading *Flori*.

^a Spartianus, *Hadrian*, xvi.

^b See Introduction, p. 344, to Loeb edition of Catullus, Tibullus and *Pervigilium Veneris*.

^c See Introduction to Tiberianus, *infra*, p. 555.

FLORUS

'TEXTS OF FLORUS' VERSE

- P. Burman. *Anthol. Lat. Lib. II. No. 97; III. Nos. 288-291.* Amsterdam, 1759.

[Burman ascribes 97, *Ego nolo . . .*, to "Julius Florus"; 288, *O quales . . .*, 289, *Aut hoc risit . . .*, and 290, *Hortus erat . . .*, to an unknown author; and 291, *Venerunt aliquando rosae . . .*, to "Florus." Baehrens and Buecheler follow these ascriptions.]

- J. C. Wernsdorf. *Poetae Latini Minores*, III. pp. 483-488. Altenburg, 1782.
L. Mueller. *Rutilius Namatianus*, etc., p. 26 *sqq.* Leipzig, 1870.
E. Baehrens. *Poet. Lat. Min.*, IV. pp. 279, 346 *sqq.* Leipzig, 1882.
F. Buecheler and A. Riese. *Anthologia Latina*, I. i. pp. 119-121, and pp. 200-202. Leipzig, 1894.

RELEVANT WORKS

- O. Mueller. *De P. Annio Poeta et de Pervig. Ven.* diss. Berlin, 1855.
F. Eyssenhardt. *Hadrian und Florus.* Berlin, 1882.
G. Costa. *Floro e Adriano*, *Bollettino di filol.* 13 (1907), p. 252.

FLORUS

I

Ego nolo Caesar esse,
ambulare per Britannos

Scythicas pati pruinas.

II-IX. DE QUALITATE VITAE

II

Bacche, vitium repertor, plenus adsis vitibus,
effluas dulcem liquorem, comparandum nectari,
conditumque fac vetustum, ne malignis venulis
asperum ducat saporem, versus usum in alterum.

III

Mulier intra pectus omnis celat virus pestilens;
dulce de labris loquuntur, corde vivunt noxio.

II. DE QUALITATE VITAE *codd.*: VITIUM *L. Mueller.*

II. ¹ vitium *codd.*: vini tu *L. Mueller.*

^a The numbering I-XIII follows *L. Mueller's* edition: No. XIV is taken from *Baehrens*.

^b The Latin is given by *Spartianus*, *Hadrian* xvi: also *Hadrian's* retort (see p. 444). As the latter is in four lines, it may be assumed that *Florus'* third line is lost.

FLORUS

I^a

I'VE no mind to be a Caesar,
Strolling round among the Britons,

Victim of the Scythian hoar-frosts.^b

II-IX. THE QUALITY OF LIFE^c

II

Bacchus, of the vine revealer, let thy fullness aid
the vine :

Send the dulcet juice afflowing which no nectar can
outshine.

Grant it ever-mellowing storage lest in veins inimical
It produce a smack of roughness turned to vinegar
withal.

III

Every woman in her bosom hides a poisonous pesti-
lence :

Though the lips speak ne'er so sweetly, yet the heart
contrives offence.

^c The MS. heading for the 26 verses in II-IX is so inappropriate that Lucian Mueller by emending *vitae* into *vitium* suggested that it meant "On the Nature of Vines" and was applicable only to poem II.

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IV

Sic Apollo, deinde Liber sic videtur ignifer :
ambo sunt flammis creati prosatique ex ignibus ;
ambo de donis calorem, vite et radio, conferunt ;
noctis hic rumpit tenebras, hic tenebras pectoris.

V

Quando ponebam novellas arbores mali et piri,
cortici summae notavi nomen ardoris mei.
nulla fit exinde finis vel quies cupidinis :
crescit arbor, gliscit ardor : animus implet litteras.

VI

Qui mali sunt non fuere matris ex alvo mali,
sed malos faciunt malorum falsa contubernia.

VII

Sperne mores transmarinos, mille habent offucia.
cive Romano per orbem nemo vivit rectius :
quippe malim unum Catonem quam trecentos
Socratas.

V. ³ fit *codd.* : fit iam *L. Mueller* : facta *Baehrens*.

³ Cf. Juvenal II. 83, *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*, "no one became an absolute villain in a moment," and St. Paul's quotation from Menander, I. Cor. xv. 33 *φθείρουσιν ἡθὴν χρήσθ' ὁμιλίας κακάς*, "evil communications corrupt good manners."

FLORUS

IV

So Apollo and then Bacchus are fire-bringers, I
opine:
Both the gods are flame-created; in their birth the
fires take part.
Both confer their heat for guerdon, by the sunbeam
or the vine;
One dispels the long night's darkness, one the dark-
ness of the heart.

V

When my young pear-trees I planted, when I planted
apple-trees,
On the bark the name I gravéd of the sweetheart
who is mine.
Never henceforth will my passion find an end or find
its ease.
As the tree grows, so my zeal glows: love-dreams
through each letter shine.

VI

Rascals have not been so always—rascals from their
mother's womb;
But false comradeship with rascals brings one to a
rascal's doom.^a

VII

Shun the morals brought across seas; they've a
thousand trickeries.
None in all the world lives straighter than a citizen
of Rome.
Why, I prize one Cato more than fifteen score like
Socrates.

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VIII

Tam malum est habere nummos, non habere quam
malum est;
tam malum est audere semper quam malum est
semper pudor;
tam malum est tacere multum quam malum est
multum loqui;
tam malum est foris amica quam malum est uxor
domi;
nemo non haec vera dicit, nemo non contra facit.

IX

Consules fiunt quotannis et novi proconsules;
solus aut rex aut poeta non quotannis nascitur.

X

DE ROSIS

Venerunt aliquando rosae. per veris amoeni
ingenium una dies ostendit spicula florum,
altera pyramidas nodo maiore tumentes,
tertia iam calathos, totum lux quarta peregit
floris opus. pereunt hodie nisi mane leguntur.

XI

DE ROSIS

A, quales ego mane rosas procedere vidi!
nascebantur adhuc neque erat par omnibus aetas.
prima papillatos ducebat tecta corymbos,
altera puniceos apices umbone levabat,
tertia iam totum calathi patefecerat orbem,

FLORUS

VIII

'Tis as bad possessing money as to live in penury ;
Just as bad perpetual daring as perpetual modesty ;
Just as bad is too much silence as too much loquacity ;
Just as bad the girl you visit as the wife at home
can be.

None can say that this is falsehood : none but does
the contrary.

IX

Every year we get fresh consuls, every year pro-
consuls too :

Only patrons, only poets, are not born each year
anew.

X

ROSES IN SPRINGTIME

Roses are here at last : thanks to the mood
Of lovely Spring, one day shows barbs of bloom ;
A second, pyramids more largely swoln ;
A third reveals the cup : four days fulfil
Their task of flowering. This day seals their doom
Unless the morning brings a gatherer.

XI

ROSES

What roses have I seen come with the morn !
Scarce born they were, yet not alike in age :
One showed the breast-like buds that hid the flower,
One shot its purple crest from swelling heart,
A third had opened full its rounded cup,

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quarta simul nituit nudati germine floris.
dum levat una caput dumque explicat altera nodum,
sic, dum virgineus pudor exsinuatur amictu,
ne pereant lege mane rosas : cito virgo senescit.

XII

DE ROSA

Aut hoc risit Amor aut hoc de pectine traxit
purpureis Aurora comis aut sentibus haesit
Cypris et hic spinis insedit sanguis acutis.

XIII

DE ROSIS

Hortus erat Veneris, roseis circumdatus herbis,
gratus ager dominae, quem qui vidisset amaret.
dum puer hic passim properat decerpere flores
et velare comas, spina libavit acuta
marmoreos digitos : mox ut dolor attigit artus 5
sanguineamque manum, tinxit sua lumina gutta.
pervenit ad matrem frendens defertque querellas :
“ unde rosae, mater, coeperunt esse nocentes ?
unde tui flores pugnare latentibus armis ?
bella gerunt mecum. floris color et cruor unum
est ! ” 10