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**Teaching Classics in the Renaissance:
Two Case Histories**

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I have always enjoyed this plenary session, and especially the awards, for they give us an opportunity to think about—and to celebrate—what it is to be a classicist, and what got us into this business in the first place: the desire to find out about the ancient world and the eagerness to convey our knowledge and enthusiasm to others. In a word: scholarship and teaching. These two activities are complementary and symbiotic in every field, but especially so in classics, where not only our discipline, but our material itself has depended on their interaction for over two thousand years. Both our reading of the ancient authors and the fact that we have them to read have depended on generations of scholars, teachers, and students reading them before us—and not just *reading* them, but transcribing, interpreting, imitating, and above all making them meaningful in terms of their own lives.

The process is an active one—much too active to be described by the terms we use for it: classical tradition, transmission, or reception. If our predecessors had merely received and transmitted the ancient texts, handing them down like so many unopened packages, the continuum of classical scholars, teachers, and readers would have ended long ago.

This afternoon I want to talk about two of our predecessors in this continuum—two great scholar-teachers of the Renaissance, Filippo Beroaldo and Pierio Valeriano. Each taught an author whose survival from antiquity hung by a slender thread, depending as it did on a single manuscript. Beroaldo lectured on Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, preserved only in an eleventh-century manuscript from Montecassino, Valeriano on Catullus, whose text was recovered only

at the beginning of the thirteenth century in a manuscript now lost to us. We have an excellent record of the teaching of both from their lectures, which suffered very different fates through the accidents of history. Beroaldo's teaching is preserved in his famous commentary on the *Golden Ass*, which was printed in many editions and is only now being fully superseded. Valeriano's lectures on Catullus are only partially preserved in a mutilated and almost unknown manuscript in the Vatican Library. Beroaldo's commentary influenced the way in which the *Golden Ass* was read all over Europe for generations. Valeriano's lectures influenced no one at all—except for the students who heard them.

1. Filippo Beroaldo

In the late fifteenth century Filippo Beroaldo of Bologna was one of the most popular and influential teachers in Italy.¹ As many as 300 students regularly attended his daily morning lectures at the University of Bologna.² Many of these students were foreign, for Beroaldo's reputation extended far beyond Italy. They came from Spain and France, but above all from Germany and eastern Europe; indeed, a contemporary chronicler tells us both that he had 200 students "from the other side of the Alps" and that they all left Bologna after his death.³ Beroaldo's students were undoubtedly attracted by his kindly, genial manner, for he seems to have been a happy, hospitable man, deeply religious, but also good company and a bit of a *bon vivant*.⁴ But it was his teaching they came to hear.

We know quite a bit about Renaissance teaching. Both the appearance of the classroom and the teaching style were inherited from the Middle Ages.⁵ The

¹For Beroaldo see Gilmore, Raimondi 90–107, Garin 1956 and 1974. For Beroaldo as a commentator see Casella. On his Apuleius commentary the fundamental work is Krautter.

²Beroaldo describes his teaching in a letter of 1499 to Pietro Várad, dedicatee of his commentary on Apuleius: "Lectionibus publicis dstringor, quarum quotidiani auditores sunt circiter tercenteni; occupatum quoque occupant privatae lectiones, quarum sitientes sunt complusculi principes scholasticorum" (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. Campori App. 324 (γ, S, 5, 25) fol. 23v ff., quoted from Garin 1956: 377).

³"Era in questa terra doxento scholari oltramontani per lui, che dopo la soa morte tutti se partino" (Fileno dall Tuata, in Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 1438, fol. 277v, quoted from Frati 212).

⁴For Beroaldo's character and personality see especially Raimondi 90–107.

⁵For an illustration of a Bolognese classroom in the early fifteenth century see Salmi plate 11. The miniature appears in a commentary on the Decretals, bk. 2, by Antonio da Budrio (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 596, fol. 1r). For similar classroom scenes from c. 1300 to 1500 see Sorbelli 1944: plates 8–15, 17–18.

professor, in his pulpit, read the text aloud, commenting on it word by word. He glossed difficult vocabulary, explained historical and mythological references, cited parallels from other authors, and corrected readings. The students either had texts or created them from the professor's dictation. This teaching method long outlasted the Renaissance: a form of it was still in use at the University of Edinburgh in the early 1960s, as I know from my own experience. By this time, of course, the students all owned printed texts, but the professor still went through the play—we were studying Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*—word by word, as his predecessors had done for a thousand years.

As he prepared his lectures, the teacher (whether Renaissance or modern) produced what amounted to a commentary on the text. The commentary was delivered orally, but from the late fifteenth century on, it often found its way into print, either before or after the delivery of the lectures. The commentary of my Edinburgh professor did not—it was anticipated by Fraenkel's great *Agamemnon*. Filippo Beroaldo, however, was more fortunate.

Beroaldo's commentary on the *Golden Ass* was published in 1500 in a large folio volume of nearly 600 pages. As in most Renaissance volumes, the commentary literally surrounds the text. The first page, for example, has room for little more than the first four lines of Apuleius' novel.⁶ Here they are in English:

Well now, I am going to thread together different tales for you in the Milesian style you like and caress your ears into approval with a beguiling whisper—provided that [you don't mind looking at] an Egyptian papyrus ...

Beroaldo's comments on these lines range from the assertion that Apuleius has written his preface in verse, to a note on the force of the opening word, *at*, to a long discussion of Milesian tales, and another of papyrus and the ancient papyrus business. Most interesting from a literary point of view is his speculation that Apuleius may have used the phrase "beguiling whisper" (*lepido susurro*) to show that his words were "not to be disclosed or openly made known to the uninitiated, but revealed in secret in the presence of reverent ears."⁷ Like many modern readers, it seems, Beroaldo is already looking ahead to the end of the novel and Lucius' initiations into the mysteries of Isis and Osiris.

⁶*Met.* 1.1.1 in Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 5r "At ego tibi sermone isto milesio varias fabulas conseram : auresque tuas benivolas : lepido susurro permulceam : modo si papyrus egyptiam : argutia ..."

⁷Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 5r "Potest et ob hoc videri usus hac dictione susurro, ut ostendat haec non esse invulganda neque prophanis palam nuntianda sed clam apud aures religiosas promenda."

At this point you may be wondering what made Beroaldo's lectures so exciting that students flocked to him from all over Europe. The teaching method I have described is not inherently appealing—I remember the lectures in Edinburgh, for example, as excruciatingly dull. The opening page of Beroaldo's commentary is hardly riveting. Yet Beroaldo's students were obviously enthralled. Why? Partly, of course, because of his tremendous erudition and their own thirst for knowledge. But that cannot have been all. Successful teaching on the scale achieved by Beroaldo requires more than erudition and interested students. On the one hand, it requires showmanship, personality, and self-promotion. On the other, it requires something to promote. In Beroaldo's case that was the almost necromantic ability to bring the world of the ancient author into that of fifteenth-century Bologna—not as a dead artifact but as a living entity. I'll begin with this aspect of Beroaldo's teaching, and come back to his flair for self-promotion in a moment.

Beroaldo treats Latin as a language to be mastered and used in the contemporary world—an essential point, since his students needed to be expert Latinists to succeed in their clerical, university, or professional careers. He glosses Apuleius' vocabulary, emends the text, and inveighs—repeatedly—against ignorant people (mostly priests) who mistake the quantity of Latin vowels. He also admires and imitates Apuleius' *recherché* diction and style on every page of the commentary. As he says in the preface,

... this Ass of ours is golden in fact as well as in name, composed and put together with such wit and refinement of style and such elegance of uncommon expressions that it could be said of it with perfect justice that if the Muses wished to speak Latin, they would speak in the language of Apuleius.⁸

Beroaldo's exploration of Apuleius' language made the *Golden Ass* more comprehensible to readers than it had been for a thousand years. But his enthusiasm also had another effect—for it brought Apuleius into the Renaissance culture wars, or at least into some interesting skirmishes. We must remember that Beroaldo and his students were not enjoying Apuleian style in the rather abstract way that we do. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Latin was the written (and

⁸Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 1v “Denique hic noster Asinus sicut verbo dicitur ita re ipsa aureus conspicitur, tanto dicendi lepore, tanto cultu, tanta verborum minime trivialium elegantia concinnatus compositusque, ut de eo id dici meritissimo possit: Musas Apuleiano sermone loquuturas fuisse si latine loqui vellent.” As Krautter 94, n. 91 observes, Beroaldo has borrowed his comment on the Muses' choice of model from Quintilian's similar remark on Plautus (*Inst.* 10.1.99).

often spoken) language of educated Europe, and the purity and correctness of ancient authors was a subject for serious debate. The question was not whether to write Latin, but rather which Latin authors to imitate. Beroaldo's championing of Apuleius provoked counter-attacks by the partisans of Cicero, and a full-fledged controversy was born, which time does not allow us to explore.⁹

But Beroaldo was not only a philologist. His commentary explores the whole world of everyday experience in the *Golden Ass*—and then links it to the life and customs of his own time. Laundry methods, funeral customs, eating habits, baldness—all draw his attention and provide the occasion for lively comparisons.¹⁰ These digressions undoubtedly brought Apuleius' novel to life for Beroaldo's students, but they create an even more interesting effect for the modern reader, who is given a glimpse into Apuleius' world and Beroaldo's at the same time. A single example must suffice. In Book 8 the charlatan priests of the Syrian goddess use a false prophecy to cheat a farmer out of his fattest ram, and Beroaldo exclaims,

Good gods! How often we see this going on in our own territory, that mendicants of some kind pretending to be preachers or priests of Saint Paul and Saint Anthony go around villages, countryside, and farms. Fabricating a prophecy with some hocus-pocus or other, predicting good fortune, promising blessings from the saints they are touting, they bilk this silly rustic out of a ram and that one out of hens, eggs, and cheese, one out of a pig and another superstitious and astonished soul out of a measure of grain.¹¹

⁹See the fundamental article of D'Amico.

¹⁰Laundry methods (Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 207r on *Met.* 9.24.2 *lacinias in albabat*): "Foeminae nostrates hoc hodie quoque usurpant, ut scilicet sub cavea viminea circumdant velamenta, eaque fumo sulphuris suppositi impune candificent inalbentque." Funeral customs (fol. 99v on *Met.* 4.35.1 *prosequente populo*): "Respexit ad veram pompam funebrem in qua more prisco, procedit funus homines sequuntur, quasi post ipsum defunctum morituri subsequuturi ... verum enim vero hoc tempore ordine praepostero praecedunt homines in pompa funebri subsequente cadavere, isque mos apud municipes meos sollemnis fere est." Eating habits (fol. 7v on *Met.* 1.4.1 *in convivas emulos*): "Solemus in convivio hoc saepe factitare, ut avide cibos transvoremus in frusta enormia concisos vixque commanducatos, dum timemus ne convivae gulones cuncta voraciter in baratrum coniciant." Baldness (fol. 280v on *Met.* 11.30.5 *non obumbrato*): "Solent plerique omnes sacerdotes tiara sive pileolo capitis coronam calvitiumque factitium obumbrare obtegereque." See also Krautter 40–46 and Cassella 686–87, 694–701.

¹¹Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 188r "Dii boni, quam saepe hoc videri contingit in territorio nostro, ut quaedam hominum mendicabula sub religionis praetextu tamquam

Sometimes, in fact, it is hard to decide whether Beroaldo has brought Apuleius to Renaissance Bologna or placed himself in the world of the *Golden Ass*. Perhaps because both places seem equally real to him,¹² he has a tendency to ignore or elide their differences, particularly in the matter of religion, so central in both. He so admires Lucius' hymn to the moon in Book 11 that he considers it worthy of the Virgin Mary herself: "If our goddess were called upon by this prayer," he says, "she would be no less pleased and propitiated than by all the prayers of the saints."¹³ Still more interesting is his reaction to the description of the statue of Diana and Actaeon in Book 2 of the novel.

The hero Lucius admires the statue group at the house of his mother's old friend Byrrhena, but fails to understand its obvious warning of the dangers of curiosity. Apuleius' imaginary statue depicts Diana standing in a grotto with her dogs on either side (*Met.* 2.4). The image of the voyeur Actaeon appears twice—once in stone, and again, reflected in the pool beneath the goddess's feet—"already animal-like, on the point of becoming a stag."¹⁴ The scene was occasionally illustrated in early editions. A fine engraving in the seventeenth-century translation by Jean de Montlyard matches Apuleius' description in almost every detail—except that it leaves out Actaeon.¹⁵ But it does include the young Lucius and his kindly hostess. We can almost hear her saying ominously, as she does in Apuleius, "Everything you see belongs to you."¹⁶

ministratores sint antistitesque divi Pauli et Antonii circumeant castella pagos villas et quibusdam affaniis vaticinationem mentientes prospera denunciantes divos quos palam iactitant propicios futuros spondentes ab rustico hoc bruto et credulo poscant et accipiant arietem, ab illo gallinos, ova, caseum, ab alio porcellum, ab alio supersticioso et attonito tritici sestarium."

¹²On the reality of Apuleius' world for Beroaldo see Krautter passim, and especially 50–51: "Denn wenn die Lektüre des antiken Textes eine solche Fülle von Assoziationen hervorruft, dann zeigt sich darin, dass dieser Text für den Humanisten eben nicht nur ein Stück überlieferter Literatur, sondern das Abbild einer Wirklichkeit ist, zu der auch von der Gegenwart aus eine direkte Brücke geschlagen werden kann: der Kommentator ist in der Welt des Apuleius ebenso zu Hause wie in seiner eigenen, sie spricht zu ihm wie die vertraute Umgebung seiner engsten Heimat."

¹³Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 275v "Hac rogata dea nostra non minus placaretur fieretque propitia, quam omnibus sanctorum orationibus."

¹⁴*Met.* 2.4.10 *iam in cervum ferinus*, translated by Walsh (see Apuleius 1994: 20).

¹⁵Apuleius 1633: 34.

¹⁶*Met.* 2.5.1 'Tua sunt' ait Byrrhena 'cuncta quae vides.'

But this is not what concerns Beroaldo. He is fascinated by Apuleius' insistence on the naturalistic quality of the statue, and a single phrase in the description—*ars aemula naturae* (*Met.* 2.4.7 “art rivaling nature”)—prompts him to launch into a digression on a contemporary example of artistic realism—a recently completed religious painting.

“While I was writing this commentary,” he says, “my fellow townsman Francia clearly demonstrated that art rivals nature.”¹⁷ Beroaldo had a specific painting in mind—an “Adoration of Christ” that Francesco Francia painted for a church in Bologna around 1499.¹⁸ The religious message conveyed by this tender picture of the infant Christ is antithetical to that of Apuleius' statue of the vengeful goddess. But, again, this is not what concerns Beroaldo. He is interested in an exciting contemporary event in Bologna, the dedication of Francia's painting and its occasion, the return of one of Bologna's ruling family from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The returning pilgrim, Antongaleazzo Bentivoglio, is shown in the painting. He kneels beside the Virgin wearing a white surplice with the red cross of a pilgrim on the shoulder.

You're probably thinking that Francia and Jerusalem and Bentivoglio have nothing to do with Apuleius. And you would be right. But they have everything to do with Apuleius' readers in late fifteenth-century Bologna. Beroaldo, as we might have said in the 1960s, was giving his students “something to relate to,” using a painting and a civic event of immediate and current interest as a way of linking Apuleius' world with their own.

He applies his contemporary vision not only to the novel's details, but also to its great centerpiece, the tale of Cupid and Psyche, which he uses as the occasion for two long digressions about his own life in present-day Bologna. In each case, he uses the same technique that we have just seen with the statue of Diana: making a word or idea from Apuleius the jumping off point for a little riff or arpeggio on his own world. The words he plays on in the Psyche story are “soul”

¹⁷Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 34v “Me ista condente artem emulam naturae esse evidenter ostendit municeps meus Francia.” The passage is translated and discussed by Baxandall and Gombrich. (But they wrongly render the phrase “me ista condente” as “in my opinion” [113].)

¹⁸As Beroaldo notes (Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 34v), the painting was commissioned by Antongaleazzo Bentivoglio on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is to be dated between his return (23 October 1498) and the publication of Beroaldo's commentary. See Baxandall and Gombrich 114 n. 7. It was placed over the altar of S. Maria della Misericordia, but is now in the Pinacoteca in Bologna. It is illustrated in Baxendall and Gombrich plate 18a; for an illustration in color see Malvasia plate ix.

(or “Psyche”) and “pleasure” (the child of Cupid and Psyche). Today we can consider only the second digression, which appears in Book 6, at the end of the story. Here Beroaldo adds to “soul” and “pleasure” a major new theme: marriage.

Apuleius’ story ends with the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. Here are the final words of the tale: “So Psyche was duly married to Cupid, and in the fullness of time a daughter was born to them, whom we call Pleasure.”¹⁹ Beroaldo notes:

Both wisely and cleverly they say that Pleasure was born of the marriage of Cupid and Psyche, since pleasure—by which the most notable philosophers measure the highest good—comes into being from the desire and love of the soul.²⁰

He continues:

While I was writing these things and commenting on this marriage of Psyche and Cupid, it so happened ... that I took a wife—it was fated by the stars, I believe May the gods make this marriage fertile and happy and fortunate for us, so that from it pleasure may be born May the offspring born of us be pleasure-bringing, like that born of Psyche and Cupid.²¹

A page later he proudly announces that his young wife is pregnant and concludes his digression: “I hope and predict that in this memorable jubilee year [of 1500] a son will be born, to be the pleasure and ornament of his parents.”²²

In this digression Beroaldo’s marriage both re-enacts the union of Cupid and Psyche and explains it—rather movingly, I think—in terms of real human feelings and experiences. We could say that he gives meaning to Apuleius’ fairy

¹⁹*Met.* 6.24.4 *Sic rite Psyche convenit in manum Cupidinis et nascitur illis maturo partu filia, quam Voluptatem nominamus.*

²⁰Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 134r “Conducenter et scite voluptatem ex connubio cupidinis et psyches natam esse finxerunt, cum ex cupiditate animae et dilectione voluptas progignatur, qua summum bonum clarissimi philosophorum metiuntur.”

²¹Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 134r–v “Condentibus haec nobis et has psyches ac cupidinis nuptias commentantibus siderali opinor decreto factum est, ut ego ... uxorem ducerem Dii faxint, ut hoc connubium sit nobis foelix faustum ac fortunatum, utque ex eo voluptas gignatur.”

²²Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 135r “... spero et ominor filium anno hoc Iubilei memorando nasciturum, qui parentibus sit voluptati futurus et ornamento.”

tale. But he does not interpret it. There are no allegories, no other-worldly or metaphysical explanations, no attempts to tell us what it is *really* about.

Beroaldo does not reject interpretation, however, or even allegory—just metaphysics; for he is more interested in this world than the next.²³ He quite willingly uses allegory to interpret the transformations of Lucius, which he sees in down-to-earth moral and ethical terms applicable to ordinary human life, and especially to the life of his young students. For Beroaldo Lucius' transformations are an allegory of the human condition:

... we turn into asses when we have sunk into bestial pleasures and become brutish in our asinine stupidity and no spark of reason and virtue glows in us The reformation from an ass to a man signifies that reason is coming back to its senses, having trampled pleasures underfoot and thrown off bodily delights, and that the inner man, who is the real man, has come back from that dung-filled prison to a shining habitation with the guidance of virtue and religion.²⁴

Young men, he continues—no doubt for the benefit of his students—are particularly prone to sink into pleasures and turn into asses, but as they mature they tend to resume their humanity.²⁵ The rose cure is wisdom.²⁶ Having taken it, one can throw off the bestiality that deforms the inner man and serve God free of sin—just like Lucius.²⁷

²³On this point see Krautter 29–30, 149–51.

²⁴Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 2v “[Verum sub hoc transmutationis involucri, naturam mortalium et mores humanos quasi transeunter designare voluisse, ut admoneremur] ex hominibus Asinos fieri, quando voluptatibus belluinis immersi Asinali stoliditate brutescimus, nec ulla rationis virtutisque scintilla in nobis elucescit Rursus ex Asino in hominem reformatio significat calcatis voluptatibus, exutisque corporalibus deliciis rationem resipiscere, et hominem interiorem, qui verus est homo, ex ergastulo illo cenoso, ad lucidum habitaculum, virtute et religione ducibus remigrasse.”

²⁵Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 2v “Ita ut dicere possimus iuvenes illicio voluptatum possessos, in Asinos transmutari, mox senescentes, oculo mentis vigente, maturescentibusque virtutibus exuta bruti effigie humanam resumere.”

²⁶Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 266r “... ut mystice intelligas coronam rosaceam esse sapientiam.”

²⁷Beroaldo 1500a: fol. 266r “Qua vita [i.e., serving God with a pure heart] nihil beatius esse potest, ad quam utinam nos quoque pervenire possimus sicut Apuleius noster, post exudatos labores multiugos post exutas terrenas sordes aliquando felicissime pervenit.”

Beroaldo undoubtedly captured the interest of his students with this allegory, with his account of his marriage, and with the countless contemporary references that brought Apuleius to life in his classroom. But he did not rely on the content of his lectures alone. He was a relentless and highly successful self-promoter—and one of the few humanists I know of who actually made money by his profession.

He gave rich former students the chance to bid on the dedications to his works, and the negotiations seem to have been accomplished with perfect good humor on both sides. The archbishop to whom the Apuleius commentary is dedicated supposedly couched his bid as follows: “If you send me that Ass of yours that you have kindly promised me, I will send it right back, laden with gold.”²⁸

Beroaldo also made money on the sale of his books. In the case of the Apuleius commentary we are fortunate enough to have the contract he signed with his printer in the spring of 1499. Its provisions included: a print run of 1200 copies, equal division of the profits between Beroaldo and the printer, and the stipulation that Beroaldo was to lecture on this book and only this at the University of Bologna, and that he was to promote it as much as possible.²⁹

The 1200 copies stipulated in the contract is a very large number—two or three times as large as a typical press run for a commentary on a classical author in this period.³⁰ As we might say today, the Apuleius commentary was expected

²⁸The story is told by Beroaldo’s contemporary biographer, Jean de Pins, who presents it as hearsay. Thus (de Pins 1.133–34) “... in Apulejani asini commentariis nuper, quos dum se Thomae coloccensi archiepiscopo, viro bonarum artium studioso, dicare velle scriberet, tale accepisse responsum dicitur: Asinum istum, quem tam benevole nobis es pollicitus, si ad nos propere miseris, denuo ipse ad te onustum auro remittam.” As Krautter points out (24 n. 58), de Pins is confusing another Hungarian friend of Beroaldo’s, Tamás Bakócz (“Thomae”), with the actual dedicatee, Peter Váradi. For other requests by Beroaldo for gifts see Garin 1956: 367–88, 371, 378.

²⁹The contract between Beroaldo and his printer, Benedetto d’Ettore, was signed on 22 May 1499. For its terms see Sorbelli 1929: 61. See also Bühler 39.

³⁰We do not know enough about the size of editions in the fifteenth century. Bühler 39 characterizes the press run of 1200 as “an unusually large one for those days.” Haebler 175 mentions a Plato edition of 1025 copies in the mid-1490s; the other very large editions he cites are of religious and legal texts. Hirsch 66–67 cites figures from 200 to 400 copies for specific classical texts. The 1502 Aldine of Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius was printed in an extraordinarily large edition of 3000 copies, but it was an octavo, not a folio edition, and contained the works of all three poets. (See Lowry 174, n. 96; Gaisser 1993: 64–65, 309, notes 153–54.) The number of copies of Beroaldo’s Apuleius may in

to be a “blockbuster.” Beroaldo planned to lecture from it in the fall of 1499, but publication was postponed by a paper shortage, and he had to lecture on Cicero instead.³¹ He explained the matter to his students in the first lecture, using it as a demonstration of the Greek proverb ἀνάγκη οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται: “Not even the gods struggle against Necessity.”³² But his purpose was not only to explain, but to advertise. In the same lecture he promoted a book of his own orations, touted the usefulness of his Cicero lectures (“the only Cicero you’ll ever need,” he claims), and promised to lecture on Apuleius “in the memorable and auspicious Jubilee year.”³³ His Apuleius finally appeared in August 1500, in time for the next school year, and sold well from the start.³⁴ It was reprinted ten times in the sixteenth century.³⁵

I haven’t been able to find a portrait of Beroaldo, and perhaps none exists. The lack is perhaps not too surprising—in spite of his reputation and the pleas-

fact have been much greater than the 1200 stipulated in the contract. In his dedication Beroaldo gives the number as around 2000 (Beroaldo 1500a: fol. a1v): “Et sane impressor optimus operam dedit, ut volumina commentariorum circiter duo millia formis excussa divulgarentur.”

³¹See Krautter 38–39.

³²1499: fols. c4v–c7r.

³³Orations (1499: fol. c6v): “De quorum [Virgilii et Tullii] laudibus melius est ad praesens tacere quam pauca dicere, cum ad laudandum pro merito Virgilium et Tullium, Virgilio et Tullio laudatoribus opus fit. Praeterea in libro orationum mearum extant utriusque scriptoris luculenta praeconia.” Cicero lectures (fol. c7r): “Erit autem haec procrastinatio scholasticis oppido quam conducibilis. Namque interea aliquot Ciceronis orationes explicabuntur a nobis, ea diligentia, eaque omnifaria eruditione, ut ianua laxissime reserata reliquis deinceps orationibus omnibus videri possit, ut qui vel paucissimas audierit, caeteras sine interprete citraque doctorem adire ipse et per se intelligere queat haud sane difficulter.” Apuleius lectures (fol. c7r): “Anno autem a salute domini milesimo quingentesimo quem iubilium nominant, perinde ac auspicatissimo et memorando anno Apuleium fauste ac feliciter initiabimus.”

³⁴Krautter 39 infers as much from a comment in Beroaldo’s opening lecture on Apuleius (Beroaldo 1500b: fol. m8v): “afficior gaudio non mediocri, cum video commentarios diutinis vigiliis absolutos per ora virorum et manus volitantes circumferri, cum labores nostros neque cassos neque penitendos fuisse conspicio.” In the same lecture Beroaldo boasts of the sales of all his works (Beroaldo 1500b: fol. n1r): “Quae omnia nisi mihi bibliopolae blandiuntur, expetuntur a studiosis, probantur a doctis, teruntur manibus scholasticorum tam provincialium quam Italicorum.”

³⁵See the bibliography in Krautter 193–94. The last edition mentioned by Krautter was printed in 1823.

ure he took in his own celebrity, and even in spite of his close friendship with the painter Francia. For Beroaldo (unlike Apuleius) refused to believe in a link between the inner and outer self of a man, and he denied that a statue could convey his real character to posterity.³⁶ Instead, he argued that he had created living and breathing portraits of himself in his books. He presents his Apuleius commentary as “a new image of my mind, thoroughly polished with versatile sculpting and careful elegance.”³⁷ Perhaps that is portrait enough.

2. Pierio Valeriano

In the fall of 1521, a generation after Beroaldo’s triumphs in Bologna, our second teacher, Pierio Valeriano, began to lecture on Catullus at the University of Rome.³⁸

Valeriano was a well-known scholar and poet, but not a full-time university teacher. Instead, like most humanists in sixteenth-century Rome, he was a clerical dependent—one of the army of highly-educated secretaries, assistants, and factotums employed by the rich cardinals and bishops of papal Rome.³⁹ Valeriano was more highly placed than most, for he was a client of the Medici pope, Leo X, tutor of the papal nephews, and secretary of the pope’s cousin, Cardinal Giulio de Medici, the future Pope Clement VII.

³⁶Beroaldo 1500a: fol. a2r “Siquidem statuæ et imagines intereunt aut vi convulsæ aut vetustatis situ decoloratæ, volumina vero quæ sunt vera spirantiaque hominum simulacra nulla vi convelluntur, nullo senio oblitterantur. Fiuntque vetustate ipsa sanctiora durabilioraque.” The theme is a favorite one of Beroaldo’s. He used it in his account of the paper shortage that delayed the publication of his Apuleius (1499: fol. c6r): “Itaque hæc civitas, quæ alioque chartam finitimis populis affatim solet subministrare, inopiam chartæ sensit, cuius usu constat immortalitas hominum.” He uses again in his poem “Quod veriores sunt imagines ex libris quam ex nomismatis” (Beroaldo 1500b: fols. q2v–q3r): “Est scriptis vivax facies: est forma perennis / Magnorum Regum nobiliumque ducum. / Scriptis Caesarei proceres sanctique Catones / Scriptus Pompeius noscitur atque Numa. / Hæc veræ effigies: hæc sunt simulacra virorum. / Hi spirant vultus; hæc monumenta vigent. / Id tibi scripta dabunt: quod nulla monumenta possunt. / Sic oculos poteris pascere: sic animum” (vv. 7–14).

³⁷Beroaldo 1500a: fol. a2r “Hoc vero noviciū animi nostri simulacrum vario effigiatu cultuque laborioso perpolitum.”

³⁸For a fine likeness of Valeriano engraved by Philippe Galle (1587) from a contemporary portrait see the frontispiece of Gaisser 1999. For Valeriano’s lectures on Catullus see Gaisser 1988 and 1993: 109–45.

³⁹See Gaisser 1999: 2–23, with earlier bibliography.

Roman humanists of every degree—whether dependents like Valeriano, or their intellectually-minded patrons, or well-off laymen with literary interests—had the institution of the sodality as the focus of their social and intellectual life.⁴⁰ The sodalities were loosely organized groups of humanists who met periodically for dinner and conversation at the house of one—richer than the rest—who served as the host and patron. There were many sodalities, and their memberships were fluid and overlapping. Some were religious in focus, others antiquarian, but they were alike in their enthusiasm for classical literature, for modern Latin poetry, and for celebrations and festivities marked by their own poetic display.

Latin poetry was the currency of their world. One sodality met each year on St. Anne's day to commemorate an altar in the Church of S. Agostino that featured a statue of St. Anne with the Madonna and Child. The humanists wrote hundreds of poems on the statue and the generosity of its donor, to whose garden they repaired in the evening for a feast and a poetry contest.⁴¹ Another sodality celebrated the Roman festival of the Palilia on April 21 and honored the founding of Rome with feasting and poetry. Every year the humanists observed the festival of the "talking statue" Pasquino with Latin verse pasquinades. Single events, too, could be seized upon and celebrated by the sodalities. The discoveries of the statue of Laocoön and of the Vatican Ariadne (which was wrongly identified as Cleopatra) and the death of Raphael were all commemorated by torrents of verse.⁴²

It was in this highly literary climate that Valeriano began his lectures on Catullus, which may well have been conceived as yet another humanist event. The lectures are preserved because they were taken down word for word as he spoke—no doubt with a view to publication; and the audience included, as Valeriano tells us, not only young students, but also practicing poets—that is, his fellow humanists.

Poetry is Valeriano's principal theme—how to hear its rhythms and perceive their effect, how to choose the best models to imitate, and how to write it. His understanding of Catullus' meters far surpasses that of all the poet's earlier editors and commentators—not surprisingly, since he was a prolific Latin poet

⁴⁰For the sodalities and their activities see Bober, and Gaisser 1995 and 1999: 23–39, with earlier bibliography.

⁴¹The poems were gathered together and published by one of the humanists in a little volume called *Coryciana* (1524). For a definitive modern edition see IJsewijn.

⁴²For Laocoön see Bieber 11–14, Maierach, Maragoni, Brummer 73–119. For "Cleopatra" see Brummer 153–84.

himself and since he was the first Catullan critic to make use of the ancient metrical handbook of Terentianus Maurus, which had been discovered only in 1493.⁴³ He drills his students on longs and shorts; playfully rewrites the hendecasyllables of Catullus 1 in iambs, dactyls, and galliambics; and discourses on the affective qualities of meter. “Consult your ears!” he says again and again, encouraging the real and aspiring poets in his audience.

Valeriano’s lectures are conceived with a dual purpose—to entertain and to be useful (*delectare et prodesse*); and he claims that the same purpose motivated Catullus himself. Catullus pleases by the charm of his verse, says Valeriano. He is useful or instructive

when he celebrates virtues [and] ... chastises vice, criticizes evil
ways, and attempts to deter mankind from imitating the wicked men
he chastises in his poetry.⁴⁴

This description of Catullus is not conspicuously appropriate, and Valeriano has to go through some hermeneutic acrobatics to make it fit. Given the sophisticated nature of both his lectures and their audience, one suspects that he did so tongue in cheek. Here is how he concludes his discussion of Catullus 3, on the death of the sparrow:

Now I will add one thing as a corollary, which we can apply to these rites of a dead sparrow. For they can both amuse you in the listening and benefit you greatly by their example. The life of a sparrow is very short. For, as those who write of these matters tell us, the males can live no more than a year, and they say that the reason is unrestrained lust—which also wears out so many men before their time and hands them over to old age. The crow, on the other hand, is very long-lived, since it copulates most seldom. Wherefore, young men, if the sweetness of life delights you, nothing will be more useful to you than to reject Venus and the goads of blind passion.⁴⁵

⁴³For Valeriano’s metrical teaching see Gaisser 1993: 121–26.

⁴⁴Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 18r “Prodest utique quum virtutes celebrat Prodest dum vitia carpit, malos mores execratur, et mortales omnes a sceleratorum quos carminibus proscindit imitatione conatur avertere.” The passage is quoted in full in Gaisser 1993: 337 n. 31.

⁴⁵Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 63r “Nunc unum addam pro corollario, quod ad has extincti passeris inferias conferamus. Nam et vos delectare possunt audiendo et exemplo plurimum iuvare. Passeribus vitae brevitatis angustissima. Eorum enim mares anno diutius durare non posse tradunt, qui rerum huiusmodi historias conscribere; cuius rei causam esse aiunt, incontinentissimam salacitatem; quae tot homi-

Like Beroaldo—and like ourselves—Valeriano brought his own cultural and social presuppositions with him into the classroom. My favorite example is his interpretation of Catullus 10. You all know it. Catullus' crony Varus has taken him to see his tarty but charming girl friend. Catullus, trying to seem better off than he is, foolishly tells her that he has acquired eight litter bearers—although, as he notes in an aside, he had no slave able to lift so much as a broken bedstead. The girl immediately asks to borrow the bearers, and Catullus has to explain in some embarrassment that they are not actually his, but a friend's, which (he assures her) is almost the same thing. He concludes that the girl isn't as charming as he'd thought, exclaiming: "What a tiresome and boring girl you are, since you won't let a man be a little careless!"⁴⁶

Modern readers see this as a tale Catullus tells on himself—a social vignette in which the poet presents himself as a little foolish and judges the girl—to the extent that he judges her at all—as gauche for catching him out in a lie. The lenses of misogyny and social class, however, presented a different image to the early commentators, who saw the episode as a victory for Catullus and commended him for protecting his property from an avaricious harlot—even though the poet explicitly tells us that he had no property to protect. Valeriano shares this interpretation, invoking his formula *delectare et prodesse* to present the poem as a cautionary tale:

I began these lectures with the premise that the task of the poet is both to delight and to be useful. This has been borne out so amply in the discussion of the first nine poems that it has required no further demonstration. But this tenth epigram consists completely of utility, so that it may advise us how we can take the opportunity to escape the shameless behavior and greed of harlots, and that we should not be afraid to look out for our property in every possible way after we have perceived their wicked and troublesome nature.⁴⁷

num etiam ante diem effoetos tradit senectuti. Contra vero corvinum genus, quia rarissime coit vivacissimum. Quare si vos vitae dulcedo capit adolescentes nihil vobis magis praestiterit quam venerem et caeci stimulos avertere amoris."

⁴⁶Catull. 10.33–34 *sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis, / per quam non licet esse neglegentem*.

⁴⁷Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 125r–v "Quod initio proloquiorum nostorum praefati sumus officium esse poetae vel prodesse, vel delectare, ita hactenus verum esse, ex novem epigrammatum praelectionibus apparuit, ut nulla id ulterius indigeat probatione. Decimum autem hoc epigramma totum in utilitate consistit, ut scilicet nos admoneat, quo pacto possimus per occasionem impudentem meretricum

Valeriano's interpretation, like that of every commentator before him, rests on the strange assumption that Catullus actually did have some litter bearers.⁴⁸ And the assumption arises from the same cultural blind spot that kept them all from seeing the poem as a social comedy in which Catullus could come off second best to a woman—and especially to a little tart like Varus' girlfriend.

Valeriano undoubtedly delighted his audience with his interpretation, although from our twenty-first-century perspective we may doubt that his misogynistic misreading “was useful” to them. Such cavils aside, however, we can see that he was bringing the text to life for his students and humorously relating it to a world they knew. Papal Rome, with its thousands of nominally celibate clerics, was known all over Europe for its legions of bold and talented prostitutes. Estimates of their numbers in the early 1520s range from one to several thousand—out of a total population of only about 54,000 men, women, and children.⁴⁹ We even know the names of some of these women, since their charms were celebrated in Latin hendecasyllables and elegiacs by their humanist patrons—some of whom must have been in the lecture hall.⁵⁰

But if Valeriano brought the real world—or his version of it—into the lecture room, real events also disrupted the lectures in ways beyond his control. These intrusions are registered in both the text and the manuscript. At the beginning of the third lecture Valeriano mentions the sudden death of Pope Leo X and the election of his successor, Adrian VI. Both events were disastrous for Roman intellectuals, for at a single stroke their generous Medici patron was replaced by a prudish and thrifty Dutchman hostile to art and secular letters—and especially to poetry. Soon after the new pope's coronation, Valeriano came to Catullus 15, the first truly obscene poem in the collection. He debated about whether he should omit it, claiming that his students were outraged at the very idea and that they had come to him lamenting

petulantiam atque rapacitatem eludere, neque quicquam ubi malum molestumque earum ingenium deprehenderimus, rebus ipsi nostris quocumque modo consulere vereamur.”

⁴⁸Thus Parthenius (1485) fol. b1v; Palladius Fuscus (1496) fol. a5v; Guarinus (1521) fol. c1v.

⁴⁹Partner 98–99 discounts the larger estimates, conservatively placing the number of prostitutes in Medicean Rome between 750 and 1000. Rowland 27 describes prostitutes as “the most numerous single professional group in the city.” For a detailed discussion see Delumeau 1.417 notes 5–6, and 1.419–22. For the total population see Lee, esp. 20.

⁵⁰Imperia was the most famous, but Matrema-non-vuole (“My mother doesn't want me to”) was another favorite. See Partner 154.

that we have fallen back into the time of the Goths and the Vandals because it seems that just as they used to cut off the genitals of all the statues, so now anything titillating is taken out of books, too.⁵¹

He seems to have given his lecture, but we will never be sure, since he (or someone else) has cut out all the pages that would have contained it.⁵²

Valeriano continued his lectures for a time, for after the omission of poems 15 and 16 (which is also obscene), the manuscript preserves discussions of poems 17 and 22. But it is not clear how long he went on. The new pope disliked both frivolous poetry and the humanists who enjoyed it. A plague ravaged the city for several months, and university salaries were paid sporadically or not at all. The lectures were put away, perhaps to be completed and published in better times. But the worst was yet to come. In 1527 Rome was sacked by the troops of Charles V, and Valeriano's lectures were among the casualties. A comment on the last folio tells the tale: "Reliquum in direptione Romae desideratum" ("the rest was lost in the Sack of Rome").⁵³

3. Then and Now

The lectures of Valeriano and Beroaldo suffered different fates, but both give us an idea of Renaissance teaching at its best. We can feel the intelligence of the teacher, his engagement with both his subject and his students, the force of his personality, his ability to bring the past to life in his classroom. These are the same qualities that characterize the gifted high school and university teachers we have recognized this afternoon—and the qualities that the rest of us would like to demonstrate in our own teaching.

Modern classicists, of course, are operating under different conditions. Teaching methods have changed. The line-by-line lecture format has passed into oblivion—and a good thing, too. Beroaldo used it to immerse his students in the details of ancient society and culture, Valeriano to teach metrics and poetic style. But in lesser hands it was a dull instrument, and it finally degenerated into solipsistic discussion of textual problems. Students have changed as well. Since Latin was a living language in the Renaissance, mastering it conferred financial as well as intellectual rewards. Beroaldo could boast of 300 students in his lec-

⁵¹Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 194v "Alii recidisce nos iterum in Gottica et Vandalica tempora lamentantur, quod videatur, veluti statuis omnibus illi virilia decutiebant, nunc quoque e libris, siquid pruriat, tolli." See Gaisser 1993: 139–40 for a transcription of the whole passage.

⁵²See Gaisser 1993: 140–42.

⁵³Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 249v.

tures; Valeriano's Roman classroom was packed. Greek, still something of a novelty in the west and of little practical value, nevertheless benefited from the primacy of Latin, attracting smaller, but still substantial numbers of students. The study of classics carried with it the thrill of new discoveries as well as the acquisition of language skills; for nearly every day, especially in Rome, new treasures came to light: coins, sculptures, mosaics, and even buildings. We, on the other hand, have no captive audience of pre-professional Latinists, and we have to compete for students with fields they perceive as more exciting, less demanding, more in tune with the modern world—or all of the above. Students themselves are less interested than their predecessors were in literature, history, philosophy, or even in the past of any period. They are often reluctant readers and recalcitrant memorizers. We cannot count on a constant stream of newly discovered antiquities to intrigue and tantalize them.

Nonetheless, we can still benefit from the example of these Renaissance predecessors. Beroaldo and Valeriano were both philologists to the core, but they both understood that words do not exist in a vacuum. They knew that successful teaching requires putting the texts of antiquity into context—or I should say, into two contexts—that of the vanished past as well as it can be reconstructed and that of the fleeting present—the world of student and teacher with its contemporary concerns. With their scholarship they reached into the past, with their teaching into the present.

In bringing Apuleius and Catullus into their own world they made mistakes that we would never make—conflating Isis with the Virgin Mary or reversing the clear sense of a text through simple misogyny. Our mistakes will be different, and we won't recognize them any more than Beroaldo and Valeriano did. "We don't see the pack on our own back," as Catullus observes.⁵⁴ But what matters, I am convinced, is showing the students that the text speaks *to them*. Beroaldo's comparison of his marriage to that of Cupid and Psyche and his comments on the asininity of young men encouraged his students to look for similarities between Apuleius' fictions and their own lives. Valeriano's facetious comments on the comparative life expectancy of salacious sparrows and clean-living crows ensured that his students would never forget Catullus. We will draw different parallels, which will probably seem equally strange 500 years from now. For some time now, movies, videos, even popular music have been helping us build bridges from the past to the present no flimsier than the ones constructed by our predecessors. But we can also take our students *into* the past in ways that our Renaissance colleagues would never have imagined. Their stu-

⁵⁴Catul. 22.21 *sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est*.

dents could be thrilled by recent local discoveries of antiquities; ours can walk through the Parthenon or climb the Palatine Hill with the click of a mouse.

All of us in this room are beneficiaries of the long continuum of classical scholars, teachers, and students, but we are also part of it. Today the continuum often seems perilously and increasingly fragile, but I remain an optimist. If we remember not only to study, but to enjoy our material and continue to find ways to teach it with an eye to both past and present, I predict that our students and their students, and their students after them as far into the future as we can imagine, will be reading, taking pleasure in, and appropriating the ancient authors. Perhaps fifty or a hundred or a hundred and fifty years hence they will even be sitting in a room like this listening to someone like me inviting them to toast the classical authors at the President's reception.

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