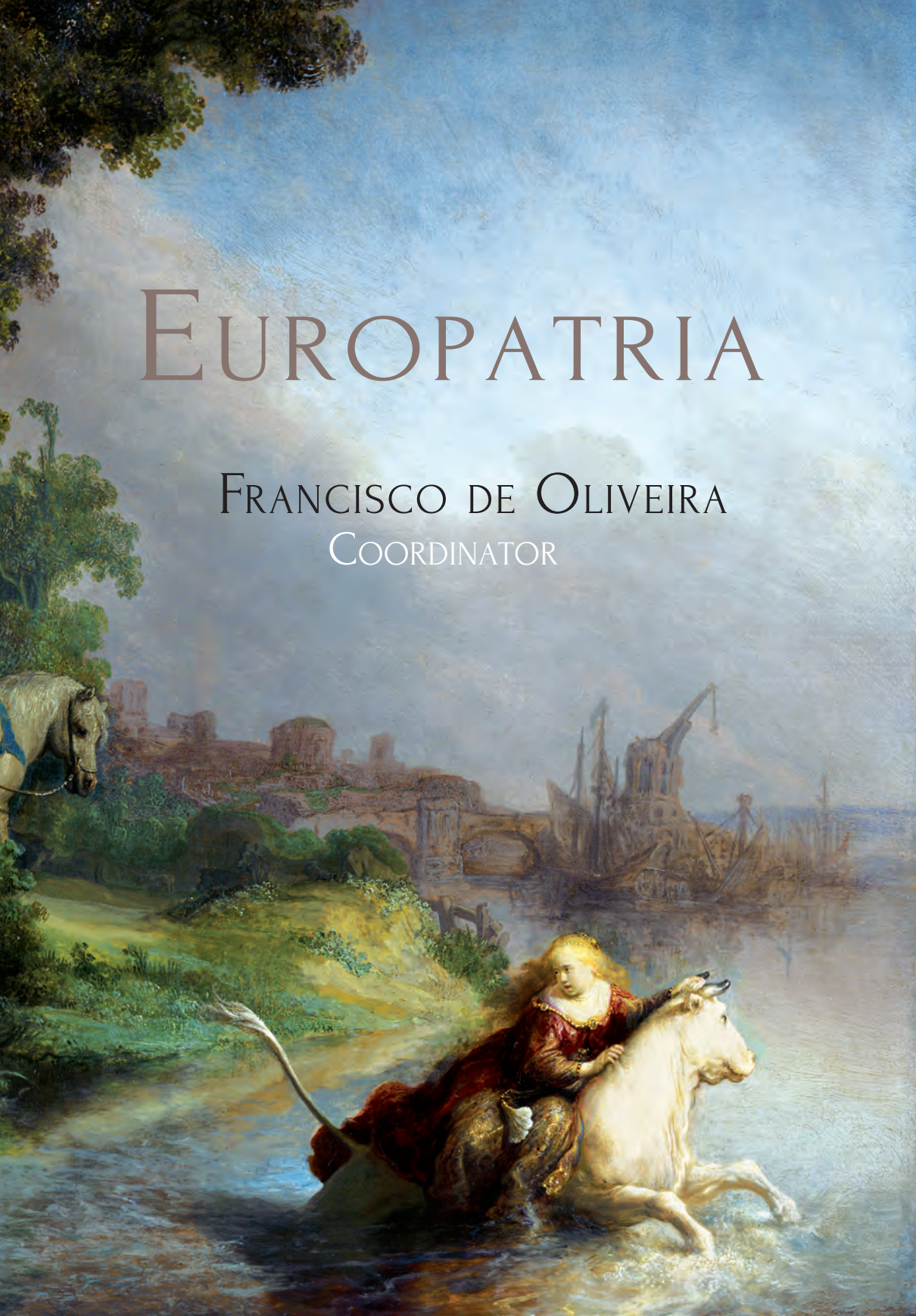


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ITALY

VAGANTES PER ITALICA LITORA. ITINERARIUM POETICVM INTRA LATINAM ITALICAMQVE TRADITIONEM

Introduction

This contribution wishes to be a practicable itinerary for knowledge and study about Italy through texts composed by poets and prose writers. The authors and works that I have chosen cover a very long period: from the Roman Republican age through to the Decadence Age, embracing a period of two thousand years. You can find some very familiar texts here, such as the beautiful poem by Catullus (Verona, 84? B.C. – 54 B.C.) about Sirmio (*carm.* 31) or the ode by Horace (Venosa, 65 B.C. – Roma, 8 B.C.) to the Bandusian spring (*carm.* 3. 13), but also some works from the medieval or humanistic age that are essentially far from the usual lines of literary studies. The order of my contribution obviously has a symbolic sense, starting with the celebration of Italian beauties (Catullus) and ancient traditions (Horace) with a pathetic mourning of a sacrificed young goat.

After these much-celebrated poems of the classical era, we go on to some verses by our most prestigious poet and humanist, Francesco Petrarca (Arezzo, 1304 – Arquà, 1374), whose most important works were inspired by Laura's love, the girl that he met in Avignon in April 1327. Able emulator of classics, Francesco Petrarca found, studied and published a very large number of manuscripts. Among his works the most remarkable Latin

poems are *De viribus illustribus*, *Africa*, *Secretum*, *De remediis utriusque Fortunae* and the *Canzoniere* (this one written in Italian but inspired by Catullus). In some of these works Petrarca speaks with ancient poets as though they were his best friends. We can find this singular attitude of the author in two texts that I have selected here, namely two letters in Latin respectively addressed to Horace and Vergil. Talking about Vergil (Andes, 70 B.C. – Brindisi, 19 B.C.), we must also include in this itinerary the famous celebration of Italy that we can read in *Georgica* (2. 458-474). It is a praise of our country very similar to the Vergilian *laus Italiae* that follows a constant pattern in Petrarca's composition. It is also a beautiful and classical text, where we can find many classical quotations.

Following the dialogue of Petrarca with ancient authors, I would like to present some quotations of the *Epistula*, composed by Dante Alighieri (Florence, 1265 – Ravenna 1321), father of Italian literature. The text I have chosen was written by the poet during a difficult period in exile, to which he was subjected for political reasons. Very famous for his *Divina Commedia*, where he describes his voyage on the reign of deads in search of God and moral redemption, Dante is also well known for his political and rhetoric works (*Epistulae*, *De Monarchia*, *De vulgari eloquentia*, *Convivio*). However, his ardent love for his city, Florence, in Tuscany, and for Italy in general, does not make it hard for him to reach a compromise with political adversaries: this is the essential message conveyed by the text introduced here. After Dante, we have another famous exile, Ovid (Sulmona, 43 B.C. – Tomis, 17 or 18 A.D.). A mysterious *carmen* (perhaps the *Ars amatoria*) and an *error* led to the banishing of this brilliant poet of the golden society away from Rome to Tomis. The difficult situation of Ovid is described in the works he wrote during his exile (*Tristia*, *Epistulae ex Ponto*), where, unlike Dante, he continuously tries to return home with the help of influential people from the Roman society. I quote here some lines from a delightful description of the Italian spring, where the poet celebrates the natural beauty of this country with a really bright picture of Roman life during the feasts, in strident contrast to his inner 'death'.

After this *Laus veris Romanae*, another poet is introduced who composed some perfect verses in Latin: Giovanni Pascoli, one of the most important

authors of the Decadence Age (S. Mauro, 1855 – Castelvechchio, 1912), and a learned classical scholar. After a tragic childhood, with the mysterious murder of his father, the poet became very sensitive. Already from his first work, *Myricae* (1891, title inspired by Vergil), one can understand all his personal suffering and love for the nature. He studied at the University of Bologna with the poet Giosuè Carducci and composed many works in Italian and Latin. With these latter poems, *Carmina (Ruralia, Res romanae, Liber de poetis, Poemata christiana)* and *Thallusa*, he won a prestigious poetry competition for poems written in Latin organized in Amsterdam. These verses are classically constructed and inspired by similar languid and delicate suffering. The lines that I present here are from the Latin work *Fanum Vacunae*: Pascoli describes a rustic sunrise, with accents of soft inspiration. In Italian literature, the motif of the spring is traditionally and strictly related to the fortunate theme of precariousness of human life and youth: let me recall the lyric of Lorenzo il Magnifico (Florence, 1449-1492) about *brevitas vitae et iuventutis*¹. After the melancholic poetry of Petrarca, I conclude my exploration of Italian classical literature with the song *Carmina Burana*, a medieval text where some *iuvenes viatores* celebrate spring and youth, exhorting readers to be happy and carefree as long as possible. The last text is a famous horatian poem on *brevitas vitae* and the need to make the best of youth and life.

¹ *Trionfo di Bacco e Arianna*, ballata, in A. Giudice-G. Bruni, *Problemi*, pp. 737-739: “Quant’è bella giovinezza/che si fugge tuttavia!/Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Quest’è Bacco e Arianna,/belli, e l’un dell’altro ardenti:/perché ‘l tempo fugge e inganna./sempre insieme stan contenti./Queste ninfe ed altre genti/sono allegre tuttavia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Questi lieti satiretti,/delle ninfe innamorati,/ per caverne e per boschetti/han lor posto mille agguati;/or da Bacco riscaldati,/ballon, saltan tuttavia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Queste ninfe anche hanno caro/ da lor esser ingannate:/non può fare a Amor riparo,/se non gente rozze e ingrante:/ora insieme mescolate/suonon, canton tuttavia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Questa soma, che vien drieto/sopra l’asino, è Sileno:/così vecchio e d’anni pieno;/se non può star ritto, almeno/ride e gode tuttavia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Mida vien drieto a costoro:/ciò che tocca, oro diventa./E che giova aver tesoro,/s’altri poi non si contenta?/Che dolcezza vuoi che senta/chi ha sete tuttavia?/Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/ di doman non c’è certezza./ Ciascun apra ben gli orecchi,/di doman nessun si paschi;/oggi sian, giovani e vecchi,/lieti ognun, femmine e maschi;/ogni tristo pensier caschi:/facciam festa tuttavia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza./ Donne e giovinetti amanti,/viva Bacco e viva Amore!/Ciascun suoni, balli e canti!/Arda di dolcezza il core!/Non fatica, non dolore!/Ciò ch’ha a esser, convien sia./Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:/di doman non c’è certezza”.

I have organized my exploration, or better my *Itinerarium poeticum intra latinam italicamque traditionem*, in eleven different symbolic stages, that I classically call *stationes* in my text. I hope that students, teachers, professors or simply my readers can easily look up the following quotations.

Itinerarium poeticum intra latinam italicamque traditionem

1. *Statio prima: amatissima paeninsula Sirmionis*

Catullus (84?-54 B.C.), the most delicate poet of Latin literature, deeply loved Lake Garda: on the shores of this lake he spent the most beautiful period of his life, a period of carefree youthfulness. In these famous lines the poet sincerely celebrates his return to Sirmio from Bitinia, where he participated in a military expedition with the governor Gaius Memmius. The hardship of military life did not suit the candid nature of Catullus, who sings Sirmio with an almost childlike joy:

*Paene insularum, Sirmio, insularumque
ocelle, quascumque in liquentibus stagnis
marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus,
quam te libenter quamque laetus in viso,
vix mi ipse credens Thuniam atque Bithunos
liquisse campos et videre te in tuto.
O quid solutis est beatius curis,
cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum
desideratoque acquiescimus lecto?
Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.
Salve, o venusta Sirmio, atque ero gaude;
gaudete vosque, o Lydiae lacus undae;
ridete, quidquid est domi cachinnorum.*

(Catul. 31)

2. *Statio secunda: laus fontis Bandusiae*

Horace (65-8 B.C.), the satiric poet who defines himself as *Epicuri de grege porcus*, is a delightful and fine artist. In these famous verses he sings the sacrifice of an innocent young goat in the not so innocent waters of the Bandusian spring:

*O fons Bandusiae, splendidior vitro,
dulci digne mero non sine floribus,
cras donaberis haedo,
cui frons turgida cornibus
primis et venerem et proelia destinat.
Frustra, nam gelidos inficiet tibi
rubro sanguine rivos
lascivi suboles gregis.
Te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculae
nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile
fessis vomere tauris
praebes et pecori vago.
Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium
me dicente cavis impositam ilicem
saxis, unde loquaces
lympae desiliunt tuae.*

(Hor. *Carm.* 3.13)

3. *Statio tertia: epistula Petrarcae ad Horatium poëtam*

In these classical verses we can read a very original dialogue between the poet and humanist Petrarca and his *magister poesiae*, Horace. Petrarca loved the ancient world so much that he imagined that he communicated with its more important spirits as though they were his best friends:

Ad Horatium Flaccum lyricum poëtam

Regem te lyrici carminis italus

- orbis quem memorat, plectraque lesbia
neruis cui tribuit Musa sonantibus,
Tbirrenum adriaco, tuscus et apulo,
5 quem sumpsit proprium Tybris ab Aufido
nec fuscam atque humilem spreuit originem,
te nunc dulce sequi saltibus abditis,
umbras et scatebras cernere uallium,
colles purpureos, prata uirentia
10 argentesque lacus antraque roscida;
seu faunum gregibus concilias uagis,
seu pergis Bromium uisere feruidum,
fuluam pampineo siue deam deo
affinem tacitis concelebras sacris,
15 Ambrorum Venerem seu canis indigam,
seu nimphas querulas et satyros leues
et nudas roseo corpore Gratias,
seu famam et titulos Herculis improbi,
incestique aliam progeniem Iouis,
20 Martem sub galea, Pallidis egida
late Gorgoneis crinibus horridam,
ledeos iuuenes, mitia sidera
tutelam ratiū, fluctibus obrutos,
argutum cithare Mercurium patrem;
25 verbis auricomum pectis Apollinem,
et Xantho nitidam cesariem lauis,
Germanam pharetra conspicuam et feris
infestam, aut choreas Pyeridum sacras:
sculpunt que rigido marmore durius
30 heroas ueteres sique forent, nouos,
eternam meritis et memorem notam
affixam calamo, nequa premat dies.*

*Sic uatum studiis sola fauentibus
 virtus perpetuas linquit imagines,
 35 quarum presidio semideos duces
 Drusum et Scipiadam uiuere cernimus,
 nec non et reliquos inclita gentibus
 per quos edomitis Roma iugum dedit,
 in quis preradians lumine uiuido
 40 ut sol eminuit Cesareum genus.
 Hec dum tu modulans me cupidum preis,
 duc aut remiuolo si libet equore,
 aut uis acrio uertice montium;
 duc et per liquidi Tyberis alueos,
 45 qua ripis Anio rura secans ruit,
 olim grata tibi dum superos colis,
 unde hec te meditans nunc tibi texui,
 nostrum, Flacce, decus; duc per inhospitas
 siluarum latebras et gelidum Algidum
 50 Baianique sinus stagna tepentia
 Sabinumque latus ruraque florae
 Soractisque iugum dum niuibus riget;
 duc me Brundusium tramite deuio;
 lassabor minime et uatibus obuuis
 55 congressus placidos aspiciam libens.
 Non me proposito temporis aut loci
 deflectet facies; ibo pari impetus
 vel dum feta uterum magna parens tumet,
 vel dum ros nimiis solibus aruit,
 60 vel dum pomifero fasce gemunt trabes,
 vel dum terra gelu segnis inborruit;
 visurus ueniam litora Cycladum,
 visurum Trachii murmura Bosphori,
 visurus Lybies auia torride,
 65 nimbosique procul frigora Caucasi.
 Quo te cunque moues, quidquid agis, iuuat:*

*seu fidos comites sedulus excitas
 virtutem meritis laudibus efferens;
 seu dignis uitium morsibus impetis,
 70 ridens stultitiam dente uaffer leui;
 seu tu blandiloquens carmen amoribus
 dum complex teneris; siue acie stili
 obiectas uetule luxuriam graui;
 siue urbem et populum dum scelerum reos
 75 culpas et gladios et, rabiem trucem;
 Mecenasque tibi dum canitur tuus,
 per partes operum primus et ultimus;
 dum calcas ueteres et studium recens
 vatum magnanimi Caesaris auribus
 80 infers, dumque Floro carminis hispidi
 limam seu tumidi carmine conficis;
 Fuscum ruris opes et mala turbide
 Urbis, cur ue homini seruit equus ferox,
 Crispum diuitiis quis color edoces;
 85 longis Virgilium luctibus abstrahis
 atque ad letitiam, uer ubi panditur,
 hortaris placide et stultitiam breuem;
 Hirpinum profugi temporis admones,
 Torquatam et parili carmine Postumum;
 90 dum noctes celeres et uolucres dies,
 obrepens tacito dum senium gradu,
 aut uite breuitas ad calamum redit,
 aut mors precipiti que celerat pede.
 Quis non preterea dulciter audiat
 95 dum tu siderea sede superstitem
 Augustum statuis; dum tunicam suis
 Marti, nec satis est texere ferream
 acceditque adamas; dum cuneos ducum
 uinclis implicitos curribus aureis
 100 per cliuum atque Sacram uictor agis Viam,*

*quam pompam mulier dum cauet insolens,
 baudquaquam rigidas horruit aspidas;
 ius fractum hospitii dum memoras dolis
 pastoris frigii, nil Nerei minis*

105 *pacatum Paridi uaticinantibus,
 dum Dane pluuiam fallitur aurea;
 dum uirgo egregiis regia fletibus
 tergo cornigeri fertur adulteri?
 Laetus sollicitus denique mestior*

110 *iratusque places dum dubium premis
 riualem uariis suspicionibus;
 aut dum uipereas iure uenificas
 execraris anus, uulgi et inscium;
 dum cantas Lalagen, nudus et asperum*

115 *et solus tacita fronte fugas lupum;
 infaustamque humeris effugia arborem,
 fluctusque Eolio turbine concitos.
 Pronum te uiridi cespite, fontium
 captantem strepitus et uolucrum modos,*

120 *carpentem riguo gramine flosculos,
 nectentem facili uimine palmites,
 tendentem tenui pollice barbiton,
 miscentem numeros pectine candido,
 mulcentem uario carmine sidera*

125 *ut uidi, inuidiam mens uaga nobilem
 concepit subito, nec peperit prius
 quam te per pelagi stagna reciproci,
 perque omnes scopulos monstraque fluctuum
 terrarumque sequens limite ab indico*

130 *vidi Solis equos surgere nitidos,
 et serum Oceano mergier ultimo.
 Tecum trans Boream transque Notum uagus,
 iam seu fortuitas ducis ad insulas,
 seu me fluctisonum retrahis Antium,*

135 *seu me Romuleis arcibus inuebis,
totis ingenii gressibus insequor.
Sic me grata lyre fila trabunt tue,
sic mulcet calami dulcis acerbitas.*

(F. Petrarca, *fam.* 24.10)

4. *Statio quarta: Vergiliana laus Italiae*

In these well-known lines from *Georgica*, Vergil (70-19 B.C) celebrates his country, Italy, with staid emotion:

*Sed neque Medorum silvae, ditissima terra,
nec pulcher Ganges atque auro turbidus Hermus
laudibus Italiae certent, non Bactra neque Indi
totaque turiferis Panchaia pinguis harenis.
Haec loca non tauri spirantes naribus ignem
invertere satis immanis dentibus hydri,
nec galeis densisque virum seges horruit bastis;
sed gravidae fruges et Bacchi Massicus umor
implevere; tenent oleae armentaue laeta.
Hinc bellator equus campo sese arduus infert,
hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos.
Hic ver adsiduum atque alienis mensibus aestas:
bis gravidae pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbor.
At rabidae tigres absunt et saeva leonum
semina, nec miseros fallunt aconita legentis,
nec rapit immensos orbis per humum neque tanto
squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis.
Adde tot egregias urbes operumque laborem,
tot congesta manu praeruptis oppida saxis*

*fluminaque antiquos subter labentia muros.
 An mare quod supra memorem quodque adluit infra?
 Anne lacus tantos? Te, Lari maxime, teque,
 fluctibus et fremitu adsurgens Benace marino?
 An memorem portus Lucrinoque addita claustra
 atque indignatum magnis stridoribus aequor,
 Iulia qua ponto longe sonat unda refuso
 Tyrrhenusque fretis immittitur aestus Avernis?
 Haec eadem argenti rivos plurima fluxit.
 Haec genus acre virum, Marsos pubemque Sabellam
 adsuetumque malo Ligurem Volscosque verutos
 extulit, haec Decios Marios magnosque Camillos,
 scipiadas duros bello et te, maxime Caesar,
 qui nunc extremis Asiae iam victor in oris
 imbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indum.
 Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
 magna virum: tibi res antiquae laudis et artem
 ingredior sanctos ausus recludere fontis,
 ascræumque cano Romana per oppida carmen.*

(Verg. G. 2. 458-474)

5. Statio quinta: Petrarcae laus Italiae

Singing about his country after spending a period traveling, Petrarca's verses remind us these poems of Catullus and Vergil seen previously:

*Salve, chara Deo tellus sanctissima, salve,
 tellus tuta bonis, tellus metuenda superbis,
 tellus nobilebus multum generosior oris,
 fertilior cunctis, terra formosior omni,
 cincta mari gemino, famoso splendida monte,
 armorum legumque eadem veneranda sacrarum,*

*Pyridumque domus, auroque opulenta virisque;
 cuius ad eximios ars et natura favores
 incubuere simul, mundoque dedere magistram.
 Ad te nunc cupide post tempora longa revertor
 incola perpetuus. Tu diversoria vitae
 grata dabis fessae. Tu quantam pallida tandem
 membra tegant praestabis humum. Te laetus ab alto
 Italiam video frondentis colle Gebennae.
 Nubila post tergum remanent; ferit ora serenus
 Spiritus, et blandis assurgens motibus aer
 Excipit. Agnosco patriam gaudensque saluto.
 Salve, pulchra parens, terrarum gloria, salve!*

(F. Petrarca, *Ep.* 3.24)

6. *Statio sexta: epistula Petrarcae ad Vergilium poëtam*

Vergil is also loved by Petrarca as a very important author and the inspiration of his poetry. Petrarca dedicates this singular letter to Vergil:

*Ad Publium Virgilium Maronem heroycum poëtam
 et latinorum principem poëtarum*

*Eloquii splendor, latie spes altera linguae,
 clare Maro, tanta quem felix Mantua prole
 Romanum genuisse decus per secula gaudet,
 quis te terrarum tractus, quotus arcet Auerni
 5 circulus? An raucam citharam tibi fuscus Apollo
 percutit et nigre contexunt uerba sorores?
 Am pius elysiam permulces carmine siluam
 tartareumque Elicona colis, pulcerrime uatum?
 Et simul unanimis tecum spatiatitur Homerus
 10 soliuagique canunt Phebum per prata poëte,*

*Orpheus ac reliqui, nisi quos uiolenta relegat
 mors propria conscita manu seuique ministry
 obsequio, qualis Lucanum in fata uolentem
 impulit - arterias medico dedit ille cruento*
 15 *supplicii grauiore metu mortisque pudende -;
 sic sua Lucretium mors abstulit ac ferus ardor
 longe aliis, ut fama, locis habitare coegit.
 Qui tibi nunc igitur comites, que uita, libenter
 audierim, quantum uero tua somnia distent*
 20 *et uagus Eneas portaque emissus eburna;
 an potius celi regio tranquilla beatos
 excipit, ingeniisque arrident astra serenis
 post Stygios raptus spoliataque Tartara, summi
 regis ad aduentum, magno certamine uictor*
 25 *impia qui pressit stigmati limina plantis
 stigmati potens eterna repagula palmis
 fregit et horrisono conuulsit cardine ualuas?
 Hec ego nosse uelim. Tu, mundo siqua silenti
 umbra recens nostra ueniet tibi forsitan ab ora,*
 30 *quis tria cara tibi loca nunc totidemque libellos
 exitus excipiat, nostris simul accipe uerbis.
 Parthenope infelix rapto gemit orba Roberto,
 multorumque dies annorum sustulit unus
 prospera; nunc dubiis pendet plebs anxia fati,*
 35 *innocuumque premunt paucorum crimina turbam.
 Optima finitimo quatitur sine fine tumultu
 Mantua, magnanimis ducibus sed fulta, recusat
 inuicta ceruice iugum, ciuilibus usa
 illa quidem dominis, externi nescia regni.*
 40 *Hic tibi composui que perlegis, otia nactus
 ruris amica tui, quonam uagus auia calle
 fusca sequi, quibus in pratis errare soleres,
 assidue mecum uoluens, quam fluminis oram,
 que curui secreta lacus, quas arboris umbras,*

45 *quas nemorum latebras collisque sedilia parui
 ambieris, cuius fessus seu cespitis herbam
 presseris accubitu, seu ripam fontis ameni;
 atque ea presentem michi te spectacula reddunt.
 Que patrie fortuna tue pax quanta sepulcri*
 50 *audisti. Quid Roma parens? hoc querere noli,
 hoc melius nescire puta; melioribus aurem
 ergo adhibe et rerum successus disce tuarum:
 Tityrus ut tenuem senior iam perflat auenam,
 quadrifido cultu tuus ut resplendet agellus,*
 55 *ut tuus Eneas uiuit totumque per orbem
 et placet et canitur, tanto quem ad sidera nisu
 tollere conanti mors obstitit inuida magnis
 principiis; miserum Eneam iam summa premebant
 fata manu iamque ore tuo damnatus abibat,*
 60 *arsurumque iterum pietas Augusta secundis
 eripuit flammis, quem non morientis amici
 deieci mouere animi, meritoque supremas
 Contempsisse preces euo laudabitur omni.
 Eternum, dilecte, uale nostrosque rogatus*
 65 *Meonium Ascreumque senes saluere iube*

(F. Petrarca, *fam.* 24.11)

7. Statio septima: infelix italicus exul

We shall see now a text by the father of Italian literature, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Informed that the florentine people would like to allow him to return home, although with some humiliating conditions, Dante replies to them with this proud letter, dated 1315:

I In litteris vestris, et reverentia debita et affectione receptis, quam repatriatio mea curae sit vobis et animo, grata mente ac diligenti

animadversione concepi; et inde tanto me districtius obligastis, quanto rarius exules invenire amicos contingit. Ad illarum vero significata responsio, etsi non erit qualem forsitan pusillanimitas appeteret aliquorum, ut sub examine vestri consilii, ante iudicium, ventiletur affectuose deposco. II Ecce igitur quod per litteras vestras meique nepotis, nec non aliorum quamplurium amicorum significatum est mihi per ordinamentum nuper factum Florentiae super absoluteione banitorum: quod si solvere vellem certam pecuniae quantitatem, vellemque pati notam oblationis, et absolvi possem et redire ad praesens. In qua quidem duo ridenda et male praeconsigliata sunt, Pater; dico male praeconsiliata per illos qui talia expresserunt; nam vestrae litterae discretius et consultius clausulatae nihil de talibus continebant. III Esne ista revocatio gratiosa, qua Dantes Alagherii revocatur ad patriam, per trilustrium fere perpessus exilium? Hocne meruit innocentia manifesta quibuslibet? Hoc sudor et labor consumatus in studio? Absit a viro philosophiae domestico temeraria tantum cordis humilitas, ut more cuiusdam Cioli et aliorum infamium, quasi vinctus, ipse se patiat offerri! Absit a viro praedicante iustitiam ut perpessus iniurias, iniuriam inferentibus, velut benemerentibus, pecuniam suam solvat! IV Non est haec via redeundi ad patriam, Pater mi; sed si alia per vos ante, aut deinde per alios invenitur, quae famae Dantisque honori non deroget, illam non lentis passibus acceptabo. Quod si per nullam talem Florentia introitur, numquam Florentiam introibo. Quidiu? Nonne solis astrorumque specula ubique conspiciam? Nonne dulcissimas veritates potero speculari ubique sub coelo, ni prius inglorium, immo ignominiosum populo Florentinaeque civitati me reddam? Quippe nec panis deficiet.

(Dante Alighieri, *Ep.* 12)

8. Statio octava: (infelix) Romanus exul cum dulcibus memoriis

Another famous exiled poet, Ovid (43 B.C. – 17 or 18 A.D.), although suffering a difficult banishment, reminds us, in these lines of *Tristia*,

how beautiful the Italian spring is – when Rome is full of feasts, dances and joyful life:

*Iam violam puerique legunt hilaesque puellae,
rustica quae nullo nata serente venit;
prataque pubescunt variorum flore colorum,
indocilique loquax gutture vernat avis:
utque malae matris crimen deponat, hirundo
sub trabibus cunas tectaue parua facit;
herbaque, quae latuit Cerealibus obruta sulcis,
exit et expandit molle cacumen humo;
quoque loco est vitis, de palmite gemma movetur:
nam procul a Getico litore vitis abest;
quoque loco est arbor, turgescit in arbore ramus;
nam procul a Geticis finibus arbor abest.
Otia nunc istic, iunctisque ex ordine ludis
cedunt verbosi garrula bella fori.
Lusus equis nunc est, levibus nunc luditur armis,
nunc pila, nunc celeri vertitur orbe trochus.
Nunc ubi perfusa est oleo labente iuventus
defessos artus Virgine tingit aqua.
Scaena viget, studiisque favor distantibus ardet,
proque tribus resonant terna theatra foris.
O quater, o quotiens non est numerare, beatum,
non interdicta cui licet Urbe frui!*

(Ovid, *Tristia* 2.12. 5-22)

9. *Statio nona: italica alba ruralis*

This is a very interesting poem by Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912), an Italian poet of the Decadence Age. In these Latin lines Pascoli sings about a sunrise in his beloved country with melancholic inspiration:

*Aves ab imis exserunt alis caput
et alterum repente ponunt cruscum:
nam voce tenue tinnula signum dedit
crista decoram parva cassidem gerens
alauda. Quod vix crepuit illinc classicum,
telluris umbras inter et clarum polum,
hic omnis arbor interemit, nutat, fremit.
Cecinit avicula, terraque expergiscitur.
Verum susurrus hactenus pressi sonant,
rerumque circum lenis oscitatio:
pelluntur absque cardinum tritu fores,
patent fenestrae molliter ceu palpebrae,
aurae queruntur, dulce aquae singultiunt.
Silvas per omnes sibilus sonat levis!
St! Hinc et illinc mussitant tristes aves,
aegre ferentes antelucanam tubam.
At iam fenestras stridulae circumvolant,
luteis relictis nidulis, hirundines,
iamque hospitale turba diversorium
passercolorum miscet ulmum cantibus.*

(Giovanni Pascoli, *Fanum Vacunae*, 125-174)²

10. *Statio decima: cantus clericorum vagantium*³

In Medieval times, the poetry of *clerici vagantes* was a very original product of classical tradition and modern sensibility. In these verses we can also perceive the classic motifs of *laus veris* and *brevitas vitae*:

Laetabundus rediit

² Apud G. Monaco, V. Rosato, *Civiltà di Roma*, pp. 245-246.

³ G. Monaco, V. Rosato, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-244.

*Avium concentus,
ver iucundum prodiit,
gaudeat iuventus,
nova ferens gaudia;
modo vernant omnia,
Phoebus serenatur;
redolens temperiem
novo flore faciem
Flora renovatur.
Gaudeamus igitur,
iuvenes dum sumus:
post iucundam iuventutem,
post molestam senectutem
nos habebit humus.*

(Ch. W. Kindleben, *Studentenlieder*, p. 52)

11. *Statio undecima: quid sit futurum cras fuge quaerere*

To conclude, here is another poem by Horace where we find all the motifs introduced in the present work. However, in Horace we do not have a lovely spring: winter wraps trees, mountains and hills in silent snow. After this pleasant wintry picture, the poet sings about the brevitas vitae and the need to deeply enjoy youth, perhaps remembering his epicurean doctrine:

*Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte nec iam sustineant onus
silvae laborantes geluque,
flumina constiterint acuto.
Dissolve frigus ligna super foco
large reponens atque benignius
deprome quadrimum Sabina,*

*o Thaliarche, merum diota.
 Permite divis cetera, qui simul
 stravere ventos aequore fervido
 deproeliantis, nec cupressi
 nec veteres agitantur orni.
 Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quaerere et
 quem Fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro
 adpone nec dulcis amores
 sperne, puer, neque tu choreas,
 donec virenti canities abest
 morosa. Nunc et campus et areae
 lenesque sub noctem susurri
 composita repetantur hora
 nunc et latentis proditor intumo,
 gratus puellae risus ab angulo
 pignusque dereptum lacertis
 aut digito male pertinaci.*

(Hor. *Carm.* 1.9)

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