

NECROMANCY IN RENAISSANCE ROME

by Paul Gwynne

Florence, Bibliotheca Riccardiana MS 996 is an interesting miscellany of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century texts. Among the manuscript's curious content is Dominici Cerbonii Tifernatis TERtheus Magus ('The Triple God Magus of Domenico Cerbonio from Città di Castello', fols 7^r–10^v). Evenly written in a neat humanistic cursive, with rubrication for the titles and a single marginal note (interpreted here as a stage direction), these folios form an account, in Latin prose and verse, of a necromantic ritual performed by members of the Roman Academy in which the shades of Cicero and Virgil are conjured from the pagan underworld to admire the Renaissance city. It is tempting to take this pagan rite as proof of the charges of heresy levelled at members of the Academy for which they were arrested and imprisoned in Castel Sant'Angelo on the orders of Pope Paul II Barbo (r. 1464–71) during Lent, 1468. However, this paper argues that the texts are evidence of a dramatic performance with scenery (or at least a theatrical backdrop) staged by the members of the reformed Academy as part of their annual celebrations of the Palilia (or Parilia) on Rome's birthday 21 April c. 1501.

Il manoscritto Firenze, Bibliotheca Riccardiana MS 996 è un'interessante miscellanea di testi di fine Quattrocento e inizio Cinquecento. Tra i contenuti curiosi del manoscritto si deve annoverare il Dominici Cerbonii Tifernatis TERtheus Magus ('Il triplice Dio Mago di Domenico Cerbonio da Città di Castello', ff. 7^r–10^v). Scritti uniformemente in corsivo umanistico, con rubricature per i titoli e un'unica nota marginale (qui interpretata come una regia teatrale), questi fogli costituiscono il resoconto, in prosa e versi latini, di un rituale negromantico eseguito dai membri dell'Accademia romana, in cui le ombre di Cicerone e Virgilio vengono evocate dagli inferi pagani per ammirare la città rinascimentale. Si è tentati di considerare questo rito pagano come una prova delle accuse di eresia rivolte ai membri dell'Accademia, per le quali furono arrestati e imprigionati a Castel Sant'Angelo per ordine di Papa Paolo II Barbo (1464–1471) durante la Quaresima del 1468. Tuttavia, il presente lavoro sostiene come i testi siano la prova di una rappresentazione drammatica con scenografie (o almeno un fondale teatrale) messa in scena dai membri dell'Accademia riformata come parte delle loro celebrazioni annuali dei Palilia (o Parilia) nel giorno del compleanno di Roma, il 21 aprile del 1501 circa.

Among the many treasures of the Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence, there is an interesting miscellany of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century texts (MS 996).¹ Included within this manuscript's curious and varied content is a Latin

¹ This article is offered to Frances Muecke as a token of her friendship and support and to the spirits we have raised over the years in various Roman hostelries. I thank Keith Sidwell and Alessandro Pagliara for help with the Greek verses and Patrick M. Owens with the Hebrew inscription and the two anonymous readers for their helpful suggestions for improvement. The codex contains disparate literary compositions in a variety of hands. The manuscript has yet to be analysed and catalogued. The nineteenth-century catalogue offers only the most cursory information: 996 Collenucci Pandulphi, Apologus cui titul. Bombarda. Dominici Cerbonii Tifernatis Tertheus magus &c. Adc. Cyriaci Aconitani inscriptiones et de Cycladum veteribus monumentis. *Inventario* 1810: 23. Abbreviations of Latin texts follow the guidelines of the

text, in prose and verse, entitled: *Dominici Cerbonii Tifernatis TERtheus Magus* ('The Triple God Magus of Domenico Cerbonio from Città di Castello', fols 7^r–10^v). These folios purport to document a necromantic ritual in which a 'Magus of the Triple God' (*TERtheus Magus*), conjures the shades of Cicero and Virgil from the pagan underworld to admire the Renaissance city of the early sixteenth century. References within the text to the recent (*nuper*, fol. 8^v, l.1) passing of the antiquarian and polymath Pomponio Leto (Pomponius Laetus, 1425–98) and the celebration of the Roman festival of the *Parilia* (or *Palilia*) on Rome's birthday (21 April; see below) strongly suggest that ritual can be associated with the Roman Academy founded by Leto (see below).² Indeed, it would be tempting to take the enactment of this pagan rite as proof of the charges of conspiracy and heresy levelled at members of the Academy by Pope Paul II Barbo (r. 1464–71; see below). However, internal references suggest a dramatic performance with scenery (or at least theatrical backdrop: *veteris scenae apparatus*, fol. 8^v, l.3). A marginal note (*Exeunt duae umbrae*: 'two shades appear [from the Underworld]', fol. 8^r, l.65) is here interpreted as a stage direction. This further supports the hypothesis that the text records a performance staged by the members of the reformed Academy c. 1501 as part of their annual celebrations of the *Palilia* in which plays and recitals of Latin poetry formed an essential element. The reiterated theme of 'Rome Reborn', that is, of contemporary achievements rivalling the grandeur of the ancient city, would justify a stage presentation in which the shades of such eminent literary figures as Cicero and Virgil return to marvel at the splendour of the papal city.³

With the definitive return of the papacy to Rome and the end of the schism, from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, a series of popes set about transforming the city into a capital worthy of Christendom and the cultural centre of Europe. Scholars and the sons of well-to-do families with literary aspirations were attracted to the city by the variety of employment and career possibilities that the curia offered. As a result of papal patronage, the centre of humanist scholarship gradually moved from Florence, and the courts of northern Italy and Naples, to Rome. Pope Nicholas V Parentucelli (r. 1443–55) gave liberal support to scholars and, as a keen book collector, created the Vatican Library. Pius II Piccolomini (r. 1458–64) had been a humanist with an international reputation before his elevation to the Holy See. There was, however, a brief and vicious backlash against the humanist circles of Rome during the reign of his successor Paul II who charged the Academicians with

Oxford Classical Dictionary, eds S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow (Oxford University Press, fourth edition 2012).

² The standard work on Leto remains Zabughin, 1910; see now Accame, 2021; also Accame 2008 and more generally, <https://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it>.

³ The manifestation of classical deities into the contemporary situation appears in a number of works associated with the Roman Academy. For example, both Hercules and Mars appear as protagonists in the epyllia of the academician and laureate Johannes Michael Nagonius; see Gwynne, 2020; and more generally Gwynne, 2012.

conspiracy and heresy and threw them into Castel Sant'Angelo during Lent, 1468.⁴ The pope also abolished the College of Abbreviators where many of the city's scholars earned their living. Yet, despite this hiatus, Paul II's immediate successors, Sixtus IV Della Rovere (1471–84) and Innocent VIII Cibo (1484–92), were enthusiastic patrons of literature and the Arts. Sixtus IV re-established both the Roman Academy and the College of Abbreviators soon after his election and appointed Bartolomeo Sacchi (il Platina) as librarian of the newly re-founded Vatican Library. As Kenneth Gouwens (1997: 43) has succinctly observed:

by the late quattrocento, humanist scholars saw the papacy as an ally of their new classically-based culture and increasingly placed their rhetorical skills in its service. Linking Renaissance Rome to classical Rome, they fashioned a rhetoric that dignified the city's historic role as cultural exemplar of Europe and infused this identity with religious motifs suitable to the papacy.

Beyond the curia there existed learned academies and sodalities.⁵ These were literary circles where prelates, curial officials, poets and artists met regularly to exchange ideas and discuss each other's work. Their meetings, held in the garden or *vigna* of one of its most influential members, were convivial affairs and often accompanied by musical performances (Cummings, 2009: 583–600). From contemporary references, it seems that these meetings were modelled upon classical prototypes and the participants thought that they were recreating the symposia of fifth-century Athens or the literary evenings of the age of Caesar and Augustus.

The earliest of the Roman academies was the group that centred upon Pomponio Leto. Although their meetings had been cruelly suppressed by Paul II when various members including Leto himself had been incarcerated in Castel Sant'Angelo, the group reformed during the pontificate of Sixtus IV Della Rovere (r. 1471–84). From 1483 onwards they met annually on 21 April to celebrate the anniversary of Romulus' founding of the city in a ceremony modelled upon the ancient *Parilia*.⁶ The Roman diarist Jacopo

⁴ On the conspiracy, see Dunston, 1973: 287–306; Palermino, 1980: 117–55; more recently, D'Elia, 2009.

⁵ See Chambers, 1995: 1–14; Deramaix *et al.*, 2008; Gwynne, 2015: 1: 18–35; also Gouwens, 2019: 500–14.

⁶ For the revival of the ceremony, see Cruciani, 1969: xxii; Tournoy-Thoen, 1972: 211–35; also Fritsen, 2016: 155–66. A number of compositions associated with the festivities have survived. For example, a miscellany (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat. 3351), ascribed to the Roman poet Fausto Capodiferro, contains a short dialogue between Venus, Ilia and Mars and introduced by the Genius of Rome, which was performed in 1499 (*incipit: Cum Genio laeto celebrate Palilia coetu*, fols 33^v–36^r). The same manuscript contains verses recited in honour of Pope Alexander VI Borgia (r. 1492–1503; *incipit: Dicite Alexandro laudes quo principe salvo*, fol. 72^{r-v}) and a performance by a breeze *Aura acta Palilibus* (*incipit: Aura ego sum, sedes nobis est mobilis aer*, fol. 77^v). For a newly discovered manuscript fragment of a dramatic performance written in Leto's own hand, see Gwynne 2022: 123–43.

Gherardi da Volterra (1434–1516) notes that during the first celebration of this revived ancient festival, a privilege granted by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III (r. 1452–93) was read to those assembled for permission to revive secular theatre and for the presentation or recitation of a play (or plays) (Da Volterra, 1904: 163).

In his encyclopaedic *Commentaria Urbana* the humanist and theologian Raffaele Maffei (1451–1522) gives an impression of the founder and their meetings:

Also, at that time Pomponio Leto, Porcellio and Chalcidius gave public lectures in Rome. Pomponio was born in Calabria yet he did not know Greek, but he had made himself a great scholar of the past, and if he had discovered any ancient and important inscriptions, he was often showing them to his students. He taught the young men of Rome, with continual labour, he stayed awake through the night, regularly copying out the books himself, and so was both learning and teaching at the same time. From his salary and his students' fees he provided himself with a small plot of land and a little house on the Quirinal hill where he set up a 'sodality for literary men' as he himself called it.⁷

Pomponio's academy was continued after his death by the apostolic secretary Paolo Cortesi (1465–1510) and then, after Cortesi's death, by Angelo Colocci (1474–1549), who also seems to have acquired Leto's house on the Quirinal hill and inherited a number of his books.⁸ The poet Vincenzo Calmeta (c. 1460–1508) has left a brief account of these later gatherings frequented by the literati of the Borgia court including (among others) the Catalan humanist Cardinal Juan de Vera (1453–1507), Cesare Borgia's secretary Agapito Geraldini (1450–1515), Pope Alexander VI's secretary Adriano Castellesi (c. 1460–c. 1521) and the poet Michele Ferno (1463–1513):

At the same time at Rome our academy also flourished at the house of Paolo Cortesi, whose learning, ability and affability was beyond his years, and he was held in great esteem at the papal court, in such a way that the academy was not a house of manners but a workshop of eloquence and a repository of every respectable virtue that could be named. Every day a great crowd of educated people gathered there: Gianlorenzo Veneto, Pietro Gravina, the bishop of Montepiloso, Agapito Geraldini, Manilio, Cornelio and other scholars, into whose orbit, younger scholars, who wanted their talents to increase, took themselves to stay and take delight. Among the vernacular poets Aretino's passions were of the greatest renown, nor yet were our fragments held in little esteem.⁹

⁷ *Eodem quoque tempore in urbe Pomponius Laetus, Porcellius, et Chalcidius profitebantur. Pomponius natione Calaber Graecorum ignarus, tantum antiquarium sese facitaverat, ac siqua nomina exoleta ac portentosa invenerat, scholis ostentabat. Iuventutem Romanum erudit, labore alioquin adsiduo, noctibus totis vigilabat, libros ipsemet scriptitando, simul et discebat, et proficiebat. Ex salario et discipulorum mercedibus parvum agellum et domunculam in Quirinali sibi paraverat, ubi sodalitates literatorum, ut ipse appellabat, instituit.* Maffei, 1544: 492. See also Wilson, 2020: 337–405.

⁸ On Cortesi, see Ricciardi, 1983: 766–70; on Colocci, see Ubaldini, 1969; Fanelli, 1979; also Petrucci, 1982: 105–11 and Muecke, 2005: 139–56. For the various dwellings on the Quirinal hill, see Coffin, 1979: 187.

⁹ *Fioriva medesimamente in Roma a quel tempo la nostra Accademia in casa di Paulo Cortese, giovane per dottrina, grado e affabilità in la Corte assai reverito, per modo che non casa di*

It has long been recognized that Leto's Academy was the prime mover behind the revival of classical theatre in late fifteenth-century Rome (Licht, 1996: 8). In his biography of Leto, the Venetian humanist Marcantonio Sabellico (1436–1506) notes the important role that theatrical performances played in Leto's pedagogy:

With equal enthusiasm Leto revived the ancient tradition of the spectacle for the unaccustomed citizens, using the courtyards of important clerics for theatres, in which certain stories of Plautus, Terence and also of more recent authors were performed, which he himself both taught to the honest youths and directed those acting.¹⁰

As noted above, Cerbonio's text suggests a theatrical performance with the Magus adopting the role of 'Master of Ceremonies' much in the manner of Leto himself. The text is divided into four parts or 'acts': a propitiatory ritual performed by a Magus (in verse) to summon the shades of Cicero and Virgil; a speech by Cicero (in prose); a speech by Virgil (in hexameters); and two concluding Sapphic stanzas.

While poets and literary figures at other Italian courts composed in both Latin and the vernacular, at Rome Latin was *de facto* the common language of an increasingly international curia. A pure Latin style stripped of the 'barbarisms' of the Middle Ages, with Cicero as the model for prose and Virgil as the model for verse, was the ultimate goal. Indeed, in his *De Elegantia* (1449) the humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–57), who worked in the papal chancery and had exposed the so-called Donation of Constantine as an eighth-century fraud, went so far as to proclaim a new *imperium* of pure Latinity. Success in Rome, both at the curia and in the literary circles that grew up around the city demanded not only a profound knowledge of the classical canon but also an ability to imitate their style. Cerbonio's text exemplifies this. Cicero and Virgil both speak lines from their own works reformulated to provide a new commentary upon contemporary events. Although in theory the fifteenth-century ideal of *imitatio* aimed at something greater, in practice it was often, as here, little more than a loose patchwork of quotations, artfully stitched together.¹¹

corteggiano ma officina di eloquenza e recettaculo d'ogni inclita virtù se poteva chiamare. Concorrevano ivi ogni giorno gran multitudine de elevate ingeni: Gianlorenzo Veneto, Petro Gravina, Montepiloso Episcopo, Agapito Gerardino, Manilio, Cornelio e molti altri eruditi, sotto la cui ombra altri di minore etade, che de amplettere la virtù tuttavia erano desiderosi, a soggiornare e prendere delectazione ancora se reducevano. Erano de' poeti vulgari in grandissimo pregio li ardori de lo Aretino, né ancora de' nostri frammenti si faceva poca essistimazione. Vincenzo Calmeta, Prose e lettere edite e inedite (con due appendici di altri inediti), Grayson, 1959: 63–4.

¹⁰ *Pari studio veterem spectandi consuetudinem desuetae civitati restituit, primorum antistitum atriis pro theatro usus, in quibus Plauti, Terentii, recentiorum etiam quaedam agerentur fabulae, quas ipse honestos adulescentes et docuit et agentibus praefuit.* Cruciani, 1983: 187; also Sabellico, 2008 <https://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it>. This claim is repeated by Giovanni Antonio Sulpizio da Veroli in the prefatory letter to his edition of Vitruvius (*editio princeps* 1486–16 Aug. 1487). In general, see Cruciani, 1983; also Krautheimer, 1948: 327–46; and Steadman, 2021.

¹¹ Although the subject is vast, relevant studies on imitation include Greene, 1982; McLaughlin, 1995; Pigman III, 1990: 199–210.

The propitiatory ritual and sacrifice to the infernal deities is spoken by a ‘Magus of the Triple God’ (*TERtheus Magus*): that is, a magus of the goddess Hecate in her triple forms (see below).¹² His preparations echo Odysseus’ rites to summon the dead heroes in Homer (*Odyssey* 11.23–50), Aeneas’ preparations to visit the Underworld in Virgil (*Aen.* 6.1–263) and the witch Erichtho’s reanimation of a soldier’s corpse in Lucan (*De Bello Civile* 6.569–830). Other epic passages, such as Dido’s curse upon the Trojans (Verg., *Aen.* 4.362–92), the construction of her funeral pyre (Verg., *Aen.* 4.509–21) and Medea gathering poisons (Ov., *Met.* 7.179–349; Valerius Flaccus 7.349–406), are also referenced.¹³ In the manner of ‘Round about the cauldron go; | In the poison’d entrails throw’ (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 4.1.4–5) *avant la lettre*, much of the ritual catalogues the grim contents of the Magus’ magic brew. As the spell takes effect the hexameter breaks into strange howling and the Magus speaks in tongues (Greek and then Hebrew) as the spirits approach.

Quec quec quec quec quec quec quec quec quec quec cu cu
Vu vu vu vu vu bof bof,
Sed tremuisse solum et mugitus terra dedisse
 60 *Visa est an fallor? Non fallor, carmine iam iam*
Certo insistendum est. Herebum te verberat anguis,
Et vos Eumenides castigat: vosque ego Manes
Persequor: et non dum celeres mea iussa subitis
Πλουτον ὤερσε ΨόνΗτε καὶ Δάμονες ἄλλοιτε πάντες
 65 *Του ἐρεθέυς ψυχάισ στι τάχι φανοιγετε πύλας*
(Exeunt duae umbrae)
Iamque audire sat est nobis quod querimus horum
Verba dabunt; lento passu tacitique sequamur.

(Quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, cu cu
 Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, bow wow.

Am I deceived or did the ground seem to shake and the earth bellow? I am not mistaken! Now, now it must be pressed home with an effective spell. The snake beats you Erebus, and chastises you Furies. I also hound you, Manes; you have not yet promptly obeyed my commands. Pluto, Persephone and all you other demons, open now the gates of Erebus to the spirits!

(Two shades appear.)

Now we must hear what we asked of them. They will speak. Let us follow slowly and in silence.)

The Magus is thus presented, albeit in a grotesque context, as the humanist ideal of a man of culture competent in the three classical languages (*trium linguarum gnarus*, in Latin, Greek and Hebrew).¹⁴ Whereas in the *Odyssey*, *Aeneid* and

¹² On the figure of the Magus in this period, see Grafton, 2024.

¹³ For necromancy as an established part of the epic tradition, see Finkmann, 2019: 2: 747–98; also Bernstein, 2011: 257–79. On necromancy in the ancient world in general, see Ogden, 2001; in neo-Latin imitation, see Haskell, 2017:17–34 (note 3).

¹⁴ For the concept of the three pre-eminent languages and the foundation of trilingual colleges all over Europe after 1500, see Boyle, 1993: xiii–xiv; and in general D’Amico, 1983.

Bellum Civile the encounter with the spirits of the dead is to gather knowledge of the future (a safe route home for Odysseus; the future greatness of Rome for Aeneas; the outcome of the battle of Pharsalus for Sextus Pompeius), here the spirits of Cicero and Virgil are summoned to confirm the present achievements of Rome and its citizens.

The shade of Cicero delivers a speech that is a collage of quotations from his philosophical works, mainly from the manual of civic virtue known as *De Officiis* ('On Duties' or 'On Obligations'). Here, Cicero's 'theoretical treatment of the obligations which a citizen should render to the Commonwealth' has been recast as a celebration of papal Rome under the Borgia:¹⁵

Cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui, familiares, sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa. iuventutem virtutis emulam magistratibus caeterisque honoribus decorate.

(Parents are dear; dear are children, relatives, friends; but one fatherland embraces all our nearest and dearest. Honour youth, emulous of virtue, with civic offices and other awards.)

As becomes obvious later in Virgil's speech, the *patria* here is no longer Republican government but the universal Church under the Borgia papacy and the *iuventus* to be honoured is Alexander's infamous son Cesare (1475–1507), then at the height of his power and influence (see below).

Virgil's speech is also a pastiche of quotations from the author's own works. This is made clear in the subtitle: *Cento* ('A Cento', fol. 9^r): that is, a poem recombining verse fragments of Virgil to generate a new meaning.¹⁶ Scott McGill (2005: xv) defines the genre as: 'a patchwork text [...] comprised of unconnected verse units taken from the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* and pieced together to create narratives that differ from Virgil's own. These units may consist of a segment of a hexameter line; an entire line; a line and some section of the following line; and rarely two or three entire lines'.¹⁷ Here, the poet expands a single passage (Verg., *Aen.* 5.49–58: Aeneas' celebration of an annual festival upon the anniversary of his father Anchises' death) to create a panegyric on Cesare Borgia and, in particular, his second campaign in the Romagna (October 1500–June 1501) (Gwynne, 2015, vol. 1: 285–312; vol. 2: 3–95).

*Mox tamen ardentis accingar dicere pugnas
Caesaris et quantus (magnae spes altera Romae)
In clipeum assurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam
Utque Faventinos nunc duro Marte subegit.*

¹⁵ Syme, 1939: 145.

¹⁶ See Tucker, 2009: 204–38. With the exception of the noun *Faventinos* (l.35) and the phrase *mihi credite* (l.52; found exclusively in Silius Italicus, among the epic poets), the poem is entirely composed in Virgilian *membra*.

¹⁷ McGill, 2005, who acknowledges that this definition is largely derived from Ausonius' preface to his own centos.

(Yet I will soon gird myself to celebrate the blazing battles of Cesare (the second hope for the future greatness of Rome), and how huge he rises behind his shield, with what a whirr he spins his javelin as he now has subdued the people of Faenza in savage war.)

The two concluding Sapphic stanzas are addressed by the Magus to the Triple Deity of the Underworld. In the second stanza it is made obvious that the rite has been a performance in honour of the *Palilia*, the feast of Pales, the shepherd festival celebrated on 21 April, the foundation of Rome:

*Tu memor fati sequere et vetusto
More natales celebra hos quotannis,
Teque magni orbis caput esse Romam
Roma memento.*

(You Rome attend, mindful of your fate, and with ancient custom, celebrate these birthdays every year; and thou shalt remember that you are Rome, master of the whole world.)

The intertextual reference to Pompey's fate *seque memor fati* ('mindful of his career', Lucan, *De Bello Civile*, 8.10) within a general *rifacimento* of Anchises' injunction to future Romans (Verg., *Aen.* 6.851) is a chilling reminder of the transience of mundane affairs and ends the performance on a sobering note.

THE AUTHOR

The author can be identified as Domenico Scribonio dei Cerboni (or dei Cerbi). He is described as *Tifernatis*: that is, 'from Tifernum Tiberinum', a Roman colony on the Tiber, now Città di Castello in northern Umbria. The Cerboni were a leading family in Città di Castello. Domenico Cerbonio was appointed Bishop of Imola on 10 February 1511 by Julius II Della Rovere (r. 1503–13). He served with distinction as bishop until his resignation in 1533.¹⁸ Otherwise, very little is known about his early career. We may assume that our author, like so many educated young men in late fifteenth-century Italy, was attracted to Rome by the opportunities for employment that the vast bureaucracy of the papal court and administration afforded talented men of letters and where, as we have noted above, humanist culture was at its height.

DATE

Internal references to contemporary events allow the date of composition to be established with some degree of accuracy. The shade of Cicero claims that Pomponio Leto had but recently (*nuper*, fol. 8^v, l.1) descended into the

¹⁸ Eubel, 1898–1923, 3: 213. An eighteenth-century history of the diocese describes him as 'sogetto ingegnossissimo, delle gravi e amene scienze illustre culture e grand politico': Alberghetti Ferri, 1805: 151.

Underworld. Leto died on 9 June 1498. The shade of Virgil mentions Cesare Borgia's siege of Faenza, which occurred from autumn 1500 to spring 1501. The city fell to Cesare's forces on 25 April 1501. No mention is made of the successful outcome to this campaign, nor of Cesare's return to Rome later that year (17 June). This suggests that the text was composed during the winter months 1500/01 for the next annual gathering of the Roman Academicians at the *Palilia* on 21 April 1501. Although disbanded by Paul II, as we have noted above, the Academy reformed during the reign of Sixtus IV on the model of a religious confraternity. The group assembled on Rome's Birthday at Santa Maria in Aracoeli, attended mass before the altar of their patron saints, Victor, Genesio and Fortunata, and then adjourned to Leto's house on the Quirinal for a banquet and a poetic contest. As mentioned above, the dramatic nature of the text and length of the speeches suggests that the piece was performed, perhaps by the younger members of the academy on this occasion. Unfortunately, there is no indication of the location. It may be that Cellini's famous séance in the Colosseum recalls a performance such as this.¹⁹

A NOTE ON THE TRANSCRIPTION

The text is transcribed and translated here for the first time. As far as I am aware, the manuscript in the Biblioteca Riccardiana is the only copy of this intriguing and enigmatic text. The script is evenly written in a neat humanistic cursive, with rubrication for the titles which suggests a fair or presentation copy (by the author himself?). The text has simply been transcribed with minimal editorial intervention. Renaissance orthography has been retained, for example using *quom* for *cum* (fol. 8^v, l.21); *soboles* for *suboles* (fol. 9^v, l.23). The distinction between consonantal and vocalic *u* has been indicated by *v* and *u* respectively. Similarly, medial *i* has been preferred to *j*. The standard palaeographical abbreviations, suspensions (e.g. the horizontal stroke for *m* and *n*) and contractions have been written in full. All proper names have been capitalized. The diphthong *æ*, ampersand *œ* and the abbreviation *-q*, for the conjunction *-que*, have been silently expanded. The fact that the text is preserved in a single manuscript inevitably means that some textual problems (such as *Θριμω* [for *τριμορος?*] fol. 7^r, l.13) are virtually insoluble. Pace Fred Nichols (1979: 835–50), the punctuation has been slightly amended, following the principles laid down by Josef IJsewijn and Dirk Sacré (1998: 460–78).

A commentary on the two original compositions has also been included. This does not aim to be exhaustive and is limited for the most part to poetic echoes of classical authors for comparison. Points of grammar or syntax are rarely commented upon. The classical references in the speeches by Cicero and Virgil, essentially mosaics of quotations of these authors' own works, can be found in the footnotes.

¹⁹ There are a number of striking similarities between the two accounts; see Cellini, 1907: 98–101.

TEXT

7^f Dominici Cerbonii Tifernatis | TERtheus Magus

Iam satis hoc latuit mentem: si tempore nostro
 Crevit in id culmen, fuerat quo maxima quondam
 Roma, dabunt Stigiis revocatae a fontibus umbrae.
 Primum, corpus aqua spargam dum sidera suadent;
 5 Hicque scrobem fodiam cubitalem, altaria ponam hic,
 Invergens fronti vina et pia vellera carpens.
 'Dii quibus aeternae est pallida Tartara curae
 Has audite preces. Tu primum, maxime Pluto,
 Fac ne nostra levis ventus ferat irrita dicta,
 10 Si tibi nostra unquam placuerunt pinguis sacra;
 Tuque, Hecate, Regina Herebi, si numina centum
 Sunt tibi, si triplex facies, si terna potestas
 Adsis; et tu, sive eadem es, sive altera, Θριμωρος.
 Et tu, Tartarei custodis limina regni
 15 Qui vigil, hac tantum sis mitis Cerberus hora
 Nosque molam dabimus tibi dulci melle perunctam.
 Tuque, Charon, vultus nimium depone severos;
 Et precibus te flecte meis, iustissime Minos.
 Nos Herebi geminas animas huc poscimus, antro
 20 Non quae Tartareo latent et valle profunda,
 Errent Elisii sed quae per gramina campi,
 Pro quibus haec²⁰ vobis manibus cadit hostia nostris.
 7^v Accipite hic vobis, Inferna o numina, sanguis
 Spargitur, et multum mellis cum lacte recenti,
 25 Herbaque sacra datur vobis et mascula thura,
 Cumque oleo bene salsa mola et quae vina ministrant
 Et vestris dantur spirantia viscera flammis.
 Nescio sed tremulum quid maius flamma refulsit,
 Grata fuit multum ceciditque victima forsan.
 30 Sed iam carminibus magicis me tempora poscunt
 Accingi; giros triplices locamus in orbem,
 Quem circum haec cantata mihi tria stamina nectam
 Pulvere et hoc magica signabimus arte figuras.
 'Hae sunt ad lunam quas dextra legimus herbas,
 35 Falcibus has secui; leva has avulsimus, hasque
 Caucasus, has Pindus dedit, has mihi Pelion altus.
 Fulmineis flammis has frondes quercus adusta,
 Nux dedit has, cantata prius mihi carmine diro.
 Hic est spuma canis rabidi, sunt condita parvo
 40 Mille venena cado, bubonis corda sinistri
 Ecce, et quae ova fovens tepfecit pectore corvus
 Saxa diu, sunt hic lincisque lupique medullae.
 Hic est quem patrius fudit cruor impius ensis
 Et qui fraterna ac soceri de cede nephanda
 45 Fluxit; et hypomanes sceleratum haec contegit urna.

²⁰ MS damus.

- 8^r Tigridis haec orbae saeva est membrana, draconis
 Hoc spoliū; atque haec sunt quae legimus ossa sepulchris;
 Hic est hic nostris assuetus cantibus anguis;
 Tulli tuque Maro, quos olim protulit aetas
- 50 Maxima qua summo regnabat culmine Roma,
 Vos petimus; vos huc cogant mea carmina; nobis
 Dum vestro eloquio pateat, quae saecula cedant;
 Urbs maior fueritne olim quae maxima nunc est
 An ne novis rebus cedat superata vetustas.
- 55 Vos placido vultu capite haec mea iussa, precamur,
 Quae Romam non vos ad tristia Tartara pellunt.⁷
 Quēc quēc quēc quēc quēc quēc quēc quēc quēc cu cu
 Vu vu vu vu vu bof bof,
 Sed tremuisse solum et mugitus terra dedisse
- 60 Visa est an fallor? Non fallor, carmine iam iam
 Certo insistendum est. Herebum te verberat anguis,
 Et vos, Eumenides, castigat: vosque ego, Manes,
 Persequor: et nondum celeres mea iussa subitis
 Πλουτον ώερσε ΨόνΗτε καί Δάιμονεσ ἄλλοιτε πάντεσ
- 65 Του έρεθέουσ ψυχάισ στι τάχι φανοιγετε πύλασ.
 (Exeunt duae umbrae)
- Iamque audire sat est nobis, quod querimus horum.
 Verba dabunt; lento passu tacitique sequamur.

Umbra Ciceronis

לילית לילית לילית לשמך אי בתרוי ריפדן
 Rupon badui alsamadech lilit lilit lilit

- [8^v] Non falsa²¹ ergo ad nos, Maro, Pomponius Laetus nuper²² attulit,
 qui instauratam Urbem barbariemque illam, qua diu possessa
 est, penitus exuisse afirmabat. En cognosco veteris scenae
 apparatus, eosdem paene hominum concursus, atque eadem
- 5 populi studia. O quod gaudium, Quirites mei,²³ in Elisiis Campis
 iam iam futurum est, quom a me audient Bruti, Decii,
 Scipiones, Maximi, Pauli,²⁴ et caeteri nostri renascentem Urbem
 ac animos vestros non esse degeneres, qui cum bellicis rebus
 animi magnitudinem (qua semper Publica Res Maxima excelluit)
- 10 declarare vobis admodum difficile sit. Praeclarae eruditioni
 atque doctrinae vos dedidistis, optima equidem sequuti.
 Nam regna, imperia, nobilitates, honores, divitiae, opes
 eaque, quae sunt his contraria, in casu sita temporibus gubernantur.²⁵
 Sola sapientia est, quae fortunae imperat; qua quid est, per

²¹ *falsa*: lit. 'false things' here translated as 'fake news' to emphasize the casual banter between Cicero and Virgil.

²² The Roman polymath Pomponio Leto, see above; he died on 9 June 1498.

²³ *Quirites*: the citizens of Rome in their peacetime functions.

²⁴ The great families of Republican Rome.

²⁵ Cic., *Off.* 1.115. From this sentence onwards the speech is a patchwork of quotations from Cicero's own works.

- 15 deos, optabilius? Quid praestantius? Quid homine dignius?²⁶
 Exequimini, exequimini, patres optimi, liberi estis; quid enim
 est aliud libertas²⁷ quam posse sic vivere ut velis? Ille autem
 vivit ut vult, qui recta sequitur, qui legibus non propter
 metum paret. Sic eas sequitur atque colit.²⁸ Rem publicam quisque
 20 pro viribus amplectetur; efficiaturque id quod Pitagoras
 vult in amicitia, ut unus fiat e pluribus.²⁹ Quum
 enim omnia ratione animoque lustraveritis, omnium societatum
 nulla est gratior, nulla carior quam ea quae cum Re Publica ||
 [9] est unicuique vestrum. Cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui,
 25 familiares, sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa.³⁰
 Iuventutem virtutis emulam magistratibus caeterisque honoribus
 decorate. Non enim aliter Urbs haec orbis imperium
 adepta est quam pro dignitate cuique tribuendo.³¹ Exequimini
 et inquam, quod spero, vos brevi in id culmen perventuros,
 30 in quo et nos Romam aliquando vidimus.

Umbra Vergilii. Cento.

- O fortunatae gentes, Saturnia regna,
 Antiqui Ausonii,³² tot iam labentibus annis;³³
 Non alios prima crescentis origine mundi
 Illuxisse dies, aliumve habuisse tenorem
 5 Crediderim:³⁴ hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat.³⁵
 Iamque dies (nisi fallor) adest, quem³⁶ corde sub imo³⁷
 Semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis habebō:³⁸
 O mihi preteritos referat si Juppiter annos,³⁹
 Hunc ego Getulis agerem si Syrtibus exul,⁴⁰
 10 Annua vota tamen solemnesque ordine pompas
 Exequerer strueremque suis altaria donis.⁴¹
 Ergo agite et cuncti laetum celebremus honorem,⁴²
 Cingite fronde comas⁴³ quando huc venistis amici.⁴⁴

²⁶ Cic., *Off.* 2.5.

²⁷ MS *liberbertas*

²⁸ Cic. *Parad.* 5.34.

²⁹ Cic., *Off.* 1.56.

³⁰ Cic., *Off.* 1.57.

³¹ Cic., *Off.* 1.42.

³² Verg., *Aen.* 11.252–3.

³³ Verg., *Aen.* 2.14.

³⁴ Verg., *G.* 2.336–8.

³⁵ Verg., *G.* 2.538.

³⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 5.49.

³⁷ Verg., *Aen.* 10.464–5.

³⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 5.50.

³⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 8.560.

⁴⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 5.51.

⁴¹ Verg., *Aen.* 5.53–4.

⁴² Verg., *Aen.* 5.58.

⁴³ Verg., *Aen.* 8.274.

⁴⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 8.172.

- 9v Ipse dies agitat festos⁴⁵ tellure sub ima,⁴⁶
 15 Sacra canunt⁴⁷ pueri circum innuptae puellae⁴⁸
 Annua, quae deferre nephas,⁴⁹ cum fratre Quirinus⁵⁰
 Dona ferunt,⁵¹ qui solus honos Acheronte sub imo est.⁵²
 Pars in gramineis exercent membra palestris,⁵³
 Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas, et carmina dicunt.⁵⁴
 20 Montibus in nostris solus⁵⁵ (mirabile dictu)⁵⁶
 Augustus Caesar,⁵⁷ premit altum corde dolorem,⁵⁸
 Aeris in campis⁵⁹ querens:⁶⁰ te, Maxime CAESAR⁶¹
 Cara deum soboles, magnum Iovis incrementum.⁶²
 Primus at ire viam⁶³ longevi regis ad aures
 25 Nuntius⁶⁴ est animus finemque imponere curis.⁶⁵
 ‘Vidi egomet,’⁶⁶ dicam,⁶⁷ ‘superas revocatus ad auras⁶⁸
 Egregium forma iuvenem et fulgentibus armis,⁶⁹
 Qualis gemma micat fulvum quae dividit aurum.⁷⁰
 Ille colit terras;⁷¹ non haec sine numine divum
 30 Eveniunt;⁷² gressu gaudens incedit Iuli.⁷³
 Solvite corde metum,⁷⁴ clipeumque auroque trilecem
 Lorica induitur⁷⁵ et caelum territat armis.⁷⁶

⁴⁵ Verg. G. 2.527.

⁴⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 6.459.

⁴⁷ Verg., *Aen.* 2.239.

⁴⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 2.238.

⁴⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 8.173.

⁵⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 1.292.

⁵¹ Verg., *Aen.* 5.101.

⁵² Verg., *Aen.* 11.23.

⁵³ Verg., *Aen.* 6.642.

⁵⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 6.644.

⁵⁵ Verg., *Ecl.* 5.8.

⁵⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 1.439.

⁵⁷ Verg., *Aen.* 6.792.

⁵⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 1.209.

⁵⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 6.887.

⁶⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 10.515.

⁶¹ Verg., G. 2.170.

⁶² Verg., *Ecl.* 4.49.

⁶³ Verg., G. 3.77.

⁶⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 7.166–7.

⁶⁵ Verg., *Aen.* 4.639.

⁶⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 3.623.

⁶⁷ Verg., *Aen.* 2.712.

⁶⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 6.128.

⁶⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 6.861.

⁷⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 10.134.

⁷¹ Verg., *Ecl.* 3.61.

⁷² Verg., *Aen.* 2.777–8.

⁷³ Verg., *Aen.* 1.690.

⁷⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 1.562.

⁷⁵ Verg., *Aen.* 7.639–40.

⁷⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 11.351.

- Mox tamen ardentis accingar dicere pugnas
 Caesaris, et⁷⁷ quantus (magnae spes altera Romae)⁷⁸
 35 In clipeum assurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam⁷⁹
 Utque⁸⁰ Faventinos nunc duro Marte⁸¹ subegit⁸²
 10^f Omnibus umbra locis adero,⁸³ populumque patresque⁸⁴
 Romanos, rerum dominos gentemque togatam⁸⁵
 Et dicam: 'non laudis amor nec gloria cessit
 40 Pulsa metu;⁸⁶ et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.⁸⁷
 Tu tamen interea⁸⁸ susceptum perforce munus⁸⁹
 O praestans animi iuvenis,⁹⁰ Romana propago⁹¹
 In primis venerare deos,⁹² et contrahe quicquid
 Sive animis sive arte vales; opta ardua pennis
 45 Astra sequi⁹³ et generis lapsi sarcire ruinas,⁹⁴
 Numina nulla premunt;⁹⁵ rex Iuppiter omnibus idem,⁹⁶
 Audentes fortuna iuvat.⁹⁷
 Pectora iam totis⁹⁸ operum haud ignara Minervae,⁹⁹
 Arma parate animis.¹⁰⁰ breve et irreparabile tempus
 50 Omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis,
 Hoc virtutis opus.¹⁰¹ nunc illas promite vires
 Nunc animos,¹⁰² (mihi credite)¹⁰³ habet Fortuna regressum.¹⁰⁴

⁷⁷ Verg., *G.* 3.46–7.

⁷⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 12.168.

⁷⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 11.283–4.

⁸⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 8.3.

⁸¹ Verg., *Aen.* 12.410.

⁸² Verg., *Aen.* 10.65.

⁸³ Verg., *Aen.* 4.386.

⁸⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 4.682.

⁸⁵ Verg., *Aen.* 1.282.

⁸⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 5.394–5.

⁸⁷ Verg., *G.* 2.534.

⁸⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 9.422.

⁸⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 6.629.

⁹⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 12.19.

⁹¹ Verg., *Aen.* 6.870.

⁹² Verg., *G.* 1.338.

⁹³ Verg., *Aen.* 12.891–3.

⁹⁴ Verg., *G.* 4.249.

⁹⁵ Verg., *Aen.* 10.375.

⁹⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 10.112.

⁹⁷ Verg., *Aen.* 10.284.

⁹⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 12.528.

⁹⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 5.284.

¹⁰⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 11.18.

¹⁰¹ Verg., *Aen.* 10.467–9.

¹⁰² Verg., *Aen.* 5.191–2.

¹⁰³ Sil., *Pun.* 7.235; 11.171, 576; 12.206.

¹⁰⁴ Verg., *Aen.* 11.413.

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.¹⁰⁵
 Panduntur portae,¹⁰⁶ en iterum crudelia retro
 55 Fata vocant;¹⁰⁷ iterum atque iterum fragor intonat ingens.¹⁰⁸
 Iam iam nulla mora est; sequor et qua ducitis adsum,¹⁰⁹
 Et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.¹¹⁰
 Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.¹¹¹

Tertheus

10^v Gratias vobis agimus damusque
 Ignibus grati pia thura, voti
 Facta quod compos mea mens, profundi
 Numina regni.
 5 Tu, memor fati, sequere et vetusto
 More natales celebra hos quotannis,
 Teque magni orbis caput esse Romam
 Roma memento.

Finis

TRANSLATION

The Triple God Magus of Domenico Cerbonio from Città di Castello.

‘This idea has now long lurked in my mind that, if in our day Rome has reached that peak where once it had been at its greatest, then its shades, recalled from the Stygian springs, will present themselves. First, I sprinkle a dead body with water, in the very moment when the constellations suggest. Here I will dig a pit a cubit square and I will set up the altars here, plucking the consecrated fleeces and pouring wine on to their heads.

[7]“You gods, who have eternal care of pale Tartarus, hear these prayers. First, you Great Pluto, if our rich sacrifices have ever pleased you, do not allow a light breeze to carry off our words without any effect; and you Hecate, Queen of Erebus, if you have a hundred divine presences, if you have triple faces, if you have three-fold power, help me; and you, whether you are the same, whether you are another, O Triple-formed. And you, Cerberus, who watches carefully the Tartarean kingdom’s threshold, be tame at this time and we will give you holy grain smeared with sweet honey. Charon too, put aside your severe expression; you also, most just Minos, soften to my prayers. We are asking here for two spirits from Erebus, who do not lurk in Tartarus’ deep cavern and vale but wander the lawns of the Elysian fields. For these spirits this sacrificial

¹⁰⁵ Verg., *G.* 3.284.

¹⁰⁶ Verg., *Aen.* 2.27; 6.543.

¹⁰⁷ Verg., *G.* 4. 495–6.

¹⁰⁸ Verg., *Aen.* 8.527.

¹⁰⁹ Verg., *Aen.* 2.701.

¹¹⁰ Verg., *Aen.* 4.654.

¹¹¹ Verg., *Aen.* 6.851.

animal falls to you from our hands. Receive it for yourselves, you infernal gods, blood is sprinkled, and honey and fresh milk; a sacred herb is offered to you, and masculine incense, and holy grain spiced well with oil, and what wines they serve, and breathing entrails are offered to your flames.”

[28] Yet the flame glows a little bigger and trembles. Perhaps the sacrifice was acceptable and turned out well. Now the time demands that I gird myself with magic spells; and we arrange three circles into a ring, around which I will tie these three enchanted threads to myself and in this dust, we will mark signs with magic art.

[34] “These are the herbs we have gathered with the right hand by moonlight; I cut these with a sickle; we plucked these with the left hand, and these the Caucasus mountains gave me, these Mount Pindar, these lofty Pelion. A holm-oak blasted by lightning flames gave these branches; a nut-tree these, first enchanted by my dire spell. This is the slaver of a rabid dog; a thousand poisons are preserved in this little urn. Look at these innards of an unlucky owl; and stones which a crow, cherishing as eggs, long warmed with her breast. Here are the entrails of a lynx and a wolf. Here is a father’s blood which a lawless sword shed and that which flowed from fraternal murder and the heinous slaughter of a father-in-law. This jar contains accursed mare-slime; this is the savage skin of a tigress bereft of her cubs. This, a serpent’s slough, and these are bones we have gathered from graves. This snake here is accustomed to our spells. You Tully, and you Maro, whom that age once produced, when mighty Rome ruled on the highest peak, we are seeking you. Let my spells force you to this place, so that we may learn by your eloquence what the future may hold: whether this city, which is now the greatest, was even greater, or whether antiquity having been surpassed will yield to new achievements. Undertake these, my commands, with a calm expression, we beg, which compel you to Rome, not gloomy Tartarus.”

Quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, quec, cu cu
Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, bow wow.

[59] Am I deceived or did the ground seem to shake and the earth bellow? I am not mistaken! Now, now it must be pressed home with an effective spell. The snake beats you Erebus, and chastises you, Furies. I also hound you, Manes; you have not yet promptly obeyed my commands. Pluto, Persephone and all you other demons, open now the gates of Erebus to the spirits!

(Two shades appear.)

[66] Now we must hear what we asked of them. They will speak. Let us follow slowly and in silence.’

The Shade of Cicero

Lilith, Lilith, Lilith, Ashmedai, rupon badui.

[8^v] ‘So, Virgil, Pomponio Leto did not recently bring us “fake news”. He confirmed that Rome has been made great again and has entirely discarded that

barbarousness which had long taken hold of it. Look! I recognize ancient stage sets, virtually the same crowds of men and the same interests of the people. (5) O what joy, my fellow Romans, will there now be in the Elysian Fields, when the Bruti, Decii, Scipiones, Maximi, Pauli and all our other citizens hear from me that Rome is reborn and that your spirits are not degenerate, who show in military affairs magnitude of spirit (with which the Greatest Republic excelled), although it may certainly be difficult for you (10).¹¹² You have devoted yourselves to glorious erudition and learning; indeed, you have pursued the very best things. For royal powers and military commands, nobilities of birth and political office, wealth and influence, and their opposites, depend upon chance and are controlled by circumstances. Wisdom alone commands Fortune. (15) What, in the name of heaven, is more to be desired than wisdom? What is more to be prized? What is more worthy of a human being? You have achieved this, renowned senators, you have achieved this; you are free men! For what is liberty other than to be able to live as you wish? Yet that man lives as he wishes who follows the right path, who obeys the laws, but not through fear. Thus, he follows those things and cultivates them. Let everyone embrace the Republic according to his ability; (20) so that it may be brought about, what Pythagoras desires in friendship, that several are united in one. But when with a rational spirit you have surveyed everything, there is no social relation among everyone more close, none more dear, than that which links each one of you with the Republic. Parents are dear; dear are children, [9^r] relatives, friends; (25) but one fatherland embraces all our nearest and dearest. Honour youth, emulous of virtue, with civic offices and other awards. For in no other way this City obtained World Empire, by rewarding each man according to his worth. You have achieved this, and I say that I hope you will shortly arrive at that peak in which we saw ourselves once at Rome.'

The Ghost of Virgil. A Cento.

'O happy people of Saturn's realm, sons of old Ausonia, so many years have already slipped away; days such as these shone and went their way, I can well believe, at the dawn of the infant world when Saturn lived upon the earth.

The day is now at hand, if I am right, which I will always hold in honour, in the depths of my heart, for so the gods have willed. If only Jupiter would give me back the years that are past, I would spend this day in exile among the Syrtes of Gaetulia, yet I would still offer up these annual vows, perform these processions in ritual order and lay due offerings on altars. Come then, let us celebrate these rites with joy, put a crown of leaves around your hair since you are here as friends. The master himself keeps holiday in the depths of the earth; boys and unmarried girls sing around the annual sacred rites which it would be sinful to postpone; Quirinus and his brother bring gifts; this is the only honour

¹¹² The reference here may be to the magnanimity displayed by Cesare to his enemies throughout his second campaign in the Romagna; see Gwynne, 2015: vol. 1: 285–312; vol. 2: 3–95.

in the depths of the Underworld. Some take exercise on grassy wrestling-grounds, others pound the earth with dancing feet and sing songs in our mountains; only Augustus Caesar kept his misery deep in his heart, lamenting on the broad fields of air: you, Caesar, greatest of all, dear child of the gods, great offspring of Jove. But he is first minded to bear the news to the aged king and put an end to his cares.

“I have seen for myself”, I will say, “recalled to the upper air, a young man, noble in appearance and in gleaming armour, like a gem sparkling in its gold setting. He looks after the earth; these events do not happen without the approval of the gods; rejoicing, he imitates Caesar’s path. Have no fear; he buckles on his shield and breastplate of triple-woven gold and defies the heavens with his weapons.” Yet I will soon gird myself to celebrate the blazing battles of Cesare (the second hope of mighty Rome), and how huge he rises behind his shield, with what a whirr he spins his javelin as he has now subdued the people of Faenza in a savage war; my shade will be with you wherever you may be, both the people and the senators, the Roman masters of the world, the race that wears the toga, and I will say: “It is not that my thirst for praise is gone, or my glory has departed, driven away by fear; Rome has become the fairest thing in the world.

For the moment, however, complete the task you have begun, great-hearted young warrior, Roman offspring, above all, worship the gods and scrape together all your resources of spirit and skill, pray to sprout wings and fly to the stars of heaven, and mend the wreckage of the ruined race, no divine powers beset you; Jupiter is the same king to all men; Fortune favours the bold.

Now prepare your hearts, not ignorant in the works of wisdom, and make ready your weapons with all your spirit. All life is brief, and time once past can never be restored. But the task of the brave man is to enlarge his fame by his actions. Now let us see that renowned courage and spirit, (trust me) Fortune has returned.”

But time is flying, flying beyond recall. The gates are thrown open; see! once again the cruel Fates are calling us back; again and again great peals of thunder; now, now there is no delay, I am following and wherever you lead, there shall I be, and now my great spirit will go beneath the earth. Remember, Roman, to govern the peoples in your empire.’

Triple God

Deities of the deep kingdom, we give you thanks and thankful offer holy incense to the fires; because my mind was able to get the fulfilment of the vow.

You Rome attend, mindful of your fate, and with ancient custom, celebrate these birthdays every year; and thou shalt remember that you are Rome, master of the whole world.

The End.

COMMENTARY

Title

TERtheus: a neologism composed of Latin *ter* ('triple') and Greek *θεός* ('god'). The triple divinity is Hecate (see below); there may also be a covert reference to (Hermes) Trismegistos.

1. **Iam satis hoc:** hexameter *incipit* at Luc. 3.388.

2. **Crevit in id culmen:** Cicero confirms this in the last line of his speech; see above, *Umbra Ciceronis*.

3. **dabunt:** with reflective sense 'to make oneself or one's services available'; see *OLD*, 21.

Stigiis . . . fontibus: found at Valerius Flaccus 7.364.

4. **corpus aqua spargam:** cf. *occupat Aeneas aditum corpusque recenti | spargit aqua*, Verg., *Aen.* 6.635–6 (Aeneas anoints himself at the threshold of the Underworld).

dum sidera suadent: perhaps *somnos* is also understood, as at Verg., *Aen.* 2.9; 4.81. The translation would then read: 'while the stars urge sleep'; thus giving a temporal location after dusk.

5. **scrobem fodiam cubitalem:** echoing the preparations at Hom., *Od.* 11.25: 'I dug a pit, of about a cubit in each direction' (trans. Richmond Lattimore).

6. **fronti** (= *in frontem*): with reference to the black sheep used in the ritual sacrifice performed by the Sibyl at the entrance to the Underworld:

*quattuor hic primum nigrantis terga iuuenos
constituit frontique inuergit uina sacerdos,
et summas carpens media inter cornua saetas
ignibus imponit sacris, libamina prima,
uocē uocans Hecaten caeloque Ereboque potentem.*
Verg., *Aen.* 6.243–7.

7. **pallida Tartara:** 'pallid Tartarus', 'the pale regions of hell'; cf. *tacitas Erebi sedes Ditisque profundi | pallida regna*, Luc. 1.455–6.

8. **Has audite preces:** echoing Verg., *Aen.* 4.612 (Dido's curse upon Aeneas).

Maxime Pluto: Pluto, king of the Lower World, has precedence and is invoked first.

9. Recalling Helenus' description of the Sibylline prophecies written on leaves and scattered by the winds; cf. Verg., *Aen.* 3.445–51.

levis . . . ventus: cf. *tenuis ventus*, Verg., *Aen.* 3.448.

10. **nostra . . . irrita dicta:** cf. Verg., *Aen.* 10.244 (the words of the sea nymph Cymodocea).

11. **Hecate:** a chthonic deity often identified with Diana, and Luna (the Moon). The goddess became associated with the lower world and night and was often represented with three heads, hence the designation *triplex facies* and *terna*

potestas in the following line; cf. *tergeminamque Hecaten, tria virginis ora Dianae*, Verg., *Aen.* 4.511.

Herebi: Erebus, the Lower World; cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.26; 6.247.

numina centum: perhaps recalling the Carthaginian sacrifices to Juno before the statue of Dido:

*ante pedes ensis Phrygius iacet, ordine centum
stant arae caelique deis Ereboque potenti.
hic, crine effuso, atque Hennaee numina diuae
atque Acheronta uocat Stygia cum ueste sacerdos.
immugit tellus rumpitque horrenda per umbras
sibila; inaccensi flagrant altaribus ignes.
tum magico volitant cantu per inania manes
exciti, vultusque in marmore sudat Elissae.
Sil., Pun. 1.91–8.*

12. **Sunt tibi:** hexameter *incipit* at Verg., *Aen.* 12.22.

terna potestas: as a line-end at Verg., *Aen.* 10.18.

13. **Adsis:** hexameter *incipit* at Verg., *Aen.* 4.578 and elsewhere.

Θριμω: contracted form for vocative τριμωρος, ('triple')? Perhaps with reference to Trivia, the epithet of Diana as goddess of the crossroads, and thus identifying her with the triple-formed Hecate. The line is heavily elided to add resonance to the summons to the shape-changing deity.

14–15. **Tartarei custodis limina regni:** Cerberus, identified in the following line (cf. Sil., *Pun.* 2.552). The Magus calls upon three deities of the Underworld and then three of their supernatural assistants: Cerberus, Charon and Minos.

15. **Cerberus:** the triple-headed guard dog Cerberus; cf. Verg., *Aen.* 6.417.

16. **molam:** *mola* was grits or grains of spelt, coarsely ground and mixed with salt, which it was customary to strew on the victims at sacrifices; cf. Verg., *Ecl.* 8.82.

dulci melle perunctam: cf. *cui uates horrere uidens iam colla colubris | melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam lobicit.* Verg., *Aen.* 6.419–21.

17. **Charon:** recalling the ferryman's anger at Verg., *Aen.* 6.407.; cf. also Dante, *Inf.* 3.82–99.

18. **Minos:** one of the judges of the Underworld; see Verg., *Aen.* 6.432; also Dante, *Inf.* 5. 4–24.

19. **geminas animas:** the twin spirits are the shades of Cicero and Virgil; identified at l.49.

22. **cadit hostia nostris:** cf. *nostra cadet hostia dextra*, a line-end at Verg., *Aen.* 1.334.

23. **Accipite hic:** *Accipite haec*, a hexameter *incipit* at Verg., *Aen.* 4.611 (Dido's prayer to the Furies).

24. **multum mellis cum lacte recenti:** that is, *melikraton*, the traditional offering in the sacred ritual of necromancy; cf. the rituals performed by

Odysseus before the pit: ‘and poured it full of drink-offerings for all the dead, first | honey mixed with milk, and the second pouring was sweet wine, | and the third, water, and over it all I sprinkled white barley’ (Hom., *Od.* 11.26–8; trans. Richmond Lattimore).

25. **et mascula thura**: a hemistich at Verg., *Ecl.* 8.66; according to Pliny (*HN* 12.61) there was a particular kind of incense named ‘masculine’.
26. **mola**: see above, l.16.
vina ministrant: cf. *Bacchumque ministrant*, a line-end at Verg., *Aen.* 8.181.
27. **spirantia viscera**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.64.
28. **Nescio ... quid maius**: cf. Prop. 2.36.? on the imminent publication of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The line recalls the success of the love charms at the end of *Eclogue* 8:

*aspice, corripuit tremulis altaria flammis
 sponte sua, dum ferre moror, cinis ipse. bonum sit!
 nescio quid certe est, et Hylax in limine latrat.
 Verg., Ecl. 8.106–8.*

30. **carminibus magicis**: found at Luc. 6.822.
tempora poscunt: a line-end at Ov., *Fast.* 2.861.
31. **in orbem | Quem circum**: cf. *Culex*, 396–7.
33. **magica ... arte**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.493.
34. **ad lunam**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.513.
35. **Falcibus has secui**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.513. (Dido’s ritual pyre).
36. **Caucasus**: the Caucasian mountains in Asia between the Black and Caspian Seas.
Pindus: Mount Pindus in Thessaly, home of the Muses.
Pelion: Mount Pelion in Thessaly, now Zagora.
37. **quercus adusta**: cf. Ov. *Tr.* 4.9.14.
39. **spuma canis rabidi**: cf. *non spuma canum quibus unda timori est*, Luc. 6.671.
40. **bubonis corda sinistri**: cf. Luc. 6.689; owls were considered unlucky and omens of death in the ancient world.
- 41–2. A *rifacimento* of *Quaeque sonant feta tepefacta sub alite saxa*, Luc. 6.676.
42. **lincisque lupique medullae**: cf. *viscera ... lyncis*, Luc. 6.672.
43. **impius ensis**: a line-end at Sil., *Pun.* 1.10.
44. **cede nephanda**: a line-end at Ov., *Met.* 15.174.
45. **hyppomanes**: lit. ‘horse-madness’; a slimy humour that flows from a mare when on heat and which was used to excite desire; cf. Verg., *G.* 3.280; Tib. 2.4.58; Prop. 4.5.18.
46. **Tigridis ... orbae**: the tigress was a byword for ferocity in ancient literature; cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.367.
47. **ossa sepulchris**: a line-end at Verg., *G.* 1.497.
49. **Tulli**: the Roman statesman, lawyer and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC).
tuque Maro: the Roman poet, Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19 BC).

50. **summo regnabat culmine Roma**: the Capitol.
 54. **superata vetustas**: a line-end at Claud. *In Ruf.* 1.283.
 55. **placido vultu**: cf. Stat., *Theb.* 1.202.
 56. **tristia Tartara**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 4.243.
 57–8. The verse breaks into unnatural sounds as the spirits approach; cf. *immugit tellus rumpitque horrenda per umbras | sibila*, Sil., *Pun.* 1.95; also the strange sounds heard as the conjured corpse of the dead soldier is brought back to life by the witch Erichtho:

*dissona et humanae multum discordia linguae.
 latratus habet illa canum gemitusque luporum,
 quod trepidus bubo, quod strix nocturna queruntur,
 quod strident ululantque ferae, quod sibilat anguis;*
 Luc. 6.687–90.

The effect here is surely intended to be humorous. The comic potential is reinforced by the direct address to the audience in the following lines.

57. **quec quec cu cu**: a spondaic hexameter (or perhaps iambic trimeter) recalling the various animal choruses in Aristophanes. Keith Sidwell suggested to me (private correspondence) – and I believe correctly – that *quec* might be a representation of *κοῶξ* the croaking of Aristophanes' frogs; cf. Ar. *Ran.* 209. Aristophanes would be entirely appropriate in this context. *The Frogs* enacts a katabasis to resurrect a playwright. In the fifteenth century 'Aristophanes was regarded highly for the purity of his diction and was believed to offer material useful in forming the character of the reader because of the criticisms of moral failings made in his comedies' (Wilson, 1992: 36).
58. **vu vu bof bof**: a catalectic hexameter (breaking at the end of the third foot -- | -- | --) to imitate the dogs' barking. Due to *betacism* (the sound change from the plosive Greek β to the fricative Latin v in fifteenth-century pronunciation) the *vu* may represent *bau* from the dog's trial in Aristophanes, *Wasps* (Ar., *Vesp.* 903). Again, I owe this suggestion to Keith Sidwell. Note that howling dogs herald the approach of Hecate at Verg., *Aen.* 6. 257.
61. **Herebum te verberat anguis**: cf. *verberat inmotum vivo serpent cadaver*. Luc. 6.727.
62. **Eumenides**: lit. 'the kindly ones'; a euphemistic name for the Furies who are, of course, chthonic deities.
Manes: the deified shades of the dead; gods of the Lower World.
- 64–5. The Magus begins to speak in barely comprehensible tongues to effect his final commands. The Greek verses are a little confused and could perhaps be rendered thus:

Πλοῦτον περσεφόνη τε καὶ δαίμονες ἄλλοι τε πάντες
 τοῦ ἔρεβευῆς ψυχῶς ὅτι (sic) τάχιστ' ἀνοίγετε πύλας

This still does not explain why Πλούτων is in the accusative and *περσεφόνη, δαίμονες* are in the vocative: ‘I summon Pluto, you Persephone and all you other demons’.

65a. **Exeunt duae umbrae**: (literally ‘two shades exit’). The marginal note acts as a stage direction. However, there is no indication in the text how or whence the shades appear.

66. **Iamque audire sat est**: cf. Verg., *Aen.* 2.103.

67. Again, the line acts as a stage direction.

Hebrew inscription

The Hebrew inscription reads: ‘Lilit, Lilit, Lilit, Ashmedai, btrvy dyfdn’ erroneously transcribed into the Roman alphabet as ‘Rupon badui alsamadech lilit lilit lilit’.

lilit: לילית *lilith*, lit. a screech owl; Tibullus associates screech owls with the ghosts that hover around his witch (1.5.51–2). It could also refer to the Jewish tradition of Adam’s first wife, sent out of Eden and replaced by Eve because she would not submit to him.

alsamadech: אַשְׁמַדַּי: Ashmedai in Judeo-Islamic lore, the king of earthly spirits mostly known from the deuterocanonical *Book of Tobit*, in which he is the primary protagonist.

badui rupon: Patrick M. Owens notes (in private correspondence) that this is ‘very unclear mostly because of the position of the letter *he*. It is likely that there is some misspelling for *bachadey* which would mean “in praise” or “with rejoicing” or it could be *bachadadey* “toward each other”. It could even be (with another misspelling) *baduy* from the root for “he created”.’

He adds: ‘*Rupon* might come from a root *rapap*, and mean something like “shaking” or “vibration”. It is certainly weird, and almost assuredly something demon related.’ He suggests further that ‘the final words could also be a mystical acrostic, which are common in Hebrew Kabbalistic texts and prayers’, and concludes, ‘It goes without saying that Renaissance margins and monuments are often adorned with Hebrew gibberish’ and concludes, ‘the best transcription into the Roman alphabet is *Lilit Lilit Lilit Ashmedai btrvy dyfdn* (or *Lilith* depending on the convention of transliteration) and after that it is anybody’s guess.’

Tertheus

A short propitiatory prayer in two sapphic stanzas in the manner of Hor. *Carm.* 1.30.

Title

Tertheus: a neologism composed of Latin *ter* ('triple') and Greek *θεός* ('god'); see above.

1. **agimus damusque:** a variation upon the formulaic *veniam petimus damusque vicissim*, Hor. *Ars P.* 11.

2. **pia thura:** a common phrase found throughout classical literature; for example, Tib. 2.2.3; Ov., *Met.* 6.161; Luc. 9.996; Mart. 8.8.3; 8.66.1.

3. **profundi | Numina regni:** cf. *Stygii numina regni*, Luc. 7.169.

5. **memor fati:** cf. Luc. 8.10 (Pompey).

7. **orbis caput:** cf. *Roma, orbis caput*, Ov., *Fast.* 5.93.

8. **Roma memento:** cf. Verg., *Aen.* 6.851 (Anchises' injunction to future Romans).

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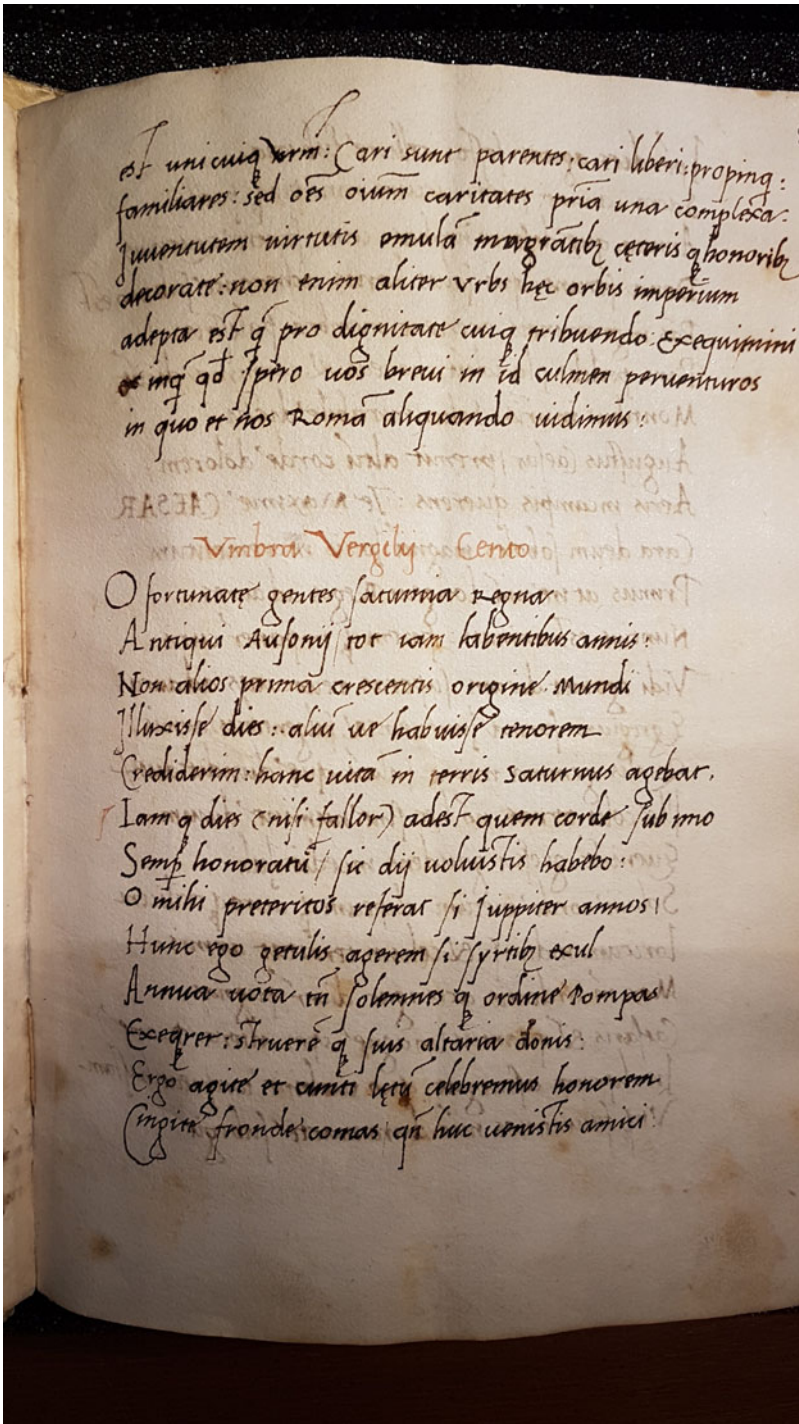
Dominici Cerbonij Tifernatis
TERTIUS Magus

7

Jam satis hoc latuit mentem: si tempor nostro
 Creuit in id cultren: fuerat quo maxima quodam
 Roma: dabunt stigij reuocare a fontibus Umbre:
 Primum corpus aqua spargam du sidera suadent:
 Hic q scrobem fodiam cubitalem: Altaria pona hic
 Inuergens fronti uina et pia uellera carperis.
 Di quibus eterne st pallida Tartara cure
 Has audite preces: Tu primu Maximu Pluto
 Fac ne mra leuis uentus ferat irrita dicta
 Si tibi mra unq placuerit pinguis sacra:
 Tu q Hecate Regina heredi si numma centu
 Sunt tibi si triplex facies / si terna potestas
 Adam et tu sine eodem es sine altera Episcu:
 Et tu tartarei custodis lumina regni
 Qui uigil hac tantu sis mitis Cerberus hora
 Nos q molam dabimus tibi dulci melle per uita:
 Tu q Charon uultus nimiru deponere seueros
 Et precibus te flecte meis iustissime Neros:
 Nos heredi geminas aras huc poscimus / antro
 Non qua tartareo latente et ualle profunda
 Errent Elusij sed que per gramina campi:
 Pro quibz huc clamus uobis manibus cadit hostia nrus.

Accipite hic vobis inferna o numina sanguis
 Spargis: et multum mellis / cui haec te recipiti |
 Herbae q^{ae} sacra dant^{ur} vobis & mascula thura:
 Cum q^{uo} oleo bene salsa mola^{re} et qua^e vincta muni
 Et vestris dant^{ur} spirantia viscera flammis:
 Nescio sed tremulum quid maius flamma refulsit
 Grata fuit multum cecidit q^{uae} iudicia forsan |
 Sz iam conmissibus mapicis me tempora poscunt
 A coni^{gi} giro^s triplices docamur in orbem:
 Quem circum haec cantata mihi tria sterna recta
 Pulver^e et hoc magica signabimus arte figuras
 Haec sunt ad luna^m quas dextra legitur herbas |
 Falcebus has fecit: leua has auulsimus: hasq^{ue}
 Caucasus: has Pindus dedit has mihi Pelion altus:
 Fulmineis flammis has frondes quercus adusta |
 Nux dedit has cantata prius mihi carmine duro:
 Hic est spuma carnis rabidi: sur^{is} condita paruo
 Mille venena cado: Euboris corda sinistra
 Ecce: et que^{ae} aqua^e fouens reperit pector^e coruus
 Sassa diu: sunt hic Imcis lupi^{ae} medulle:
 Hic est quem patrius fudit eruor impius ensis
 Et qui fœterna ac foeteri de caelo nephanda
 fluxit: et hyppomane^s scelcratum hac co^{re}git Vna:

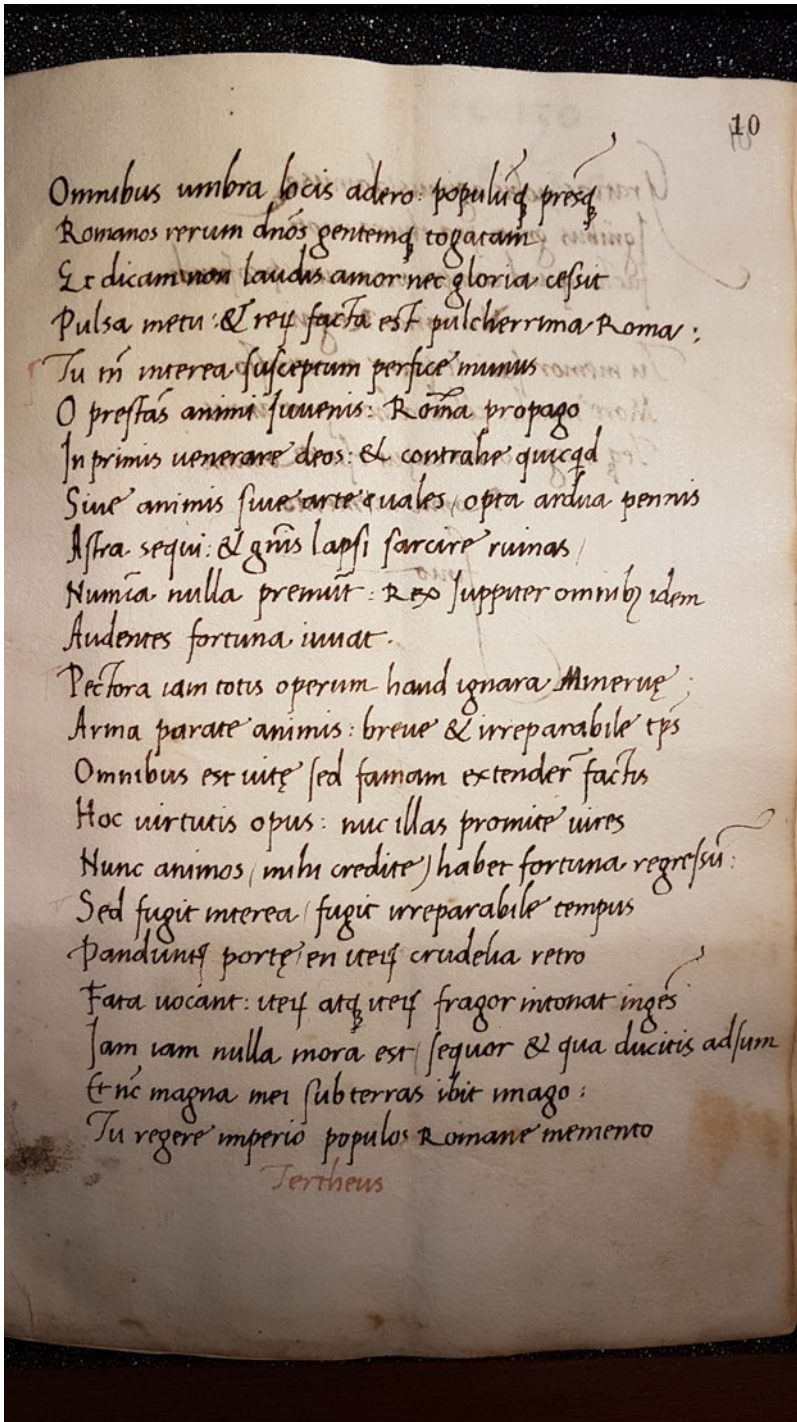
Non falsa ergo ad nos Maro Pomponius letus nup attulit.
 qui in saurata urbem barbariam q̄ illa qua du p̄sa
 est pernicus exiit affirmabat. En cogitō utris scēg
 apparatus eosdem p̄ne hominū concursus: atq̄ eadē
 populi studia. Id qd̄ gaudium quinque mei in Elisyis Campis
 iam iam fuerit est. quom a me audierit Bruti Doci
 Scipiones: Maximi: Pauli: et ceteri nri: Renascente Urbe
 ac aīos vros nō est degeneres. qui cum bellicis rebus
 animi magnitudinem qua semper P. R. Max̄ excellit
 declarare vobis admodū difficult̄ sit: p̄clare eruditioni
 atq̄ doctrinē vos deducitis optima eadē sequunt̄
 nā Regna. Imperia. Nobilitates. Honores. divitiē. opes
 atq̄ quā sunt his contraria in casu sua sibi gubernā
 Sola sapientia est que fortune imperat q̄ quid est per
 deos optabilius. quid prestantius. qd̄ hōie dignius.
 Exequimini exequimini p̄res optimi liberi estis quid n.
 est aliud libertas q̄ posse sic vivere ut velis. ille aut
 vivit ut vult q̄ recta sequit̄ qui legibus nō propter
 motū parit. s̄ eas sequitur atq̄ colit. Rem P. quinq̄
 pro viribus amplexat̄. efficiat̄ q̄ id qd̄ Pythagoras
 vult in amicitia. ut unus fiat se pluribus. quum
 nō oīa ratione aīo q̄ lustrant̄is oīum societatum
 nulla est gratior. nulla carior q̄ ea que cū. R. P.



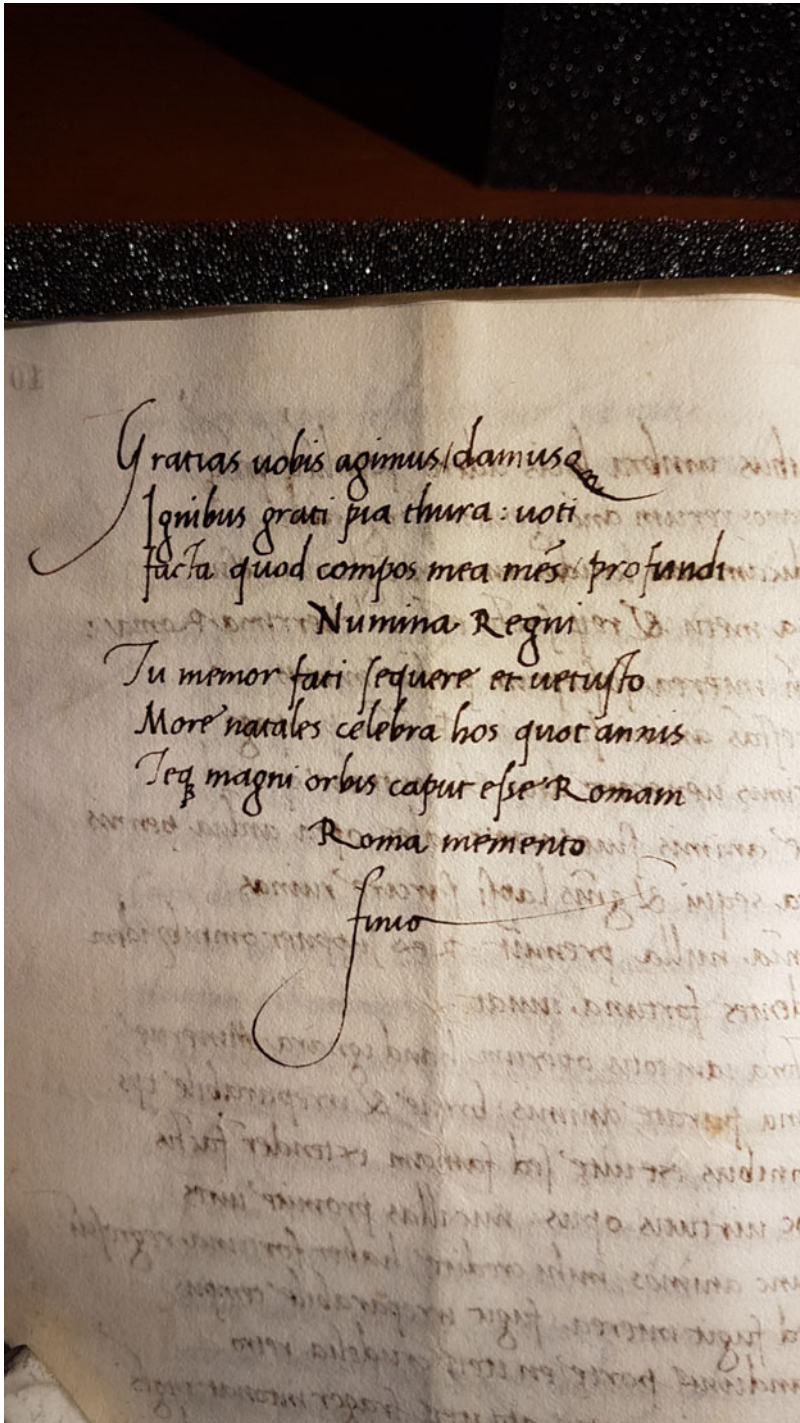
Et uni cuiq[ue] d[omi]ni: Cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinq[ui]:
 familiares: sed oēs oīum caritates priā una complexa:
 Iuuentutem virtutis omula migrātib[us] ceteris q[ue] honorib[us]
 decorat: non enim aliter vrbs hec orbis imperium
 adeptā est q[ue] pro dignitate cuiq[ue] tribuendo: Exequimini
 et inq[ui] q[ui]d spero uos breui in id culmen peruenturos
 in quo et nos Roma aliquando uidimus
Vmbra Vergilyia Cento
 O fortunatę gentes, sacunna regnar[is]
 Antiqui Ausonii tot iam habentibus annis
 Non alios prima crescentis origine mundi
 Illucisse dies: alii ut habuist[is] tenorem
 Crederim: hinc uita in terris saturnus agebat.
 Lam q[ue] dies (nisi fallor) adest, quem corda sub imo
 Semper honoratū, sic dii uoluistis habebō:
 O mihi preteritos referat si iuppiter annos
 Hunc ego gerulis agerem si syrrib[us] ocul[is]
 Annua uota eni solennis q[ue] orant[ur] pompa
 Exequer[er]: struere q[ue] suis altaria donis:
 Ergo agite et cuncti letę celebremus honorem
 (mota fronde comas q[ue] huc uenistis amici)

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Ipse dies agitat festos cellare sub ima
 Sacra canunt pueri circum inruptae puellae
 Annua quae deferre nephas: cum fratre Quirinus
 Dona ferunt: qui solus honos acheronte sub imo est
 Pās in gramineis exercent membra palestris:
 Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas: & carmina dicunt
 Montibus in rris: Solus (mirabile dictu)
 Augustus Caesar | premit alium corde dolorem,
 Aeris in campis querens: Te Maxime CAESAR
 Cara deum soboles magni Iouis incrementum.
 Primus ac me uia Longeuus Regis ad aures
 Nuntius est animus: finemque imponer' curis:
 Vidi egomet dicam superas reuocatus ad auras
 & gregium forma Iuuenem | & fulgentibus armis |
 Quales gemma micat fuluū quae diuidit aurum.
 Ille colit terras, nō hec sine numine diuum
 Queniūt: gressu gaudens incedit Iuli:
 Soluit corde metum clipeumque auroque trisicem
 Loricam induit: & celum territat armis:
 Mox in ardentis accingat dixer' pugnas
 Caesaris: & quantus (magnae spes altera Romae)
 In clipeum assurgat, quo turbine torquetur hastam.
 Utque fauenninos nūc duro Marte subegit



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