

## Rutilio, De reditu

### 1. vv. 19-66

at mea dilectis fortuna revellitur oris,  
indigenamque suum Gallica rura vocant.  
Illa quidem longis nimium deformia bellis,  
sed quam grata minus, tam miseranda<sup>3</sup> magis.  
securos levius crimen contemnere cives:  
privatam repetunt publica damna fidem.  
praesentes lacrimas tectis debemus avitis:  
prodest admonitus saepe dolore labor.  
nec fas ulterius longas nescire ruinas  
quas mora suspensae multiplicavit opis:  
iam tempus laceris post saeva incendia fundis  
vel pastorales aedificare casas.  
ipsi quin etiam fontes si mittere vocem  
ipsaque si possent arbuta nostra loqui,  
cessantem iustis poterant urgere querelis  
et desideriiis addere vela<sup>4</sup> meis.  
iam iam laxatis carae complexibus urbis  
vincimur et serum vix toleramus iter.

electum pelagus, quoniam terrena<sup>5</sup> viarum  
plana madent fluviis, cautibus alta rigent.  
postquam Tuscus ager postquamque Aurelius agger,  
perpessus Geticas ense vel igne manus,  
non silvas domibus, non flumina ponte coerces,  
incerto satius credere vela mari.  
crebra reliquendis infigimus oscula portis:  
inviti superant limina sacra pedes.  
oramus veniam lacrimis et laude litamus,  
in quantum fletus currere verba sinit:

"exaudi, regina tui pulcherrima mundi,  
inter sidereos Roma recepta polos,  
exaudi, genetrix hominum genetrixque deorum,  
non procul a caelo per tua templa sumus:  
te canimus semperque, sinent dum fata, canemus:

sospes<sup>6</sup> nemo potest immemor esse tui.  
obruerint citius scelerata oblivia solem,  
quam tuus ex nostro corde recedat honos.  
nam solis radiis aequalia munera tendis,  
qua circumfusus fluctuat Oceanus.  
volvitur ipse tibi, qui continet omnia, Phoebus  
eque tuis ortos<sup>7</sup> in tua condit equos.  
te non flammigeris Libye tardavit harenis,  
non armata suo reppulit Ursa gelu:  
quantum vitalis natura tetendit in axes,  
tantum virtuti pervia terrae tuae.  
fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam:  
profuit iniustis<sup>8</sup> te dominante capi.  
dumque offers victis proprii consortia iuris,  
urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat.

But 'tis my fortune that is plucked back from the well-loved land; the fields of Gaul summon home their native. Disfigured they are by wars immeasurably long, yet the less their charm, the more they earn pity. 'Tis a lighter crime to neglect our countrymen when at their ease: our common losses call for each man's loyalty. Our presence and our tears are what we owe to the ancestral home: service which grief has prompted oftentimes helps. 'Tis sin further to overlook the tedious tale of disasters which the delay of halting aid has multiplied: now is the time after cruel fires on ravaged farms to rebuild, if it be but shepherd's huts. Nay, if only the very springs could utter words, if only our very trees could speak, they well might spur my laggard pace with just complaints and give sails to my yearning wishes. Now that the dear city slackens her embrace, my homeland wins, and I can scarce feel patient with a journey deferred so late.

I have chosen the sea, since roads by land, if on the level, are flooded by rivers; if on higher ground, are beset with rocks. Since Tuscany and since the Aurelian highway, after suffering the outrages of Goths with fire or sword, can no longer control forest with homestead or river with bridge, it is better to entrust my sails to the wayward sea. Repeated kisses I imprint on the gates I have to leave: unwillingly my feet cross the honoured threshold. In tears I beseech pardon (for my departure) and offer a sacrifice of praise, so far as weeping allows the words to run:

"Listen, O fairest queen of thy world, Rome, welcomed amid the starry skies, listen, thou mother of men and mother of gods, thanks to thy temples we are

not far from heaven: thee do we chant, and shall, while destiny allows, for ever chant. None can be safe if forgetful of thee. Sooner shall guilty oblivion overwhelm the sun than the honour due to thee quit my heart; for benefits extend as far as the sun's rays, where the circling Ocean-flood bounds the world. For thee the very Sun-God who holdeth all together doth revolve: his steeds that rise in thy domains he puts in thy domains to rest. Thee Africa hath not stayed with scorching sands, nor hath the Bear, armed with its native cold, repulsed thee. As far as living nature hath stretched towards the poles, so far hath earth opened a path for thy valour. For nations far apart thou hast made a single fatherland; under thy dominion captivity hath meant profit even for those who knew not justice: and by offering to the vanquished a share in thine own justice, thou hast made a city of what was erstwhile a world.

<sup>3</sup> veneranda **R**: miseranda **VB**.

<sup>4</sup> verba vir doctus apud Wernsdorf: accepit Baehrens.

<sup>5</sup> vetabant Baehrens.

<sup>6</sup> sospes **VRB**: hospes Cuperus, Baehrens.

<sup>7</sup> ortus **VB**: ortas **R**: ortos Castalio.

<sup>8</sup> iniustus **VB**: inustus **R**: invitis Juretus, Damm, Mueller, Baehrens: invictis Castalio: infestis Schrader.

## 2. vv. 115-164

erige crinales lauros seniumque sacrati  
verticis in virides, Roma, refinge<sup>18</sup> comas.  
aurea turrigero radient diademata cono,  
perpetuosque ignes aureus umbo vomat!  
abscondat tristem deleta iniuria casum:  
contemptus solidet vulnera clausa dolor.  
adversis solenne tuis sperare secunda:  
exemplo caeli ditia damna subis.  
astrorum flammae renovant occasibus ortus;  
lunam finiri cernis, ut incipiat.  
victoris Brenni non distulit Allia poenam;  
Samnis servitio foedera saeva luit;  
post multas Pyrrhum clades superata fugasti;  
flevit successus Hannibal ipse suos:  
quae mergi nequeunt, nisu maiore resurgunt  
exsiliuntque imis altius acta vadis;  
utque novas vires fax inclinata resumit,  
clarior ex humili sorte superna petis.  
porrige victuras Romana in saecula leges,

solaque fatales non vereare colos,  
quamvis sedecies denis et mille peractis  
annus praeterea iam tibi nonus eat.  
quae restant nullis obnoxia tempora metis,<sup>19</sup>  
dum stabunt terrae, dum polus astra feret!  
illud te reparat quod cetera regna resolvit:  
ordo renascendi est crescere posse malis.

ergo age, sacrilegae tandem cadat hostia gentis:  
submittant trepidi perfida colla Getae.  
ditia pacatae dent vectigalia terrae:  
impleat augustos barbara praeda sinus.  
aeternum tibi Rhenus aret, tibi Nilus inundet,  
altricemque suam fertilis orbis alat.  
quin et fecundas tibi conferat Africa messes,  
sole suo dives, sed magis imbre tuo.  
interea et Latiis consurgant horrea sulcis,  
pinguiaque Hesperio nectare prela fluant.  
ipse triumphali redimitus arundine Thybris  
Romuleis famulas usibus aptet aquas;  
atque opulenta tibi placidis commercia ripis  
devehat hinc ruris, subvehat inde maris.  
pande, precor, gemino pacatum Castore pontum;  
temperet aequoream dux Cytherea viam,  
si non displicui, regerem cum iura Quirini,  
si colui sanctos consulique patres;  
nam quod nulla meum strinxerunt crimina ferrum,  
non sit praefecti gloria, sed populi.  
sive datur patriis vitam componere terris,  
sive oculis umquam restituere meis,  
fortunatus agam votoque beatior omni,  
semper digneris si meminisse mei."

"Raise, O Rome, the triumphal laurels which wreath thy locks, and refashion the hoary old of thy hallowed head to tresses fresh and fair. Golden let the diadem flash on thy tower-crowned helmet; let the golden buckler belch forth perpetual fires! Let forgetfulness of thy wrongs bury the sadness of misfortune; let pain disregarded close and heal thy wounds. Amidst failure it is thy way to hope for prosperity: after the pattern of the heavens losses undergone enrich thee. For flaming stars set only to renew their rising; thou seest the moon wane to wax afresh. The Allia did not hinder Brennus' penalty; the Samnite paid for a

cruel treaty by slavery; after many disasters, though defeated, thou didst put Pyrrhus to flight; Hannibal himself was the mourner of his own successes. Things which cannot be sunk rise again with greater energy, sped higher in their rebound from lowest depths; and, as the torch held downward regains fresh strength, so from lowly fortune thou dost soar more radiant aloft. Spread forth the laws that are to last throughout the ages of Rome: alone thou needst not dread the distaffs of the Fates, though with a thousand years and sixteen decades o'erpast, thou hast besides a ninth year in its course. The span which doth remain is subject to no bounds, so long as earth shall stand firm and heaven uphold the stars! That same thing builds thee up which wrecks all other realms: the law of thy new birth is the power to thrive upon thine ills.

"Come, then, let an impious race fall in sacrifice at last: let the Goths in panic abase their forsworn necks. Let lands reduced to peace pay rich tribute and barbarian booty fill thy majestic lap. Evermore let the Rhineland plough for thee, for thee the Nile o'erflow; and let a teeming world give nurture to its nurse. Yea, let Africa proffer to thee her fertile harvests, rich in her own sun, but richer for thy showers. Meanwhile may granaries too arise to house the furrow-crops of Latium, and with the nectar of the West may sleek wine-presses flow. Let Tiber's self, garlanded with triumphal reed, apply his waters to serve the needs of Romulus' race, and 'twixt his peaceful banks bear for thee down-stream the wealthy cargoes of the fields and up-stream those of the sea.

"Outstretch, I pray, the level main lulled to rest 'neath Castor and his twin brother; be our Lady of Cythera the guide to smooth my watery path, if I found favour when I administered Quirinus' laws, if to the venerable senators I showed respect and from them asked advice; for that ne'er a crime unsheathed my magisterial sword must be the people's, not the prefect's, boast. Whether 'tis granted to lay my life to rest in ancestral soil or whether thou shalt one day be restored to my eyes, blest shall my life be, lucky beyond all aspiration, if thou deign always to remember me."

<sup>18</sup> recinge **VRB**, Vessereau: refinge Heinsius et fere omnes.

<sup>19</sup> maestis Baehrens.

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APPENDICE.

Giovanni Pascoli, *A Roma. Nella sventura*

A ROMA, NELLA SVENTURA

Anno 416 d. C.

(INNO D'UN CELTA)

Del tuo mondo bellissima  
regina, o Roma, ascolta;  
o Roma, nell'empireo  
ciel tra le stelle accolta  
madre non pur degli uomini  
ma de' celesti. Noi  
siam presso al cielo per i templi tuoi.

Or te, te quindi cantisi  
sempre, finchè si viva;  
dimenticarti e vivere  
chi mai potrebbe, o diva?  
Prima del sol negli uomini  
vanisca ogni memoria,  
che il ricordo, nel cuor, della tua gloria.

Già, come il sol risplendere  
per tutto, ognor, tu sai.  
Dovunque il vasto Oceano  
ondeggia, ivi tu vai.  
Febo, che tutto domina,  
si volge a te: da sponde  
Romane muove, e nel tuo mar s'asconde.

Co' suoi deserti Libia  
non t'arrestò la corsa;  
non ti respinse il gelido  
vallo che cinge l'Orsa;  
quanto paese agli uomini  
vital, Natura diede,  
tanta è la terra che pugnar ti vede.

Desti una patria ai popoli  
dispersi in cento luoghi:  
furon ventura ai barbari  
le tue vittorie e i gioghi:  
chè del tuo dritto ai sudditi  
mentre il consorzio appresti,  
di tutto il mondo una città facesti.