

The *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* is a polemical text of over 5000 Loeb-sized pages of Latin. I use two excerpts in verse to illustrate the difficulties posed for translators, who must communicate the classical pedigree of the material while simultaneously fashioning a work which rings true as a product of its time yet is intelligible to the modern Latinless reader: no easy task.

In the first passage the reader is lured into an initial degree of sympathy for the target, a traitor depicted as a small boy abducted and corrupted by degenerates. However, this is revealed as a tactic to blacken the political party to which the target belongs. Having sinuously introduced the language of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into the prose introduction, the author then uses two images to seal his victim's fate. The nobleman is first likened to the disloyal Aeneas of Virgil *Aeneid* 4. 366-7. Then the point is hammered home through quotation of the corresponding passage from Ovid *Heroides* 7. 36-7. Of particular note here is the contemporary relevance of the image of the deserted Dido, who represents the traitor's native land and culture, abandoned by the dictates of political and financial expediency. Having manipulated pagan poets to paint his pen-portrait of the target, the passage concludes with an appropriate negative exemplum from the perceived ultimate authority: the Bible. If this first example shows a delight in Virgil and Ovid, the second shows that Lucretius was fully appreciated. Indeed, it is his very "atheism" which is exploited to particular point in the socio-religious context of contemporary events. The victim here is a well-known cleric, whose *magnum opus* is described in the vocabulary of Lucretius' void. This example is also an interesting case-study in translation because it contains a Greek pun on the victim's pseudonym. The result, when combined with a judiciously positioned classical allusion, is that the target is also likened to Polyphemus. But it is not over yet. Before the verses end, the cleric will also have been bracketed with ancient Romans infamous for their inability to contain their own bodily effluent.

I conclude with observations on the censorship practised by scholars with respect to the profane and obscene register of the material under discussion: the unacceptability of the bawdy and intemperate utterances of the writers and poets was doubtless exacerbated by the fact that some of the most offensive examples originate from Christian theologians and clerics who manifestly did not practise what they preached. The paper argues that it should be part of the translator's brief to ensure that the register of the original be preserved: no Classicist can read this poetry, and the surrounding prose in which it is situated, without an admiration for the vibrancy of the voices of these men who chose Latin over their vernacular, in part because of their joyful appreciation of the tradition in which they composed.