

Songs As Sights: Latinized Versions of Popular lyrics As Sight Translation Exercises

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I. Introduction

Neapoli amor est rex. Carmen amoris cantat grex. Oculos pulsat si luna, fruimini nunc amore. Mundus vinosus si nitet, potimini nunc amore. Tintinnabula tinnient, amatores laeti canent, "Vita Bella!" Cordaque—tippitippite tippitippite—saltabunt tarantella. Mica, stella. Astra salivam si movent, vescimini nunc amore. Nubes circumdat si pedes, vos superavit amor. Ambulatis si vigilantes somniant stupore. Ignoscite mihi, sed vos fungimini nunc amore.

This, neo-Latin, text was designed as part of a classroom exercise, to reinforce memorization—or at least recognition—of the major verbs in classical Latin that govern an object in the ablative case. Of course, and as many Latin students learn, there is an “acronymic mnemonic” that supposedly serves a similar function, an English word formed by the first letters of these verbs: PUFF, for *potior, utor, fungor* and *fruo*. To be sure, this acronym neglects *vescor*, but, then again, the neo-Latin text is missing *utor*. More important, this text actually illustrates this construction in action, with the repeated ablative noun *amore*.

It illustrates some other Latin linguistic phenomena worth reinforcing as well. One is the second person plural, present active indicative of third and fourth conjugation deponents such as these PUFF verbs. Others include the locative of Neapolis; present general conditions; the so-called dative of offense with *ignosco*; and the ablative absolute.

What is more, this text is a loose translation of English lyrics—spiced with contemporary Italian words and allusions—known to, or at least knowable by, my students at the University of Maryland, College Park. True, they may not recognize the “English original” when I first present these lyrics in class, as part of the quiz or test that occupies the closing moments of our final meeting each week. They may not have purchased, or even heard, the new compact disc recording, recently promoted by Starbucks nationwide, featuring Dean Martin’s greatest hits. They may not have seen, or even heard of, the now-classic 1988 film *Moonstruck*, which highlights, and indeed moonlights, this song. But by our next class meeting the following week, they can tell you a great deal about “That’s Amore.”

For they may well have inquired of parents, or grandparents, for whom the song holds a special place in their recollections of their younger days. Or, as another of Dean Martin’s hits puts it, whose “Memories are Made of This” (fans of Martin’s one-time partner Jerry Lewis—who co-starred with Martin in the film which introduced “That’s Amore”—might add Lewis’ immortal line, “I like it. I like it.”). Nowadays, moreover, students can track down the “original” English lyrics with a simple Internet search, something beyond everyone’s imaginings when I first translated this song into Latin back in 1989. All they have to do is “Google” the first word in the notes that I provide: “Napoli,” the “English” (well, technically Italian) translation of Neapoli, the very first word in my Latin lyrics. Their

Google search also needs to combine “Napoli” with the much-repeated Latin ablative (and, as it happens, also Italian) noun *amore*.¹

Besides the fact that I find it challenging and fun to fit the Latin words of my translation to the melody, rhythm and rhyming scheme of the English original, what is the point of preparing texts, and exercises, of this kind for Latin students of all levels, secondary school as well as college students? Why do I usually present these texts—often, but not always, supplemented with extensive written annotation, vocabulary and grammatical explanations as well as comprehension questions—to my students “sight unseen”? Why do my own classroom exercises require that these texts be translated and explicated, both grammatically and literarily, and tackled twice? First, within a limited portion of classroom time, as the final, extra-credit, section of a quiz or examination that assesses students’ mastery of vocabulary, forms and syntax, and their comprehension of brief Latin passages. Then, as an additional extra-credit, take home, over-the-weekend assignment, so that they can finish, and finish correctly, whatever they could not complete during class time.

In responding to these questions about my own classroom practices, my discussion will consider the pedagogical value of Latin songs as sight translation exercises, not only for students at the college level at which I teach, but also for those at the pre-collegiate level. As I offer my own reasons for having “songs as sights.” I will illustrate my observations by providing the texts of some other songs that I have been translating into Latin for this purpose ever since 1989. I will also illustrate how I annotate these Latinized songs, in much but not entirely the same way as one might a passage from a classical Latin author.

So, too, I will reflect on my main motivations for choosing certain songs, and share some of my own, positive and altogether unexpected experiences with incorporating these Latin lyrics into my teaching, and my efforts to assess student learning. These experiences suggest that teachers of Latin at different levels—especially those working with secondary school students in elementary Latin courses—might wish to include some of these songs among the materials that they present in their classrooms. But they might not choose to limit the pedagogical function of these songs to that of “sights.”

II. The Pedagogical Value of “Songs As Sights”

As I observed when explaining why I rendered “That’s Amore” into Latin for use as a classroom exercise, the major pedagogical benefit of translating Latinized English songs at sight is that one that it shares with all sight translation exercises: namely, that it reinforces memorization and mastery of individual Latin vocabulary words, inflected forms, and grammatical constructions by requiring students to identify and construe these linguistic items in an entirely new, written setting. But in the case of these songs, the rhythmical, rhyming and musical components as well as the Latin words in the new setting aid students in their memorization and mastery too. That is, if students take the opportunity to recite, and ideally to sing, the Latin lyrics aloud.

¹ “That’s Amore.” Music by Harry Warren; lyrics by Jack Brooks, 1953. Warren (1893-1981) was born Salvatore Anthony Guaragna in Brooklyn. The song was first performed by Martin in the 1953 Martin-Lewis film, *The Caddy*, and received an Academy Award nomination for the Best Original Song in a motion picture that year.

Owing to the pedagogical value of singing the Latin lyrics—and of oral Latin recitation generally—I always have the students sing them, and at times the English originals as a “warm up.” We do so when reviewing our sight translations in class, after the students have had a weekend in which to translate and answer questions posed about these texts, as well as to obtain information about the English “originals.” This group endeavor invariably raises the energy level, relaxes, and lifts the spirits of the class, expediting our review of the other material on the quiz or exam, usually a less than scintillating list of Latin forms and constructions, and English grammatical terms.

During the weekend prior to class, moreover, some of my students have “practiced” singing the English, and Latin, lyrics when researching the “originals,” as the result of efforts that have pedagogical value of their own. Often these students happen to encounter the tune played on an internet site that furnishes the English lyrics. But over the years, before and since the advent of the Internet, I have found that quite a few students, at my urging, will consult with older family members—who will themselves sing (or play recordings of) these songs for them—on the phone or in person. These consultations thereby enable students to share their Latin learning experiences with family members of older generations who may not have studied Latin themselves, but certainly know and have positive associations with the English originals.

I have additional, to my mind pedagogically beneficial, motivations for integrating texts of this kind into my Latin language courses. In some, more advanced, classes, I create and use translations whose themes and language specifically preview classical Latin texts by major Roman authors that we will be reading later in the semester. Most of my translated Latin lyrics, even those that do not allude to classical literary works, are also written in such a way that close reading and analysis of their themes and language will enhance students’ literary critical skills; some now seek to strengthen students’ cultural literacy in regard to the classical world. Yet I am also mindful to aim these translations at students who are not classics concentrators and may not know, and will not in future be learning, much about the classical world.

My repertoire of songs, let me emphasize, has evolved over a long period of time, in response to my own classroom observations and experiences. These are not teaching materials one can produce overnight. The translated lyrics I include in this essay represent merely a fraction of what I have done. I am happy to share songs from this repertoire with others who do not have the time or inclination to try writing songs of their own, and to advise those willing to try about their “work in progress.”

Let me also emphasize that I adopted the practice of incorporating these songs as sight translation exercises in large part because it seemed an efficient use of the limited time allotted to me for my Latin language classes. At my university the lower-level Latin courses meet for at most 200 minutes each week, spread out among three class meetings (and in some cases 160 minutes, divided into two meetings). This tight schedule affords me very little opportunity to challenge and assess my students other than during our weekly quizzes and tests; there is too much material to cover otherwise.

K-12 Latin teachers who incorporate Latin translations of English song lyrics into the their classrooms may not have to operate within these time constraints, inasmuch as their courses tend to proceed at a more leisurely pace, to meet more frequently and to cover less material. As a result, they can consider strategies for presenting these texts in different

ways. Most obviously, they could have their students learn Latinized song lyrics such as these during an in-class oral exercise, and sing these lyrics in class subsequently, and frequently, after they first master them.

Performing these songs in class repeatedly, however, has its downside: it reduces the likelihood that these Latin texts will remain obscure enough to function as sight translation passages for other students at the same school during the next few years, especially friends and younger family members of the students who learn and repeatedly perform them. On the other hand, if older family members are to participate in the teaching and learning of these songs, perhaps it is preferable to regard these songs as part of an expanding oral Latin repertoire for students to perform together, rather than as texts for sight translation exercises. Inasmuch as K-12 students are likely to have far more face-to-face encounters with parents and grandparents, having older family members involved in acquainting students with these songs has clear advantages at the pre-collegiate level. Luckily, many of my students at the University of Maryland, College Park, even those who reside on campus, do not live a great distance from their families, and seem to be in frequent touch with them through emails and cell phoning as well as face-to-face visits.

III. A Formal Rationale for “Songs As Sights”

My own experience with using Latin translations of English songs as teaching materials is so far limited to the college classroom. Hence I looked to writings about Latin instruction for students at the college level for a formal pedagogical rationale. I found an excellent, albeit partial and for me somewhat problematic, one in a 2003 publication from the Cambridge University Philoponia Project: it is entitled “Rethinking ‘Unseen’ Translation: a pilot scheme for developing students’ reading skills in Greek and Latin” and accessible through their website, <http://hierapolis.classics.cam.uk/philoponiaPages/index.html>.

The Philoponia Project discussion underscores the abiding pedagogical value of integrating what we in the US refer to as “sight translations” into the classical language learning experience.² Such passages are there defined as brief, “discrete selections of text, presented to language students for translation and comprehension,” ordinarily unfamiliar to the students. According to the Philoponia website, too, the classroom use of “unseens” is “intended to test and develop the students’ grasp of grammar, syntax and vocabulary.” Furthermore, it states that an engagement with such passages not only requires but also enhances both literary critical skills, such as semantic and stylistic analysis, and classical “cultural literacy,” knowledge of the social and historical contexts in which these texts were created.

Yet incorporating sight translation exercises into the assessment of elementary and intermediate Latin and Greek language students, even at the college level, poses challenges that the Philoponia discussion fails to acknowledge, especially in US colleges and universities. It is not easy to find actual, brief passages by classical authors that students can translate, comprehend and appreciate, especially passages noteworthy for their literary artistry and socio-cultural significance. Even if these passages are heavily annotated and

² The British term for what we in the US call “sight translations” is “unseens”; I will use the British term in quoting directly from the Philoponia discussion.

doctored, they need to be wrenched from their literary and cultural context. More important, the Latin and Greek language learning communities investigated by the Cambridge project, especially those at universities in the UK and Commonwealth countries, are more homogeneous and academically specialized than those we tend to encounter in lower-level Latin and Greek classes at their US counterparts.

Yes, some of the lower-level language students in US colleges and universities are classics majors eager to get their Latin and/or Greek “up to speed.” But others—many of them talented language learners—enroll to fulfill undergraduate foreign language requirements. They often have no previous or concurrent exposure to the ancient Greco-Roman world other than that offered by the classroom textbook, and do not continue with study of the classical world once they have completed the courses fulfilling foreign language requirements. We run the risk of shortchanging and marginalizing these non-concentrators with sight translation exercises that privilege what our classics majors already, and need to, know.

This is why I decided to work out my own pedagogical solution to these challenges, that of using these, often annotated, Latin renderings—some literal, others fairly loose—of popular English songs as sight translation texts. While I mostly use songs of this kind as sights in my elementary and intermediate Latin classes, at times I present them in more advanced courses, such as the History and Development of the Latin Language. Occasionally I have taken, or adapted, Latinized lyrics from Franz Schlosser’s 1996 *Latine Cantemus*.³

Most, however, are my own. They include folk, Broadway, patriotic, holiday and “classic rock” songs. Like the Latinized version of “That’s Amore” with which my discussion began, my translations fit the melody and follow the rhyming schemes of the “original.” Similarly, they are designed to reinforce mastery of specific grammatical points. They do not, however, necessarily follow classical Latin accentual patterns. I try to avoid word collocations that would require elision in classical Latin verse. But if I cannot—as in the case of *Neapoli amor* or *stupore ignoscite*—“hiatus” will be needed to make the syllables fit the rhythm of the English original.

IV. Songs Emphasizing American Cultural Connections

Many of the passages that I present—and much of the explicatory information furnished by the quizzes and examinations that incorporate these passages—make no connections with the literary, social and cultural contexts of classical antiquity. In fact, some of these passages, and our classroom approaches to them, focus exclusively on the modern, Anglophone world that my students and I inhabit together. For example, I decided to translate, and “share,” another popular American song in 2003 after I facetiously chose—as one of the English passages for translation into Latin on a diagnostic exercise in my advanced History and Development of the Latin Language course—an excerpt from Henry

³ Franz Schlosser, *Latine Cantemus* (Wauconda, Illinois 1996). Meredith Dixon’s translation of various popular and folk songs, such as “Blowin’ in the Wind,” is another valuable resource: <http://ravendays.org/latin/carmina.html>. Since her Latin translations do not attempt to reproduce the rhyming scheme of the English originals, and since they incorporate such features of Latin verse as syncope and elision (to which my, and most, lower level Latin students have not yet been introduced), I do not foresee using them myself, but others may wish to do so.

Beard's *Latin for All Occasions* that mentioned Pig Latin.⁴ I discovered that many of the students, all of whom had studied Latin for at least three years and some of whom had studied it for more than three decades, had either never heard of Pig Latin, or were unable to explain how it functioned.⁵

To remedy this gap in their American popular cultural education, I brought in the English and Pig Latin lyrics of "We're in the Money," accompanied by my own translation into "non-Pig" Latin.⁶ Since this was a class of advanced Latin students, I asked them not only to assess how I had translated the words into Latin but also to analyze what grammatical forms and constructions they thought I was trying to reinforce. While they picked up on the impersonal passive periphrastics, the ablative of comparison, the idiomatic use of *opus est*, the subjunctives (both hortatory and in a relative clause of characteristic) and the mixed condition, they missed the personification of *Paupertas* (feminine, for "Old Man Depression").

For this reason I was pleased that at the same time I provided these students with another set of lyrics from the period of the Great Depression, indeed the very year it occurred: my version of "Happy Days Are Here Again."⁷ The grammatical focus of my translation is the present, again hortatory, subjunctive, although I confess to sneaking in one, contrary-to-fact-style, imperfect, *possemus*. But I also personified "cares and troubles" with *Tristitia*, and contrasted that abstract noun with another, *Laetitia*.

As it happens, I had chosen to juxtapose "We're in the Money" with "Happy Days Are Here Again" in the name of political balance, much recommended as classroom practice these days. It seemed appropriate to highlight both Republican and Democratic sentiments from the Depression era in my choice of translated songs. Somewhat to my surprise, many students in this class instantly recognized one or both of these songs, during the exam itself, despite their relatively antique vintage. Presumably that is because "We're in the Money" often appears in television commercials, and currently gets a regular airing as background music—whenever the stock market rises—on National Public Radio's "Marketplace" segments. And because Barbra Streisand has also recorded an unforgettable, anything-but-upbeat "Happy Days," one of her signature tunes since the early 1960's.

⁴ Henry Beard, *Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus* (New York 1990) 13: "An All-Purpose Personal Ad: Attractive and intelligent man/woman wishes to meet a Latin speaker of the opposite/same sex. Please—no pig Latin."

⁵ Pig Latin is defined in the Fourth Edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* (Boston, 2000) 1330, as "NOUN: a jargon systematically formed by the transposition of the initial consonant to the end of the word and the suffixation of an additional syllable, as igpay antinLay for pig Latin." The 1934 short *Three Little Pigskins* features a Pig Latin conversation among the Three Stooges (Professors Ixnay, Onay and Amscray) and a blonde Lucille Ball.

⁶ "We're In the Money" was written for the film *Gold Diggers of 1933*, in which Ginger Rogers performed the lyrics in both English and Pig Latin. As it is also known as "The Gold Diggers Song," I have given it two Latin titles: *Pecuniosae* (the first word of the Latin lyrics) and the *Carmen Aurum Fodientium*. Its music is by Harry Warren, its lyrics by Al Dubin; coincidentally, Warren later wrote the music for "That's Amore" too.

⁷ "Happy Days Are Here Again" was written in 1929. Its music is by Milton Agar, its lyrics by Jack Yellen. Yellen (1892-1991), born Jacek Jellef in Poland, was evidently a Republican who did not care for the Democrats' appropriation of the song in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 political campaign.

V. Songs Emphasizing Latin Literary Connections

At times, taking a cue from the practices of the *Ecce Romani* series which I have been using since 1988, I will select a sight translation passage that previews a classical Latin text with which the students will experience a close encounter later in the semester.⁸ Indeed, I have deliberately echoed a variety of well-known Latin literary passages in several songs that I have translated. My intermediate Latin class begins by consolidating the Latin forms and grammar that students have supposedly mastered already, proceeds to introduce the essential material they have not had to learn before, and does both fairly rapidly so that by semester's end they can read some Catullan and Horatian poems in addition to the diverse group of prose selections featured in *Ecce Romani* III.

For example, my version of an Elvis Presley hit, "All Shook Up," is incorporated into a quiz or exam for that course which I give fairly early in the semester.⁹ It offers an intentionally intertextual homage to Catullus' evocation of Sappho in poem 51, signaling the salute with the phrase "*dicunt antiqui!*" Yet in writing these lyrics I chiefly aimed at furnishing a Latin equivalent of contemporary, folksy southern American English idiom, while at the same time reviewing forms of *hic, haec, hoc*; subjunctives of various sorts; fourth declension nouns; and the ablative with *frigor*.

With this particular Latin passage I have provided an illustration of the written annotation that ordinarily accompanies my sight translation exercises as well as the actual English lyrics, which the students have to find for themselves, a fairly easy task these days owing to the Internet. As you see, I supply extensive help on vocabulary and grammar as well as comprehension questions, although I do not include any Latin words that appear in the Latin to English Vocabulary at the back of *Ecce Romani* III. These words are, after all, officially categorized as "basic words," and forgetful students can look them up when they tackle the passage for a second time at their leisure over the weekend. Sometimes, as I noted earlier, the comprehension questions also require some stylistic analysis of my Latin. Indeed, once the students are introduced to "figures of speech" towards the end of *Ecce Romani* III, and by our Catullus and Horace reader, the Aronson and Boughner volume published by Prentice-Hall, I try to present them with Latin translations of English songs that feature alliteration, assonance, asyndeton, anaphora and of course personification.

Let me also acknowledge my personal, perhaps idiosyncratic and naïve, opinion that there is an inverse correlation between the alleged "difficulty" of a sight translation exercise in Latin (and Greek), whatever its provenance, and the amount and kind of annotation furnished. I maintain that it is possible to present students, even students in the early semesters of Latin study, with a fairly complicated passage of classical Latin poetry or prose if enough help is provided. Furnishing, as I have done in the notes to "All Shook Up," more familiar vocabulary to elucidate obscure words is one kind of help. Notes that simplify the

⁸ It is no coincidence that I began preparing Latin versions of English songs as sights the year that I switched from using a grammar-based Latin learning method to a reading method, and to the *Ecce Romani* series—with its high quality of literarily flavored Latin—at that. Without the regular practice in reading extended passages of made-up, but lively, Latin afforded by the *Ecce* series, my students would have been daunted at the prospect, and perhaps incapable, of tackling sight translations of this kind.

⁹ "All Shook Up" was written in 1957. Its music and lyrics are by Otis Blackwell and Elvis Presley.

word order so as to clarify the grammatical structure of an elaborate, trickily phrased sentence are another.

In addition to extensive annotation, I will often provide “oral assistance” when I am giving a quiz or a test in response to questions from students. The goal of these sight translation exercises is for as many students as possible to understand as much as possible about what these Latin passages literally say and figuratively do. These exercises also encourage students to rely upon their own knowledge of “the original English lyrics” and the context in which these lyrics were written, however and whenever acquired, to attain that understanding.

VI. Songs with Classical Cultural Connections

In recent years I have begun experimenting, to my mind successfully, with Latin lyrics, set to popular modern melodies, which deal with ancient Roman personalities and culture as well as with the contemporary American scene. I am now starting to incorporate them into my Latin classes as sight translation exercises as well. Two examples, written expressly for our department’s 2003 Latin Day on Julius Caesar, are lyrics that I have entitled *Ecce Caesar* and *In Tres Partes* respectively. Both derive from actual, celebrated, passages in ancient Roman literary texts: Suetonius’ *Divus Iulius* and (in the second song) Caesar’s *Bellum Gallicum*. The first text works not only with the music of “The Marines’ Hymn” but also (if one substitutes *hostis noster* for Vercingetorix) with that of “Clementine” and Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”; the second text was written to be sung to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

When presenting these lyrics as sight translation exercises to my students, however, I identify the tune (or tunes) to which the words are set immediately, rather than have the students guess what the melody might be. I do so because my choice of music was fairly arbitrary, and its relevance to the words may not be immediately apparent. In addition, I encourage them to translate the brief Latin passages from Suetonius and Caesar on which my lyrics are based, furnishing not only the passages themselves but also sufficient annotation for this purpose. In future I may pose some comprehension questions that ponder the relevance of these Latin words to these well-known American tunes, such as: what does Julius Caesar have in common with the Marines as described in “The Marines’ Hymn,” or with “the miner, forty-niner, and his daughter Clementine,” or with a Germanic celebration of joy? How do Caesar’s Gallic campaign and crossing of the Rubicon resemble the actions of the figure sung about in the Battle Hymn? And how does the Republic of the Battle Hymn compare with that of Caesar’s Rome?

The comprehension questions that I have asked my students when presenting two other Latin texts involve explicit cross-cultural comparisons between ancient Roman and contemporary American culture. I have also chosen the first of them, my Latin version of “Surfin’ USA,” for a good, and sentimental, reason. When attending the 2004 CAMWS centennial meeting in St. Louis, I journeyed out to the Duck Room at Blueberry Hill. There I witnessed, and eventually participated in, a memorable performance by Chuck Berry, whose music was shamelessly plundered by the Beach Boys for this celebration of coastal wave-

riding. If I am to champion their contribution to this song, he deserves some compensation above and beyond what he received when he took them to court.¹⁰

The questions that I ask about these Latin lyrics—*In Romae fluctibus*—require students to recognize Berry as having been musically plagiarized by the *litorales pueri*. This is, of course, information that they can easily obtain over the Internet. These questions also ask them “intertextual” allusions to “The Marines’ Hymn” in lyrics literally (and litorally) about marine pursuits and to consider why different forms of the Latin subjunctive might have been more accurate in transposing what takes place on Pacific shores to Tiber’s banks.

The annotation for my Latin version of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” merits attention because the lyrics draw on a passage from Petronius’ *Satyricon*. I wrote these lyrics, along with Latin songs about two other figures from the *Satyricon*—the Matron of Ephesus, to the tune of “We’re Off to See the Wizard, the Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” and the Pergamene boy, to the tune of “Hush Little Baby Don’t Say a Word”—as sight translations for the final exam in a Latin literature course on Petronius. Suffice it to say that the comprehension questions for this Latin text require students to contrast baseball and gladiatorial games as spectator sports.

VII. The Inter-Generational Connection

Let me conclude with some reflections on my practice of encouraging my students to contact their parents and grandparents for their assistance, and their memories, when they tackle these Latin versions of English songs for the second time. The sustained inter-generational communications that these exercises foster has been one unexpected benefit of my using songs as sights, particularly because it has made the decision by my students to take Latin (rather than subjects perceived as practical) more comprehensible and acceptable to previously skeptical family members. At graduations and other family-inclusive occasions, I have even been introduced, by former Latin students who were not necessarily classics majors, to relatives who expressly wanted to meet “that professor who made you ask me all those questions about “As Time Goes By,” or “Wake Up Little Susie” or “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On”?

I hope that these intergenerational interrogations at times conclude with all family members singing in Latin as well as in English. The Latin lyrics to *Aufer me ad arenam* may warrant close scrutiny by Latin students because they contain a singular imperative form of the irregular verb (*au*) *fero*, a hortatory subjunctive form of a first conjugation deponent verb, some anaphora, assonance and asyndeton, and an intertextual Petronian allusion. But they seek to be singable above all, even by those who may not be studying Latin. *Cantemus omnes. Aufer me ad arenam. Aufer me ad turbam. Da mihi glires sparsos melle. Reditum domum non curo velle. Pro leonibus exhortemur. Nil refert hominum. Duo tria membra edent gladiatorum.*

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¹⁰ “Surfin’ USA” features lyrics written in 1963 by the Beach Boys. The music was written by Chuck Berry in 1958, who sued them and won a songwriting credit for their blatant appropriation of his melody and rhythm from “Sweet Little Sixteen.”

Appendix:

Songs as Sights: Latinized Versions of Popular Lyrics as “Unseen”
Translation Exercises

Special thanks to Sergey Brin, BA Maryland 1993, and Larry Page

[Click image to
hear song](#)

1.

Nunc Amore (“That’s Amore”). Written for *The Caddy*.

Performed by Dean Martin.

Music by Harry Warren and lyrics by Jack Brooks, 1953.



Neapoli amor est rex. Carmen amoris cantat grex.

Oculos pulsat si luna, fruimini nunc amore. Mundus vinosis si nitet, potimini nunc amore.

Tintinnabula tinnient. Amatores laeti canent “Vita Bella.”

Cordaque—tippitippite, tiptiptipite—saltabunt tarentella. Mica stella!

Astra salivam si movent, vescimini nunc amore. Nubes circumdat si pedes, vos superavit amor.

Ambulatis si vigilantes somniant stupore, ignoscite mihi, sed vos fungimini nunc amore.

Judith P. Hallett, 1989

(In Napoli, where love is king. When boy meets girl here’s what they sing. When the moon hits your eyes like a big pizza pie, that’s Amore. When the world seems to shine like you’ve had too much wine, that’s Amore. Bells will ring, ting-a-ling-a-ling, ting-a-ling-a-ling, and you’ll sing ‘Vita Bella’. Hearts will sway, tippitippite, tippitippite, like a gay tarantella. Lucky fella! When the stars make you drool just like pasta fazool, that’s Amore. When you dance down the street with a cloud at your feet, you’re in love. When you walk in a dream, and you know you’re not dreaming, Signore. Scusa me, but you see, back in old Napoli, that’s Amore!)

2.

Carmen Aurum Fodientium (*Pecuniosae* a/k/a “The Gold Diggers’ Song” and “We’re In the Money”). Written for *Gold Diggers of 1933*

Performed by Ginger Rogers in English and Pig Latin

Music by Harry Warren and lyrics by Al Dubin, 1933.

Chorus (English):

We’re in the money, we’re in the money

We’ve got a lot of what it takes to get along!

We’re in the money, the skies are sunny.

Old man Depression, you are through, you done us wrong!



We never see a headline, 'bout a breadline today;
 And when we see the landlord
 We can look that guy right in the eye
 We're in the money, come on my honey
 Let's spend it, lend it, send it rolling along.

(Pig Latin)

Ereway inhay the oneymay, ereway inhay the oneymay!
 Eveway otgay ayay otlay ofway atwhay itay akestay otay etgay aylayongwayo!
 Ereway inhay the oneymay, ethay lesksays are unnysay!
 Oldmay anday eedayessionpray, ouyay aray ootrhay ootay unday usay ongwayo!
 Eway evernay eesay eadlayinelay ayofay eadbrayinelay otayayday.
 Anday enwhay eway eesay ethay andlayord
 We'll ooklay atthay uygay ightray inay ethay eyeyay!
 We're in the money, come on, my honey,
 Let's lend it, spend it, send it rolling along.

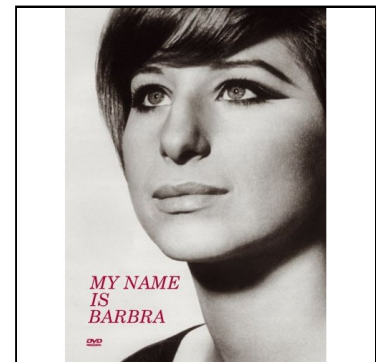
(Latine non in modo porcorum)

Pecuniosae, pecuniosae!
 Habemus plus quo sit opus ad florendum.
 Pecuniosae, non nebulosae.
 Abi, Paupertas, nefas tibi luendum.
 Numquam videtur fama, de congiario
 Si cauponem videmus,
 Superbe gaudere paremus.
 Pecuniosae, et studiosae,
 Faeneremus et fundamus in aeternum!
 Judith P. Hallett, 2003

3.

Dies Laeti Redeunt ("Happy Days are Here Again")

Memorably (and ironically) performed by Barbra Streisand.
 Music by Milton Ager and lyrics by Jack Yellen, 1929.



Dies laeti redeunt, caela superna clarescunt. "Gaudeamus" iterum canunt,
 Dies laeti redeunt.
 Omnes nunc conclamemus, dubitare nunc non possemus, omnibus nunc
 pernuntiemus,
 Dies laeti redeunt.
 Nunc vale, Tristitia. salveque, Laetitia...futura.
 Dies laeti redeunt, caela superna clarescunt. "Gaudeamus" iterum canunt,
 Tempora, et noctes, et dies laetissimi!
 Judith P. Hallett, 2000

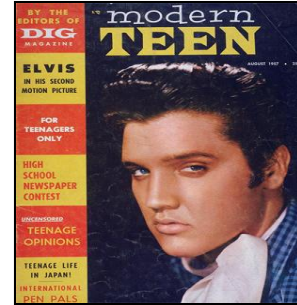
(Happy days are here again, the skies above are clear again. Let us sing a song of cheer again, happy days are here again. All together, shout it now, there is no one who can doubt it now. So let's tell the word about it now, happy days are here again. Your cares and troubles are gone. There'll be no more from now on, from now on. Happy days are here again, the skies above are clear again. Let us sing a song of cheer again, happy times, happy nights, happy days are here again!)

4.

Labefactissimus {"All Shook Up")

Performed by Elvis Presley

Music and lyrics by Otis Blackwell and Elvis Presley, 1957.



Macte virtute sim! Quomodo affligor? Pruriginem villosa dat mihi arbor?

Ab amicis appellor cimex absurdus.

Amans sum, labefactissimus! Hic Hic, Haec Haec, Hoc Hoc.

Manus tremuntur, genua labant. Et duo mei pedes saepe titubant.

Quibus beati grates agimus?

5

Amans sum, labefactissimus? Hic Hic, Haec Haec, Hoc Hoc.

Quid putem ne roges, amabo. Mente confusus sum, tamen valeo.

Si propinquo hanc carissimam, cor sic pulsatur ut pertimescam!

Manum tetigit! Quam congelabar! Basians, igni Vulcani fio par.

Est floris lutei mihi instar!

10

Amans sum, labefactissimus! Hic Hic, Haec Haec, Hoc Hoc.

Lingua torpet (dicunt antiqui!). Eripit sensus misero mihi;

Fruitur si corpus amore meo, videor esse mihi par deo!

Manum tetigit! Quam congelabar! Basians, igni Vulcani fio par.

Est floris lutei mihi instar!

15

Amans sum, labefactissimus! Hic Hic, Haec Haec, Hoc Hoc.

Labefactissimus. Hic Hic, Haec Haec, Hoc Hoc.

Judith P. Hallett, 1996.

The following notes and vocabulary should be of help:

Line 1 *Macte virtute*= [masc.] be blessed for excellence; *sim* [present subjunctive, potential?]=well, I'll be; *quomodo*=how; *affligo, affligere, afflicxi, afflictus*=strike, make suffer; *prurigo, inis* F itch; *villosus, a, um* hairy, shaggy

Line 2 *appello* (1) call; *cimex, cimicis* M bug; *absurdus a, um* ridiculous, weird

Line 3 *labefactus*, from *labefacio, -facere, feci, factus*=to shake up, cause to totter

Line 4 *tremo, tremere* tremble, quiver; *genu, us* N knee; *labo* (1) totter, be unsteady;

titubo (1) totter, stagger, reel.

Line 5 *beatus, a, um* fortunate, lucky; *grates agere=gratias agere* (with dative object)

Line 7 Translate: *Amabo* (=si placeat), *ne roges* (negative imperative with *ne* + present subjunctive) *quid putem* (indirect question with present subjunctive: "what I am thinking, have on my mind"). *confundo, confundere, confusi, confusus* disturb, throw into disorder

Line 8 *propinquo* (1) approach; *cor, cordis* N heart; *pertimesco, ere* fear, be frightened to death.

Note the *sic*, followed by *ut* and the subjunctive. What construction is this?

Line 9 *tango, tangere, tetigi, tactus* touch; *quam=quomodo*; *congelō* (1) chill, freeze up; *basio* (1) kiss; *Vulcanus, I M=Vulcan*, Roman fire god; *par*, equal, takes a dative object (here *igni*).

Line 10 *flos, floris* M flower; *luteus, a, um* yellow; *instar* N image

Line 12 *lingua, ae* F tongue; *torpeo, ere, torpui* become numb. *Eripio, eripere, eripui, ereptus*=steal away. Translate: [*Haec femina*] *eripit sensus* (accusative plural) [from: dative with compound] *mibi misero*

Line 13 Translate *Si corpus [meum] fruitur amore meo; fruor, frui, fructus sum* (with ablative object) enjoy.

Please translate these lyrics into grammatically correct and vivid English. Then:

1. Identify the name of the English song on which these lyrics are based, and the [regal] singer who made these lyrics immortal
2. Explain how the speaker characterizes his physical reaction to being *amans* in lines 3, 7, 8 and 12. How does his response justify the superlative *labefactissimus*?
3. What is the contrast between *congelabar* and *igni Vulcani par* in lines 9 and 14? What physical action causes the former reaction? The latter?
4. How does *videor esse mihi par deo* resemble, in language and sentiment, *igni Vulcani fio par*? How do these statements—one prefaced by *basians*, the other by *fruitur si corpus amore meo*— differ from one another?
5. In Poem 51, which translates Greek lyrics by the 6th century BCE female poet Sappho, the first century BCE poet Catullus describes his reaction to observing his female beloved with another man. What does this excerpt from that poem have in common with these lyrics? How does it differ from them?: *Ille mi par esse deo videtur...qui sedens adversus...te spectat et audit...misero quod omnes eripit sensus mihi....lingua sed torpet.*

(A-well-a bless my soul. What's wrong with me? I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy tree. My friends say I'm actin' queer as a bug.

I'm in love. I'm all shook up. Mm Mm.. Oh oh. Yeah Yeah.

My hands are shaky and my knees are weak. I can't seem to stand on my own two feet. Who do you thank when you have such luck? I'm in love. I'm all shook up! Mm Mm. Oh oh. Yeah Yeah.

Please don't ask me what's on my mind, I'm a little mixed up but I'm feelin' fine. When I'm near that girl that I love best. My heart beats so it scares me to death!

She touched my hand. What a chill I got. Her kisses are like a volcano that's hot! I'm proud to say she's my buttercup. I'm in love! I'm all shook up. Mm Mm. Oh oh. Yeah Yeah.

My tongue gets tied when I try to speak. My insides shake like a leaf on a tree. There's only one cure for this body of mine. That's to have the girl that I love so fine.

She touched my hand. What a chill I got. Her kisses are like a volcano that's hot! I'm proud to say she's my buttercup. I'm in love! I'm all shoot up. Mm Mm. Oh oh. Yeah yeah. Yeah I'm all shook up. Mm Mm. Oh oh. Yeah Yeah. I'm all shook up!)

5.

Set to the tune of "The Marines' Hymn," or, substituting *hostis noster* for *Vercingetorix*,

“Clementine” or “Ode to Joy.”

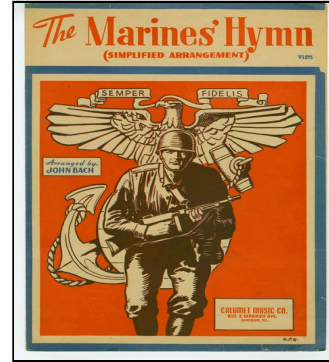
**Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Galliam
Vercingetorix [hostis noster] in catenis**

Captivus pergit Romam.

Superavit Cleopatram (et non solum in bello)

“Veni, Vidi, Vici” dixit, laetante hoc populo.

Judith P. Hallett, 2003



Notes:

subigo, subigere, subegi, subactus to subjugate, conquer

Cf. Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 49.4 *Gallico denique triumpho milites eius inter cetera carmina, qualia currum prosequentes ioculariter canunt, etiam illud vulgatissimum pronuntiaverunt: Gallias Caesar subegit Nicomedes Caesarem/Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat qui subegit Gallias,/Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Caesarem.*

Catena, ae F chain

Pergo, pergere, perrexi, perrectus to proceed forward towards an eventual destination

Cf. Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 37.2 *Pontico triumpho inter pompae fercula trium verborum praetulit titulum VENI VIDI VICI non acta belli significantem sicut ceteris, sed celeriter confecti notam.*

Laetor (1) rejoice, the present active participle here is used in an ablative absolute construction.

[Set to the tune of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”]

In tres partes dividebatur omnis Gallia.

Victis Gallis, Caesar dixit “iacta est alea.”

Rubico flumen, meta fatalis, est transita.

Incedit noster dux.

Gloria nostro Caesari, Gloria nostro Caesari, Gloria nostro Caesari,

Incedit noster dux.

Judith P. Hallett, 2003



Notes:

In tres partes dividebatur omnis Gallia. Cf. Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 1.1 *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres.*

Victis Gallis=ablative absolute

Iacta est alea Cf. Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 32 *Tunc Caesar: “Eatur, inquit, “quo deorum ostenta et inimicorum iniquitas vocat. Iacta alea est,” inquit.*

Rubico, onis M the Rubicon, a stream near Ariminum (Rimini) marking the boundary between Italy and Gaul at the time of Caesar’s Civil War. In apposition with *flumen, fluminis N* river

Transeo, transire, transii, transitus cross

Meta, ae F goalpost, boundary. In apposition with *flumen Rubico*, and responsible for the feminine gender of *transita* (as well as its ability to rhyme)

Incedo, incendere, incedi walk in a stately manner, march on

6.

In Romae fluctibus (“Surfin’ USA”)

Performed by the Beach Boys

Lyrics by the Beach Boys, 1963. Music by Chuck Berry, 1958, who sued and won a songwriting credit for their blatant appropriation of his melody and rhythm from “Sweet Little Sixteen”

Si omnes mare habeant, trans hoc solum nostrum.

Omnes undis vehantur, ut apud Neptunum.

Videas adustos sole, nudis cum pedibus,

Capillorum flavorum, in Romae fluctibus.

Spectes in flumine Tiberi, aut ductibus aquae,

Iuvenes se respergentes, similes Cloeliae.

Ab Tripolitanis marinis litoribus,

Ad has aulas Caesarum, in Romae fluctibus.

Judith P. Hallett, 2003

5



(If everybody had an ocean, across the U.S.A., Then everybody'd be surfin', like Californi-A. You'd see 'em wearing their baggies, huarachi sandals too, A bushy bushy blonde hairdo, Surfin' U.S.A. You'd catch em surfin' at Del Mar, Ventura County line, Santa Cruz and Trestle, Australia's Narabeen, All over Manhattan, And down Doheny Way, Everybody's gone surfin', Surfin'USA.)

Please translate these lyrics into grammatically correct and vivid English. Then

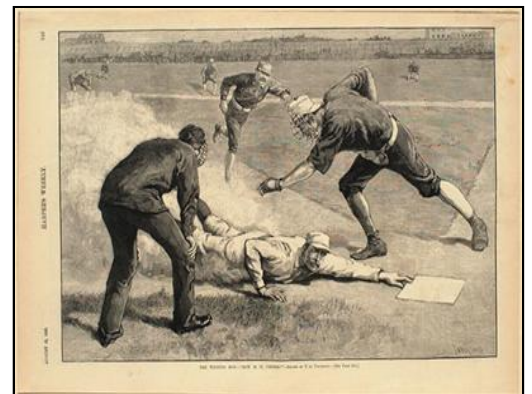
1. Identify the name of the English song on which these lyrics are based, who wrote the lyrics for and immortalized this song, and who originally wrote the music.
2. Explain the relevance of the following details in this, Latin, version to the original lyrics: *apud Neptunum* (line 2); *in flumine Tiberi aut ductibus aquae* (line 5), *similes Cloeliae* (line 6)
3. To what places in the ancient Roman world do *Tripolitanis marinis litoribus* (line 7) and *has aulas Caesarum* (line 8) literally refer? To what contemporary American patriotic song do they figuratively allude? [HINT: the Latin word from which the title derives is in line 7.]
4. In view of the aquatic activities which are feasible *in flumine Tiberi* and *ductibus aquae*, why might it be more appropriate to use imperfect (for present contrary-to fact conditions) subjunctive forms rather than the present (for future less vivid conditions) subjunctive forms *habeant*, *vehantur*, *videas* and *spectes*?

7.

Aufer me ad arenam (“Take Me Out to the Ballgame”)

Aufer me ad arenam, aufer me ad turbam.

Da mihi glires sparsos melle



**Reditum domum non curo velle.
Pro leonibus exhortemur. Nil refert hominum.
Duo, tria membra edent gladiatorum.
Judith P. Hallett, 2000.**

Notes: *aufer* singular imperative form of *aufero*, *auferre*, carry away; *glires sparsos melle*, dormice sprinkled with honey, as served at the *Cena Trimalchionis* (Petronius, *Satyricon* 31.10 *glires melle ac papavere sparsos*); *reditus*, *us* M return; *exhortor* (1) cheer, root, here in hortatory subjunctive. *Nil[bi]l refert* (with genitive)=it doesn't matter about, it doesn't concern; *edo*, *edere*, *edi*, *esum* to eat.

Professor John Starks (Classics, Randolph College) sings all songs.