

# What if Kyriai Doxai was NOT a list?

Post by “Joshua” of July 29, 2023 at 11:11 AM

Quote

Are the Latin translations varying dramatically such as modern translations of Lucretius into English do, or do they tend to be largely latin word for latin word consistent?

That's a good question that I don't have an answer to. In one of Poggio's letters to Niccolo Niccoli, the writer apologizes for his style--he was stuck in England reading Ecclesiastical Latin and did not, at the time, have access to the high Classical Latin of Cicero, Varro, Lucretius, Virgil, etc. So a Poggio or a Niccoli at the height of their powers would have attempted as far as possible to consciously imitate the style of the Late Republic, while many of their contemporaries will have written in a less polished register. This difference would affect everything from grammar and sentence structure to diction and spelling.

Montaigne, whose native language was Latin due to an unusual upbringing, complained that the Latin of the Renaissance had fallen so far below that of its antecedents.

Quote

When I consider this, reiicit, pascit, inhians, molli, fovet, medullas, labefacta, pendet, percurrit, and this noble circumfusa, mother of gentle infusus, I am vexed at these small points and verball allusions, which since have sprung up. To those well-meaning [ancient] people there needed no sharpe encounter or witty equivocation: their speech is altogether full and massie, with a naturall and constant vigor: they are all epigram, not only taile, but head, stomacke, and feet. There is nothing forced, nothing wrested, nothing limping; all marcheth with like tenour.

He was referring to this passage from Lucretius:

-----belli fera munera Mavors

Armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se

Reiicit, aeterno devinctus vulnere amoris:

Pascit amore aridos inhians in te Dea visus,

Eque tuo endet resupini spiritus ore:

Hunc tu Diva tuo recubantem corpore sancto  
Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelas  
Funde.

Mars, mighty arm'd, rules the fierce feats of armes,  
Yet often casts himselfe into thine armes,  
Oblig'd thereto by endlesse wounds of love,  
Gaping on thee feeds greedy sight with love,  
His breath hangs at thy mouth who upward lies,  
Goddesse thou circling him, while he so lies,  
With thy celestiall body, speeches sweet

Montaigne continues:

#### Quote

This is not a soft quaint eloquence, and only without offence; it is sinnowie, materiall, and solid; not so much delighting, as filling and ravishing, and ravisheth most the strongest wits, the wittiest conceits. When I behold these gallant formes of expressing, so lively, so nimble, so deepe, I say not this is to speake well, but to think well.

Translated into [English](#) by John Florio, 1603.