

# Ars poetica

- [1] Hūmānō capitī cervīcem pictor equīnam  
[2] jungere sī velit et variās indūcere plūmās  
[3] undique collātīs membrīs, ut turpiter ātrum  
[4] dēsinat in piscem mulier fōrmōsa supernē,  
[5] spectātum admissī, rīsum teneātis, amīcī?  
[6] Crēdite, Pīsōnēs, istī tabulae fore librum  
[7] persimilem, cujus, velut aegrī somnia, vānae  
[8] fingentur speciēs, ut nec pēs nec caput ūnī  
[9] reddātur fōrmae. "Pictōribus atque poētīs  
[10] quidlibet audendī semper fuit aequa potestās."  
[11] Scīmus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim,  
[12] sed nōn ut placidīs coeant immītia, nōn ut  
[13] serpentēs avibus geminentur, tigribus agnī.  
[14] Inceptīs gravibus plērumque et magna professīs  
[15] purpureus, lātē quī splendeat, ūnus et alter  
[16] adsuitur pannus, cum lūcus et āra Diānae  
[17] et properantis aquae per amoenōs ambitus agrōs  
[18] aut flūmen Rhēnum aut pluvius dēscrībitur arcus;  
[19] sed nunc nōn erat hīs locus. Et fortasse cupressum  
[20] scīs simulāre; quid hoc, sī frāctīs ēnatat exspēs  
[21] nāvibus, aere datō quī pingitur? Amphora coepit  
[22] īstituī; currēte rotā cūr urceus exit?  
[23] Dēnique sit quod vīs, simplex dumtaxat et ūnum.  
[24] Maxima pars vātum, pater et juvenēs patre dignī,  
[25] dēcipimur speciē rēctī. Brevis esse labōrō,  
[26] obscūrus fiō; sectantem lēvia nervī  
[27] dēficiunt animīque; professus grandia turget;  
[28] serpit humī tūtus nimium timidusque procellae;  
[29] quī variāre cupit rem prōdigialiter ūnam,  
[30] delphīnum silvīs adpingit, flūctibus aprum.  
[31] In vitium dūcit culpae fuga, sī caret arte.  
[32] Aemiliū circā lūdum faber īmus et unguīs  
[33] exprimet et mollīs imitābitur aere capillōs,  
[34] īnfēlīx operis summā, quia pōnere tōtum  
[35] nesciet. Hunc ego mē, sīquid compōnere cūrem,  
[36] nōn magis esse velim quam nāsō vīvere prāvō  
[37] spectandum nigrīs oculīs nigrōque capillō.  
[38] Sūmite māteriam vestrīs, quī scrībitis, aequam  
[39] vīribus et versātē diū quid ferre recūsent,  
[40] quid valeant umerī. cui lēcta potenter erit rēs,  
[41] nec fācundia dēseret hunc, nec lūcidus ūrdō.  
[42] Ōrdinis haec virtūs erit et venus, aut ego fallor,  
[43] ut jam nunc dīcat jam nunc dēbentia dīcī,  
[44] plēraque differat et praesēns in tempus omittat,  
[45] hoc amet, hoc spernat prōmissī carminis auctor.  
[46] In verbīs etiam tenuis cautusque serendīs  
[47] dīxeris ēgregiē, nōtum sī callida verbum  
[48] reddiderit jūnctūra novum. Sī forte necesse est  
[49] indicīs mōnstrāre recentibus abdita rērum, et

[50] fingere cīnctūtīs nōn exaudīta Cethēgīs  
[51] continget dabiturque licentia sūmpta pudenter,  
[52] et nova fictaque nūper habēbunt verba fidem, sī  
[53] Graecō fonte cadent parcē dētorta. Quid autem  
[54] Caeciliō Plautōque dabit Rōmānus, adēmptum  
[55] Vergiliō Variōque? Ego cūr, adquīrere pauca  
[56] sī possum, invideor, cum lingua Catōnis et Ennī  
[57] sermōnem patrium dītāverit et nova rērum  
[58] nōmina prōtulerit? Licuit semperque licēbit  
[59] signātum praesente notā prōducere nōmen.  
[60] Ut silvae foliīs prōnōs mūtantur in annōs,  
[61] prīma cadunt, ita verbōrum vetus interit aetās,  
[62] et juvenum rītū flōrent modo nāta vigentque.  
[63] Dēbēmur mortī nōs nostraque. Sīve receptus  
[64] terrā Neptūnus classēs Aquilōnibus arcet,  
[65] rēgis opus, sterilisve diū palus aptaque rēmīs  
[66] vīcīnās urbēs alit et grave sentit arātrum,  
[67] seu cursum mūtāvit inīquum frūgibus amnis,  
[68] doctus iter melius, mortālia facta perībunt,  
[69] nēdum sermōnem stet honōs et grātia vīvāx.  
[70] Multa renāsentur quae jam cecidēre, cadentque  
[71] quae nunc sunt in honōre vocābula, sī volet ūsus,  
[72] quem penes arbitrium est et jūs et norma loquendī.  
[73] Rēs gestae rēgumque ducumque et trīstia bella  
[74] quō scribī possent numerō, mōnstrāvit Homērus.  
[75] Versibus impariter jūnctīs querimōnia prīmum,  
[76] post etiam inclūsa est vōtī sententia compos;  
[77] quis tamen exigūōs elegōs ēmīserit auctor,  
[78] grammaticī certant et adhūc sub jūdice līs est.  
[79] Archilochum propriō rabiēs armāvit iambō;  
[80] hunc soccī cēpēre pedem grandēsque coturnī,  
[81] alternīs aptum sermōnibus et populārīs  
[82] vincentem strepitūs et nātum rēbus agendīs.  
[83] Mūsa dedit fidibus dīvōs puerōsque deōrum  
[84] et pugilem victōrem et equum certāmine prīmum  
[85] et juvenum cūrās et lībera vīna referre.  
[86] Dīscrīptās servāre vicēs operumque colōrēs  
[87] cūr ego, sī nequeō ignōrōque, poēta salūtor?  
[88] Cūr nescīre pudēns prāvē quam discere mālō?  
[89] Versibus expōnī tragicīs rēs cōmica nōn vult;  
[90] indignātur item prīvātīs ac prope soccō  
[91] dignīs carminibus nārrārī cēna Thyestae.  
[92] Singula quaeque locum teneant sortīta decentem.  
[93] Interdum tamen et vōcem cōmoedia tollit,  
[94] īrātusque Chremēs tumidō dēlītigat ōre;  
[95] et tragicus plērumque dolet sermōne pedestrī  
[96] Tēlephus et Pēleus, cum pauper et exul uterque  
[97] prōicit ampullās et sēsquipedālia verba,  
[98] sī cūrat cor spectantis tetigisse querellā.  
[99] Nōn satis est pulchra esse poēmata; dulcia suntō  
[100] et, quōcumque volent, animum audītōris aguntō.  
[101] Ut rīdentibus adrīdent, ita flentibus adsunt

- [102] hūmānī voltūs; sī vīs mē flēre, dolendum est  
[103] prīmū ipsī tibi; tum tua mē īfōrtūnia laedent,  
[104] Tēlephe vel Pēleu; male sī mandāta loquēris,  
[105] aut dormītābō aut rīdēbō. Trīstia maestum  
[106] voltum verba decent, īrātum plēna minārum,  
[107] lūdentem lascīva, sevērum sēria dictū.  
[108] Fōrmāt enim nātūra prius nōn intus ad omnem  
[109] fortūnārum habitum; juvat aut impellit ad īram,  
[110] aut ad humum maerōre gravī dēdūcit et angit;  
[111] post effert animī mōtūs interprete lingua.  
[112] Sī dīcentis erunt fortūnīs absona dicta,  
[113] Rōmānī tollent equitēs peditēsque cachinnum.  
[114] Intererit multum, dīvusne loquātur an hērōs,  
[115] mātūrusne senex an adhūc flōrente juventā  
[116] fervidus, et mātrōna potēns an sēdula nūtrīx,  
[117] mercātorne vagus cultorne virentis agellī,  
[118] Colchus an Assyrius, Thēbīs nūtrītus an Argīs.  
[119] Aut fāmam sequere aut sibi convenientia finge  
[120] scrīptor. Honōrātum sī forte repōnis Achillem,  
[121] impiger, īrācundus, inexōrābilis, ācer  
[122] jūra neget sibi nāta, nihil nōn arroget armīs.  
[123] Sit Mēdēa ferōx invictaque, flēbilis īnō,  
[124] perfidus Ixīōn, īō vaga, trīstis Orestēs.  
[125] Sīquid inexpertum scaenae committis et audēs  
[126] persōnam fōrmāre novam, servētur ad īmum  
[127] quālis ab inceptō prōcesserit et sibi cōnstet.  
[128] Difficile est propriē commūnia dīcere, tūque  
[129] rēctius īliacum carmen dēdūcis in āctūs  
[130] quam sī prōferrēs ignōta indictaque prīmus.  
[131] Pūblica māteriēs privātī jūris erit, sī  
[132] nōn circā vīlem patulumque morāberis orbem,  
[133] nec verbō verbum cūrābis reddere fidus  
[134] interpres nec dēsiliēs imitātor in artum,  
[135] unde pedem prōferre pudor vetet aut operis lēx.  
[136] Nec sīc incipiēs, ut scrīptor cyclicus ūlī:  
[137] "Fortūnam Priamī cantābō et nōbile bellum".  
[138] Quid dignum tantō feret hic prōmissor hiātū?  
[139] Parturient montēs, nāscētur rīdiculus mūs.  
[140] Quantō rēctius hic, quī nīl mōlītūr ineptē:  
[141] "Dīc mihi, Mūsa, virum, captae post tempora Trōjāe  
[142] quī mōrēs hominū multōrum vīdit et urbēs".  
[143] Nōn fūmum ex fulgōre, sed ex fūmō dare lūcem  
[144] cōgitat, ut speciōsa dehinc mīrācula prōmat,  
[145] Antiphatēn Scyllamque et cum Cyclōpe Charybdim.  
[146] Nec redītum Diomēdis ab interitū Meleagrī,  
[147] nec geminō bellum Trōjānum ūrdītūr ab ūvō;  
[148] semper ad ēventū festīnat et in mediās rēs  
[149] nōn secus ac nōtās audītōrem rapit, et quae  
[150] dēspērat tractāta nitēscere posse relinquit,  
[151] atque ita mentītur, sīc vērīs falsa remiscet,  
[152] prīmō nē medium, mediō nē discrepet īmum.  
[153] Tū quid ego et populus mēcum dēsīderet audī,

[154] sī plōsōris egēs aulaea manentis et usque  
[155] sessūrī dōnec cantor. "Vōs plaudite" dīcat.  
[156] Aetātis cujusque notandī sunt tibi mōrēs,  
[157] mōbilisbusque decor nātūrīs dandus et annīs.  
[158] Reddere quī vōcēs jam scit puer et pede certō  
[159] signat humum, gestit paribus conlūdere et īram  
[160] colligit ac pōnit temere et mūtātur in hōrās.  
[161] inberbus juvenis tandem cūstōde remōtō  
[162] gaudet equīs canibusque et aprīcī grāmine Campī,  
[163] cēreus in vitium flectī, monitōribus asper,  
[164] ūtilium tardus prōvīsor, prōdigus aeris,  
[165] sublīmis cupidusque et amāta relinquere pernīx.  
[166] Conversīs studīs aetās animusque virīlis  
[167] quaerit opēs et amīcitiās, īservit honōrī,  
[168] commīsisse cavet quod mox mūtāre labōret.  
[169] Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda, vel quod  
[170] quaerit et inventīs miser abstinet ac timet ūtī,  
[171] vel quod rēs omnīs timidē gelidēque ministrat,  
[172] dīlātor, spē longus, iners avidusque futūrī,  
[173] difficilis, querulus, laudātor temporis āctī  
[174] sē puerō, castigātor cēnsorque minōrum.  
[175] Multa ferunt annī venientēs commoda sēcum,  
[176] multa recēdēntēs adimunt. Nē forte senīlēs  
[177] mandentur juvenī partēs puerōque virīlēs;  
[178] semper in adjūnctīs aevōque morābitur aptīs.  
[179] Aut agitur rēs in scaenīs aut ācta refertur.  
[180] Sēgnius inrītant animōs dēmissa per aurem  
[181] quam quae sunt oculīs subjecta fidēlibus et quae  
[182] ipse sibī trādit spectātor; nōn tamen intus  
[183] digna gerī prōmēs in scaenam multaque tollēs  
[184] ex oculīs, quae mox nārret fācundia praeſēns.  
[185] Nē puerōs cōram populō Mēdēa trucīdet,  
[186] aut hūmāna palam coquat exta nefārius Atreus,  
[187] aut in avem Procnē vertātur, Cadmus in anguem.  
[188] Quodcumque ostendis mihi sīc, incrēdulus ōdī.  
[189] Nēve minor neu sit quīntō prōductior āctū  
[190] fābula, quae poscī volt et spectanda repōnī;  
[191] nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nōdus  
[192] inciderit; nec quārta loquī persōna labōret.  
[193] Āctōris partīs chorus officiumque virīle  
[194] dēfendant, neu quid mediōs intercinat āctūs,  
[195] quod nōn prōpositō condūcat et haereat aptē.  
[196] Ille bonīs faveatque et cōnsiliētur amīcē  
[197] et regat īrātōs et amet peccāre timentīs;  
[198] ille dapēs laudet mēnsae brevis, ille salūbrem  
[199] jūstitiam lēgēsque et apertīs ūtia portīs;  
[200] ille tegat commissa deōsque precētūr et ūret,  
[201] ut redeat miserīs, abeat Fortūna superbīs.  
[202] Tībia nōn, ut nunc, orichalcō vīncta tubaeque  
[203] aemula, sed tenuis simplexque forāmine paucō  
[204] adspīrāre et adesse chorīs erat ūtilis atque  
[205] nōndum spissa nimis complēre sedīlia flātū,

[206] quō sānē populus numerābilis, utpote parvus,  
[207] et frūgī castusque verēcundusque coībat.  
[208] Postquam coepit agrōs extendere victor et urbēs  
[209] lātior amplexī mūrus vīnōque diurnō  
[210] plācārī Genius fēstīs impūne diēbus,  
[211] accessit numerīsque modīsque licentia major.  
[212] Indoctus quid enim saperet līberque labōrum  
[213] rūsticus urbānō cōnfūsus, turpis honestō?  
[214] Sīc pīscae mōtumque et luxuriem addidit artī  
[215] tībīcen trāxitque vagus per pulpita vestem;  
[216] sīc etiam fidibus vōcēs crēvēre sevērīs  
[217] et tulit ēloquium īsolitum fācundia praeceps,  
[218] ūtiliumque sagāx rērum et dīvīna futūrī  
[219] sortilegīs nōn discrepuit sententia Delphīs.  
[220] Carmine quī tragicō vīlem certāvit ob hircum,  
[221] mox etiam agrestīs Satyrōs nūdāvit et asper  
[222] incolumī gravitāte jocum temptāvit eō quod  
[223] inlecebṛīs erat et grātā novitāte morandus  
[224] spectātor fūncusque sacrīs et pōtus et exlex.  
[225] Vērum ita rīsōrēs, ita commendāre dicācīs  
[226] conveniet Satyrōs, ita vertere sēria lūdō,  
[227] nē quīcumque deus, quīcumque adhibēbitur hērōs,  
[228] rēgālī cōnspectus in aurō nūper et ostrō,  
[229] migret in obscūrās humili sermōne tabernās,  
[230] aut, dum vītat humum, nūbēs et inānia captet.  
[231] Effūtīre levīs indigna tragoedia versūs,  
[232] ut fēstīs mātrōna movērī jussa diēbus,  
[233] intererit Satyrīs paulum pudibunda protervīs.  
[234] Nōn ego inōrnāta et dominantia nōmina sōlum  
[235] verbaque, Pīsōnēs, Satyrōrum scrīptor amābō,  
[236] nec sīc ēnītar tragicō dīferre colōrī  
[237] ut nihil intersit Dāvusne loquātur et audāx  
[238] Pīthias, ēmūnctō lucrāta Simōne talentum,  
[239] an cūstōs famulusque deī Sīlēnus alumnī.  
[240] Ex nōtō fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quīvīs  
[241] spēret idem, sūdet multum frūstrāque labōret  
[242] ausus idem; tantum seriēs jūnctūraque pollet,  
[243] tantum dē mediō sūmptīs accēdit honōris.  
[244] Silvīs dēductī caveant mē jūdice Faunī  
[245] nē, velut innātī triviīs ac paene forēnsēs,  
[246] aut nimium tenerīs juvenentur versibus unquam  
[247] aut inmunda crepent ignōminiōsaque dicta;  
[248] offenduntur enim quibus est equus et pater et rēs,  
[249] nec, sī quid frictī ciceris probat et nucis ēmptor,  
[250] aequīs accipiunt animīs dōnantve corōnā.  
[251] Syllaba longa brevī subjecta vocātūr iambus,  
[252] pēs citus; unde etiam trimetrīs adcrēscere jussit  
[253] nōmen iambēīs, cum sēnōs redderet ictūs,  
[254] pīmus ad extrēmum similis sibi; nōn ita pīdem,  
[255] tardior ut paulō graviorque venīret ad aurīs,  
[256] spondēōs stabilīs in jūra paterna recēpit  
[257] commodus et patiēns, nōn ut dē sēde secundā

[258] cēderet aut quārtā sociāliter. Hic et in Accī  
[259] nōbilis trimetrī adpāret rārus, et Ennī  
[260] in scaenam missōs cum magnō pondere versūs  
[261] aut operaे celeris nimium cūrāque parentis  
[262] aut ignōrātae premit artis crīmine turpī.  
[263] Nōn quīvīs videt inmodulāta poēmata jūdex,  
[264] et data Rōmānīs venia est indigna poētīs.  
[265] Idcircōne vager scrībamque licenter? An omnīs  
[266] vīsūrōs peccāta putem mea, tūtus et intrā  
[267] spēm veniae cautus? Vītāvī dēnique culpam,  
[268] nōn laudem meruī. Vōs exemplāria Graeca  
[269] nocturnā versāte manū, versāte diurnā.  
[270] At vestrī proavī Plautīnōs et numerōs et  
[271] laudāvēre salēs, nimium patienter utrumque,  
[272] nē dīcam stultē, mīrātī, sī modo ego et vōs  
[273] scīmus inurbānum lepidō sēpōnere dictō  
[274] lēgitimumque sonum digitīs callēmus et aure.  
[275] Ignōtum tragicae genus invēnisse Camēnae  
[276] dīcitur et plaustrīs vēxisse poēmata Thespis  
[277] quae canerent agerentque perūnctī faecibus ōra.  
[278] Post hunc persōnae pallaeque repertor honestae  
[279] Aeschylus et modicīs īstrāvit pulpita tignīs  
[280] et docuit magnumque loquī nītīque coturnō.  
[281] Successit vetus hīs cōmoedia, nōn sine multā  
[282] laude; sed in vitium lībertās excidit et vim  
[283] dignam lēge regī; lēx est accepta chorusque  
[284] turpiter obticuit sublātō jūre nocendī.  
[285] Nīl intemptātum nostrī līquēre poētæ,  
[286] nec minimum meruēre decus vestīgia Graeca  
[287] ausī dēserere et celebrāre domestica facta,  
[288] vel quī prae{text}tās vel quī docuēre togātās.  
[289] Nec virtūte foret clārisve potentius armīs  
[290] quam linguā Latium, sī nōn offenderet ūnum  
[291] quemque poētārum līmae labor et mora. Vōs, ō  
[292] Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite quod nōn  
[293] multa diēs et multa litūra coercuit atque  
[294] prae{sect}um deciēns nōn castīgāvit ad unguem.  
[295] Ingenium miserā quia fortūnātius arte  
[296] crēdit et exclūdit sānōs Helicōne poētās  
[297] Dēmocritus, bona pars nōn unguīs pōnere cūrat,  
[298] nōn barbam, sēcrēta petit loca, balnea vītat;  
[299] nancīscētūr enim pretium nōmenque poētæ,  
[300] sī tribus Anticyrīs caput īsānābile nunquam  
[301] tōnsōrī Licinō commīserit. Ō ego laevus  
[302] quī pūrgor bīlem sub vernī temporis hōram!  
[303] Nōn aliis faceret meliōra poēmata; vērum  
[304] nīl tantī est. Ergō fungar vice cōtis, acūtum  
[305] reddere quae ferrum valet exsors ipsa secandī;  
[306] mūnus et officium, nīl scrībēns ipse, docēbō,  
[307] unde parentur opēs, quid alat fōrmētque poētam,  
[308] quid deceat, quid nōn, quō virtūs, quō ferat error.  
[309] Scrībendī rēctē sapere est et pīncipium et fōns.

[310] Rem tibi Sōcraticae poterunt ostendere chartae,  
[311] verbaque prōvisam rem nōn invīta sequentur.  
[312] Quī didicit, patriae quid dēbeat et quid amīcīs,  
[313] quō sit amore parēns, quō frāter amandus et hospes,  
[314] quod sit cōnscrīptī, quod jūdicis officium, quae  
[315] partēs in bellum missī ducis, ille profectō  
[316] reddere persōnae scit convenientia cuique.  
[317] Respicerē exemplar vītae mōrumque jubēbō  
[318] doctum imitātōrem et vīvās hinc dūcere vōcēs.  
[319] Interdum speciōsa locīs mōrātaque rēctē  
[320] fābula nūllīus veneris, sine pondere et arte,  
[321] valdius oblectat populum meliusque morātur  
[322] quam versūs inopēs rērum nūgaeque canōrae.  
[323] Grāīs ingenium, Grāīs dedit ōre rotundō  
[324] Mūsa loquī, praeter laudem nūllīus avārīs;  
[325] Rōmānī puerī longīs ratiōnibus assem  
[326] discunt in partīs centum dīdūcere. "Dīcat  
[327] filius Albīnī: sī dē quīncunce remōta est  
[328] uncia, quid superat? Poterās dīxisse. " "Triēns. " "Eu!  
[329] Rem poteris servāre tuam. Redit uncia, quid fit? "  
[330] "Sēmis. " An, haec animōs aerūgō et cūra pecūlī  
[331] cum semel imbuerit, spērāmus carmina fingī  
[332] posse linenda cedrō et lēvī servanda cupressō?  
[333] Aut prōdesse volunt aut dēlectāre poētae  
[334] aut simul et jūcunda et idōnea dīcere vītae.  
[335] Quicquid praeciōpēs, estō brevis, ut cito dicta  
[336] percipiāt animī docilēs teneantque fidēlēs.  
[337] Omne supervacuum plēnō dē pectore mānat.  
[338] Ficta voluptātis causā sint proxima vērīs,  
[339] nē quodcumque volet poscat sibi fābula crēdī,  
[340] neu prānsae Lamiae vīvum puerum extrahat alvō.  
[341] Centuriae seniōrum agitant expertia frūgis,  
[342] celsī praetereunt austēra poēmata Ramnēs.  
[343] Omne tulit pūnctum quī miscuit ūtile dulcī,  
[344] lēctōrem dēlectandō pariterque monendō;  
[345] hic meret aera liber Sosiīs, hic et mare trānsit  
[346] et longum nōtō scrīptōrī prōrogat aevum.  
[347] Sunt dēlicita tamen quibus ignōvisse velīmus;  
[348] nam neque chorda sonum reddit quem volt manus et mēns,  
[349] poscentīque gravem persaepe remittit acūtum,  
[350] nec semper feriet quodcumque minābitur arcus.  
[351] Vērum ubi plūra nitent in carmine, nōn ego paucīs  
[352] offendar maculīs, quās aut incūria fūdit,  
[353] aut hūmāna parum cāvit nātūra. Quid ergō est?  
[354] Ut scrīptor sī peccat idem librārius usque,  
[355] quamvīs est monitus, veniā caret, et Citharoedus  
[356] rīdētūr, chordā quī semper oberrat eādem,  
[357] sīc mihi, quī multum cessat, fit Choerilus ille,  
[358] quem bis terque bonum cum rīsū mīror; et īdem  
[359] indignor quandōque bonus dormītat Homērus;

- [360] vērum operī longō fās est obrēpere somnum.  
[361] Ut pictūra poēsis; erit quae, sī propius stēs,  
[362] tē capiat magis, et quaedam, sī longius abstēs;  
[363] haec amat obscūrum, volet haec sub luce vidērī,  
[364] jūdicis argūtum quae nōn formīdat acūmen;  
[365] haec placuit semel, haec deciēns repetīta placēbit.  
[366] Ō major juvēnum, quamvīs et vōce paternā  
[367] fingeris ad rēctum et per tē sapis, hoc tibi dictum  
[368] tolle memor, certīs medium et tolerābile rēbus  
[369] rēctē concēdī; cōnsultus jūris et āctor  
[370] causārum mediocris abest virtūte disertī  
[371] Messallae nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus,  
[372] sed tamen in pretiō est; mediocribus esse poētīs  
[373] nōn hominēs, nōn dī, nōn concessēre columnae.  
[374] Ut grātās inter mēnsās symphōnia discors  
[375] et crassum unguentum et Sardō cum melle papāver  
[376] offendunt, poterat dūcī quia cēna sine istīs,  
[377] sīc animīs nātum inventumque poēma juvandīs,  
[378] sī paulum summō dēcessit, vergit ad īmum.  
[379] Lūdere quī nescit, campestribus abstinet armīs,  
[380] indoctusque pilae discīve trochīve quiēscit,  
[381] nē spissae rīsum tollant impūne corōnae;  
[382] quī nescit, versūs tamen audet fingere. Quidnī?  
[383] Līber et ingenuus, praeſertim cēnsus equestrem  
[384] summam nummōrum vitiōque remōtus ab omnī.  
[385] Tū nihil invītā dīcēs faciēsve Minervā;  
[386] id tibi jūdīcīum est, ea mēns. Sīquid tamen ūlim  
[387] scripseris, in Maecī dēſcendat jūdicis aurīs  
[388] et patris et nostrās, nōnumque premātur in annum  
[389] membrānīs intus positīs; dēlēre licēbit  
[390] quod nōn ēdiderīs; nescit vōx missa revertī.  
[391] Silvestrīs hominēs sacer interpresque deōrum  
[392] caedibus et vīctū foedō dēterrūt Orpheus,  
[393] dictus ob hoc lēnīre tigrīs rabidōsque leōnēs;  
[394] dictus et Amphiōn, Thēbānae conditor urbīs,  
[395] saxa movēre sonō testūdinis et prece blandā  
[396] dūcere quō vellet. Fuit haec sapientia quondam,  
[397] pūblica prīvatīs sēcernere, sacra profānīs,  
[398] concubitū prohibēre vagō, dare jūra marītīs,  
[399] oppida mōlīrī, lēgēs incīdere lignō.  
[400] Sīc honor et nōmen dīvīnīs vātibus atque  
[401] carminibus vēnit. Post hōs īsignis Homērus  
[402] Tyrtaeusque marēs animōs in Mārtia bella  
[403] versibus exacuit, dictae per carmina sortēs,  
[404] et vītae mōnstrāta via est et grātia rēgum  
[405] Pīeriīs temptāta modīs lūdusque repertus  
[406] et longōrum operum finis: nē forte pudōrī  
[407] sit tibi Mūsa lyrae sollers et cantor Apollō.  
[408] Nātūrā fieret laudābile carmen an arte,  
[409] quaeſītum est; ego nec studium sine dīvite vēnā  
[410] nec rude quid prōsit videō ingenium; alterius sīc  
[411] altera poscit opem rēs et conjūrat amīcē.

[412] Quī studet optātam cursū contingere mētam,  
[413] multa tulit fēcique puer, sūdāvit et alsit,  
[414] abstinuit venere et vīnō; quī Pȳthia cantat  
[415] tībīcen, didicit prius extimuitque magistrum.  
[416] Nunc satis est dīxisse: "Ego mīra poēmata pangō;  
[417] occupet extrēmum scabiēs; mihi turpe relinquī est  
[418] et, quod nōn didicī, sānē nescīre fatērī."  
[419] Ut praecō, ad mercēs turbam quī cōgit emendās,  
[420] adsentātōrēs jubet ad lucrum īre poēta  
[421] dīves agrīs, dīves positīs in fēnore nummīs.  
[422] Sī vērō est ūncutum quī rēctē pōnere possit  
[423] et spondēre levī prō paupere et ēripere ātrīs  
[424] lītibus implicitum, mīrābor sī sciet inter  
[425] nōscere mendācem vērumque beātus amīcum.  
[426] Tū seu dōnārīs seu quid dōnāre volēs cui,  
[427] nōlīto ad versūs tibi factōs dūcere plēnum  
[428] laetitia; clāmābit enim: "Pulchrē, bene, rēctē",  
[429] pallēscet super hīs, etiam stillābit amīcīs  
[430] ex oculīs rōrem, saliet, tundet pede terram.  
[431] Ut quī conductī plōrant in fūnere dīcunt  
[432] et faciunt prope plūra dolentibus ex animō, sīc  
[433] dērīsor vērō plūs laudātōre movētur.  
[434] Rēgēs dīcuntur multīs urgēre culillīs  
[435] et torquēre merō, quem perspexisse labōrent  
[436] an sit amīcītiā dignus; sī carmina condēs,  
[437] numquam tē fallent animī sub volpe latentēs.  
[438] Quīntiliō sīquid recitārēs: "Corrige, sōdēs,  
[439] hoc" ajēbat "et hoc"; melius tē posse negārēs,  
[440] bis terque expertum frūstrā; dēlēre jubēbat  
[441] et male tornātōs incūdī reddere versūs.  
[442] Sī dēfendere dēlictum quam vertere māllēs,  
[443] nūllum ultrā verbum aut operam īnsūmēbat inānem,  
[444] quīn sine rīvālī tēque et tua sōlus amārēs.  
[445] Vir bonus et prūdēns versūs reprehendet inertīs,  
[446] culpābit dūrōs, incōmptīs adlinet ātrum  
[447] trānsvorsō calamō signum, ambitiōsa recīdet  
[448] ḫornāmenta, parum clārīs lūcem dare cōget,  
[449] arguet ambiguē dictum, mūtanda notābit,  
[450] fīet Aristarchus, nec dīcet: "Cūr ego amīcum  
[451] offendam in nūgīs? " Hae nūgae sēria dūcent  
[452] in mala dērīsum semel exceptumque sinistrē.  
[453] Ut mala quem scabiēs aut morbus rēgius urget  
[454] aut fānāticus error et īrācunda Diāna,  
[455] vēsānum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poētam,  
[456] quī sapiunt; agitant puerī incautīque sequuntur.  
[457] Hic dum sublīmis versūs ructātur et errat,  
[458] sī velutī merulīs intentus dēcidit auceps  
[459] in puteum foveamve, licet "succurrīte" longum  
[460] clāmet "iō cīvēs", nōn sit quī tollere cūret.  
[461] Sī cūret quis opem ferre et dēmittere fūnem,  
[462] "quī scīs an prūdēns hūc sē dējēcerit atque  
[463] servārī nōlit? " dīcam, Siculīque poētae

[464] nārrābō interitum. Deus inmortālis habērī  
[465] dum cupit Empedoclēs, ārdentem frīgidus Aetnam  
[466] īnsiluit. Sit jūs liceatque perīre poētīs;  
[467] invītum quī servat, idem facit occīdentī.  
[468] Nec semel hoc fēcit nec, sī retractus erit, jam  
[469] fiet homō et pōnet fāmōsae mortis amōrem.  
[470] Nec satis appāret cūr versūs factitet, utrum  
[471] mīnxerit in patriōs cinerēs, an trīste bidental  
[472] mōverit incestus; certē furiit, ac velut ursus,  
[473] objectōs caveae valuit sī frangere clātrōs,  
[474] indoctum doctumque fugat recitātor acerbus;  
[475] quem vērō arripuit, tenet occīditque legendō,  
[476] nōn missūra cutem nisi plēna crūoris hirūdō.