

PRECATIO TERRAE AND PRECATIO OMNIUM HERBARUM

The text of these prayers is preserved in four manuscripts. Baehrens listed them as follows¹).

- A Codex Leidensis M.L.V.Q. 9 of the sixth century.
- B Codex Vratislaviensis 3 F. 19 of the eleventh century.
- C Codex Laurentianus 73.41 of the eleventh century.
- D Codex Laurentianus 73.16 of the thirteenth century.

The condition of the text of the prayers in the codices is strange. Baehrens says²) that they were copied in a continuous form as if they were prose in A, B, and C. In D they were written as some type of verse. In A there were some slight signs of interpunctuation and in B and C here and there initial letters. Riese comments³) that both involve the greatest difficulty in emendation because, before they were copied into our manuscripts, they had been distorted at times into a form like prose by persons destitute of a poetic sense. The efforts of these two scholars were directed towards recovering or reconstituting the texts as poems from the words which were preserved in the four codices. A new examination of the evidence, however, shows that this is excessive.

In A the *Precatio Terrae* is called a *carmen*. The metrical pattern is iambic senarius. The first 24 lines are poetry, but the balance is prose. A text is here presented and comments follow.

Dea sancta Tellus, rerum naturae parens,
quae cuncta generas et regeneras sidera,
quae sola praestas te tutelam gentibus,
caeli ac maris diva arbitra rerumque omnium,
5 per te quiescit natura et somnum capit,
itemque lucem reparas et noctem fugas;
tu Ditis umbras tegis et immensum chaos,
tu ventos imbres tempestates contines
et cum libet dimittis et misces freta
10 fugasque soles et procellas concitas,
itemque cum vis hilarem promittis diem.

1) E. Baehrens, *Miscellanea Critica* (Groningen 1878) p. 107 f.

2) *Ibid.* p. 108.

3) A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina* (Teubner, Leipzig 1894) p. xi f.

- Alimenta vitae tribuis perpetua fide
 et cum recesserit anima in tete refugimus
 et quidquid tribuis in te cuncta recidunt.
- 15 Merito vocaris magna tu mater deum
 pietate quia vicisti divum numina
 et illa vere es gentium et divum parens
 sine qua nec moritur quicquam nec nasci potest.
 Tu magna tuque divum regina es, dea!
- 20 Te, diva, adoro tuumque ego numen invoco
 facilisque praestes hoc mihi quod te rogo
 referamque, diva, gratias merita fide.
 Exaudi me, quaeso, et fave coeptis meis.
 Hoc quod peto a te, diva, mihi praesta volens.

Herbas quascumque generat tua maiestas salutis causa tribuis cunctis gentibus. Hanc mihi permittas medicinam tuam. Veni ad me cum tuis virtutibus. Quidquid ex his fecero, habeat eventum bonum; cuique easdem dedero, quique easdem a me acceperint, sanos eosdem praestes. Nunc, diva, postulo ut hoc mihi maiestas praestet quod te supplex rogo.

The first line illustrates the meter perfectly. The text of line 2, however, as transmitted in the manuscripts is imperfect. In A it reads *que cuncta generans et generas sidus*. In B and D it is *que cuncta generas et regeneras sidus*. Baehrens reports⁴⁾ that Schneider emended it to *sidera* and Buecheler to *in dies*. Schneider's correction is the best, is closest to the manuscript reading and is suited to the meaning of lines 4, 6, and 10. Parallels to the thought are seen in Cicero, *circuitus solis et lunae reliquorumque siderum*⁵⁾, in Horace⁶⁾ who calls the moon *siderum regina bicornis* and in Quintilian⁷⁾, *solem lunamque praecipua siderum*. The concept is of a geocentric system with sun, moon and the other stars circling the earth. Riese⁸⁾ accepted Buecheler's *in dies*, but Baehrens emended *sidus* to *indidem*, and in his *Miscellanea Critica* refers to Catullus 61.207f, *sed indidem / semper ingenerari*⁹⁾. He was attracted by the verb in Catullus as a parallel to *generas et regeneras* and

4) E. Baehrens, *Poetae Latini Minores* (Teubner, Leipzig 1879–83) p. 138.

5) *De natura deorum* 2.62.155.

6) *Carmen saeculare* 35.

7) *Institutiones oratoriae* 2.16.6.

8) *Op. cit.* p. 26.

9) R. A. B. Mynors, *C. Valerii Catulli Carmina* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1958) p. 49.

adopted *indidem*. In Catullus the word does not refer to the feminine side of marriage at all, but to the male. He was honoring the wedding of Manlius Torquatus and it was the distinguished name of that family that should be continued in his sons. This is an instance where Baehrens' *scripsi* "is usually ominous of alterations so arbitrary as to amount to a rewriting of the Latin."¹⁰) Schneider's change to *sidera* is to be preferred. The thought of line 2 with this reading is mirrored in *Orphic Hymn* 26, lines 8 and 9, where earth is hailed as the one "around whom the much wrought universe of stars / revolves."¹¹)

In line 3 the reading of the codices, *quod sola praestas gentibus tutela*, fails metrically and if *tutela* is nominative *praestas* has no accusative object. Baehrens emended *tutela* to *vitalia* citing Livy 6.40.12 as source, but there the word is singular, *vitale*. He intended the plural to mean "the needs of life." But the lines are considered to be post-Augustan¹¹) and in Lucan 7.620 and 9.743 *vitalia* means "vital organs." In Seneca *Ep.* 99.22 it means "graveclothes." It has the same meaning in Petronius 77.7, for Trimalchio is holding a rehearsal of his funeral. There is a pre-Augustan use in Lucretius 2.575 *vitalia rerum*, but he is speaking of things dying and in the *Precatio* the opposite is the case. Duff's translation of Baehrens' text is "because thou only dost supply each species with living force."¹²) But *gentibus* does not mean "species." This is repeated for line 17, and then in 26 *cunctis gentibus* is rendered as "upon every race." The translators are not consistent. The conclusion is that Baehrens' choice of *vitalia* for *tutela* was unfortunate and complicated the meaning of the line.

Riese changed *tutela* to the accusative case¹³), transposed words inserting *tuam*, and offered *quod sola praestas tuam tutelam gentibus*. Placing *gentibus* in the final position is metrically an improvement. He took *tutelam* to mean "protection," but the use of *praesto* with an accusative following a reflexive is found in

10) J. W. and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets* (Loeb, Harvard Press 1935) p. ix.

11) G. Quandt, *Orphei Hymni* (Weidmann, Berlin 1955) p. 22. The Greek text is here translated. He set the date for the hymns in the time of the Roman empire (*Prolegomena* p. 44). Baehrens (*Miscellanea Critica* p. 109) attributed the anthem to earth to Antonius Musa, the physician of Augustus, but later scholars disagree and Duff's statement (op. cit. p. 340f.) is now accepted, that it is also from the time of the empire.

12) Op. cit. p. 343.

13) Op. cit. p. 26.

Cicero, *Fam.* 1.6.2 *praesta te eum qui*, in Lucretius 3.219f. *se incolumem*, in Ovid, *Tr.* 4.10.104 *se invictam*, and again in 4.5.23 with an adverb. By metonymy *tutela* means "protectress." The reading should be *tutelam* with *te* preceding instead of *tuam*. By the simple error of haplography a scribe omitted it because of *-te-* in the medial syllable of the next word.

Schneider had suggested that the first word be changed from *quod* to *quae*.¹⁴⁾ This makes eminent sense for the pattern of poetic prayer in both Greek and Latin was to invoke a divinity and then begin a list of divine attributes or acts using a relative pronoun. This is first seen in *Iliad* 1.37–42 and 3.276–292 as well as elsewhere in Homer. In the *Homeric Hymns* this pattern is used in fifteen of the smaller poems¹⁵⁾. Lucretius used it in the address to Venus at the beginning of his work, as did Horace in *Car.* 1.10, 3.22 and in the *Carmen saeculare*, line 9. Accordingly, line 3 can be reconstituted as *quae sola praestas te tutelam gentibus*.

The invocation continues on line 4. In A the reading is *arbitratumque rerumque*. In B and C it is *arbitrarumque*. The reading of D, *arbitra rerumque*, is accepted as proper in sense and meter.

In A and C line 5 reads *per quem silet natura et somnus capit*. This was corrected in B to *quē* and to *quam* in D. B has *somnos* and D has *somnum*. Riese printed the line as *per quam silet natura et somnos capit* and accepted hiatus between *natura* and *et*. Baehrens chose elision and compensated for the lost syllable by changing *capit* to *concipit*. This is arbitrary since the verb is not used with *somnum*, while *somnum capere* is attested in Plautus, *Mil.* 3.1.115 and Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.19.44. Hence *capit* is the proper idiom. The reading *somnus* in A is best changed to *somnum* of D, rather than *somnos* of B, which introduces a plurality, although this is defensible since nature is personified as asleep at night and can be conceived as doing this regularly. However, the metrical problem of the first part of the line remains. The style of the poetic part of the *Precatio* is rather simple. The lines are end-stopped, there is no instance of enjambement, and there is no other use of techniques such as hiatus. If in some places the poem was changed into prose before the period of our manuscripts, *silet* may have replaced *quiescit*, a more poetic verb with the same meaning. It has the required number of syllables to heal the metrical problem. Moreover, the use of *per quam* at the start of the line

14) Reported by both Baehrens and Riese in *app. crit.*

15) *Hymns* 6, 9, 11, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30 and 32.

is against the pattern of poetic prayer in which the second person pronoun is emphatic after the invocation of the divinity. Duffs' translation shows that they were aware of the problem, for they wrote "through thee is nature hushed and lays hold on sleep."¹⁶) Thus line 5 would read *per te quiescit natura et somnum capit*. This continues the invocational second person. The vocative *Dea sancta Tellus* begins the poem followed by two relative clauses in the second person. Line 4 continues the vocative, and if *quam* is used in line 5, there is a break in the thought, for the verbs are in the third person. Yet throughout the poem the second person is dominant. Instead of *per quam*, therefore, *per te* is more fitting.

Lines 6 and 7 present no textual problems. Line 8, however, *ventosque et imbres tempestatesque contines*, as it is in the codices, has too many syllables. Riese changed *tempestatesque* to *tempestive*, altering the meaning. Baehrens changed *contines* to *attines* in an attempt to solve it by elision. This leaves an excessive number of conjunctions in lines 8, 9 and 10. If line 8 began with *tu*, following the pattern of poetic prayer, and if the conjunctions are omitted, *contines* can be preserved¹⁷). This asyndeton is seen in Cicero *de nat. deorum* 3.51 *ergo imbres nimbi procellae turbines dei putandi*.

Line 9 contains no problems. For line 10 the codices have *fugasque solem et procellas concitas*. Riese kept this allowing hiatus again. Baehrens changed *solem* to *soles* which avoids hiatus and makes better sense. The plural of *procellas* supports it. One violent storm in a day is the way of nature. If the singular is kept as Riese chose, the reading should be *procellam*. Line 11 contains no problems and this ends the first part of the anthem in which the power of earth over nature is asserted.

The manuscripts begin line 12 with *et*. Baehrens emended it to *tu*. Riese dropped *et*, and this seems to be correct, since a new thought in the verses is starting, the power of earth over mankind.

In line 13 the manuscript reading *et cum recesserit anima in te refugimus* lacks a syllable to be metrical. Baehrens supplied one by *tete*. This is to be preferred to Riese's change of *refugimus*, a general present tense, to the future *refugiemus*, which ends the line with a spondee.

16) Op. cit. p. 343.

17) Cf. Paul de Winterfeld, *Philologus* 58, 1899, p. 288, where this reading was first suggested.

In line 14 the transmitted text is *ita quidquid tribuis in te cuncta recidunt*. Both scholars accepted it. Yet the word *ita* is so totally prosaic that it should be emended to *et*. Punctuation was not used when the poem was composed. The use of *ita* makes the line be a conclusion of the two preceding. Without punctuation in prose we would expect *itaque*. In the simple style of this poem, however, *et* and the line which follows sum up in *quidquid* all that earth gives to mankind which is returned to her. As printed in their texts the last word in the line, *recidunt*, is not metrical because the first syllable is short. If the prefix is to have the impact of *red-*, orthography would require the spelling *reccidunt*, as in Propertius 4.8.44 and Juvenal 12.54.

Line 15 contains no problems and in 16 the reading of the codices *nomina* was rightly emended by Riese to *numina*.

In line 17 the text of A is *tu illa vere es gentium et divum parens*, while B, C, and D begin the line with *tum*. Within the line B and C have *ver et* and D has *vero*. Riese in an attempt to uphold A and to avoid elision between *tu* and *illa* offered *tu es illa vere gentium et divum parens*. This causes an awkward elision between *tu* and *es*, both monosyllables. Baehrens changed in to *tuque illa vera es*. This also causes repeated elisions, the basic problem in A. It is much simpler if we emend *tu* to *et*.

In the manuscripts line 18 reads *sine qua nec maturatur quicquam nec nasci potest*, which is too long by a foot. Both editors dropped *quicquam* and emended *nec* to *nil*, offering *sine qua nil maturatur nec nasci potest*. But this presents the odd hysteron-proteron of maturity before birth. Schneider had recommended *nec moritur quicquam*. This holds to *quicquam* of the codices, is metrical, and the thought sequence is preserved. In lines 12 to 14 the topic is earth's power over man and man's return to earth at death. Logically *moritur* in line 18 should precede *nasci* for this is the way of earth, death and then birth; autumn, winter, and spring.

For line 19 the codices offer *tu es magna tu es divum regina dea*. This fails as verse even if we accept two instances of hiatus in a single line. Baehrens emended it to read *tu es magna tuque divum regina es, dea*. Riese changed it to *tu es magna, tuque divum regina ac dea*. In both, the line begins with the elision between *tu* and *es* which can be avoided by dropping the second word, *es*. The verb is used later in the line.

Lines 20 and 21 contain no textual or metrical problems. In A and C the next passage reads: *referamque gratias diva tibi merito*

fide exaudi queso et fabe coeptis meis. Baehrens emended *gratias* to *gratis* and *merito* to *merita*, and ended line 22 after *fide*. Riese made *gratias* the third word in the line, treated *merito* as an adverb or ablative of cause of the noun *meritum*, and reversed the order of *tibi merito*. At this point he ended line 22. Both strove to rearrange prose into verse. The two versions are:

Baehrens: *referamque gratis, diva, tibi merita fide*.

Riese: *referamque, diva, gratias merito tibi*.

They evidently felt that *tibi* was to be preserved, although the vocative *diva* made it obvious that thanks would be rendered to her. If *tibi* is omitted the line can easily be emended: *referamque, diva, gratias merita fide*.

For line 23 Baehrens inserted *me* after *exaudi* for metrical reasons. This correction is much better than Riese's attempt. He dropped *fide* from the preceding line, changed it to *rite*, inserted it into line 23 and wrote *me* before it. Baehrens stayed closer to the manuscripts. The text of line 24 presents no problems.

Both editors continued a reconstruction of the Latin words which follow into the same form of verse as that which preceded. They did this also with the *Precatio omnium herbarum* and made it the companion piece to the anthem of earth. In this they ran into a veritable thicket of textual and metrical difficulties. Both disregarded or did not know that there are other herbal *precationes* in the manuscripts from which these texts were abstracted and these are in prose. They also set aside an obvious fact. The content of the first twenty lines of the *Precatio Terrae* would apply universally to men of ancient times. After line 19 the content is personal to the poet. He (*ego*, line 19) is about to make a request of the goddess. When we reach it, the plea has to do with herbal medicine. This is an abrupt and definite change of topic and tone. The change in diction is sudden. Herbs in general are mentioned immediately, abstract nouns appear, *maiestas*, *salutis causa*, *medicinam*, and indefinite pronouns, *quascumque*, *quidque*, *cuique* and *quique*. This is the diction of prose not of poetry. Definite and concrete images are used by poets to symbolize thoughts which in prose are expressed by abstract nouns, and so Virgil spoke of *arma virumque* rather than of warfare and armies. In the first 24 lines of this *precatio* earth controls the sky, the sea, light, night, winds, storms, billows, and nature is personified as hushed and asleep. These vivid details arouse the imagination of the reader and by the appeal to sight and hearing produce the effect

intended and show earth's power. In a climax she is named *magna mater deum*, line 15, and the reason, which has already been given in detail, is summed up by *pietate quia vicisti divum numina*, where *pietate* refers back to the benefits given in lines 3, 11 and 12. The diction and the thought of the Latin after line 24 prove that the remainder is not poetry.

The other herbal *precationes* are all in prose. Howald and Sigerist¹⁸⁾ edited the text of a work *De herba vettonica*, formerly attributed to Antonius Musa. After a list of 47 maladies which betony can cure there is a *precatio* to the herb¹⁹⁾: *Herba vettonica, quae prima inventa es ab Aesculapio vel a Cirone centauro, his precibus adesto! Te peto, magna herbarum, per hunc qui te iussit creari et remediis plurimis adesse, his numero quadraginta septem adesse digneris!* Then there is the instruction: *Hoc incantas, sed mundus ante solis ortum, et sic colligis mense Augusto*. In spite of *incantas* it would be a fruitless exercise of ingenuity to attempt rendering this into verse. Neither Baehrens nor Riese refer to it nor to the following ones.

Howald and Sigerist also edited an appendix inserted into the codices of the text of Pseudo-Apuleius Platonicus²⁰⁾. Here there are other *precationes*. The first is to *proserpinaca*, knotweed or doorweed, a specific *ad profluvium mulieris*, and the instruction is also *incantas*.

Another is to *herba cucumis silvaticus*, the *cucumber*, the wild or squirting cucumber, where mother earth is invoked and incantation is mentioned. Yet for this the instruction is *precabis autem eam sic dicens*, not *incantas* as previously.

The herb called basil, *ocimum basilicum* or *ocimum* is to be invoked. The opening words of this prayer, *per summam divinitatem quae te iussit nasci*, are to be considered in the textual criticism of the last lines of the *precatio omnium herbarum*. In the prayer to betony *qui te iussit creari* was used, while here the feminine *quae te iussit creari* must follow *divinitatem*, a feminine noun. In the prayer to betony the phrase *per hunc*, the antecedent of *qui*, is not clarified by a noun.

There is a *precatio* to *apium*, parsley. Part of this *venias ad me cum tuis virtutibus et ea mihi praestes, quae a te fidus peto*

18) E. Howald and H. Sigerist, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* (Teubner, Berlin and Leipzig 1927) volume 4, p. 3–11.

19) *Ibid.* p. 11.

20) *Ibid.* p. 289–298.

resembles lines 28 and 32 of the prayer to earth. There is a prayer to *hedera crisocantes*, a type of ivy which bears gold-colored berries, in which *ut venias huc ad me hilaris* recalls line 11 of the same prayer, and *quae te fidus rogo* the ending is now familiar. The words of these prayers are plainly prose, and are quite similar to the final lines of the anthem to earth which Baehrens and Riese changed into verse.

A prayer to the herb *menta*, mint, is also in prose²¹). Here the instruction is to read the prayer, not *incantas*, as was the case with the prayer to betony, and no particular month is required, merely dawn and a clear sky. Next there is a prayer to *herba anetum*, anise, a word which in Latin previously was spelled *anethum* in imitation of its Greek name. The last words of this prayer *ut remediis eius curem ad quemcumque manumisero* resemble the indefinite thought contained in line 30 of the prayer to earth. There follows a prayer to the herb called *erifion*, a Latinized spelling of a Greek word, which in Latin was *ruta*, and in English is rue. In this prayer we find the centaur named the *magister medicinae*. It is only in the part of the *Precatio Terrae* after line 24 where the word *medicina* is found. I maintain that the last part of the prayer to earth is also prose because the diction seen in these prayers to herbs mirrors the usage of words found there.

Finally, at the end of the *Herbarius liber*²²) attributed to Apuleius Platonicus is the description of a magic herb called *basilisca*. At this point we are stepping into the field of magic. According to the text this herb is to be found only where there is a serpent called *basiliscus*, and a drawing of it is provided. There are three types. One called *olocrisus* breathes on whatever it sees and sets it on fire. The second called *stellatus* causes everything it sees to dry up and die. The third called *sanguineus* causes whatever it sees or strikes to vanish and only the bones remain. The herb controls these serpents and the man who has it is safe not only from them but from all snakes. The man who would gather this herb must draw a line around the spot with gold, silver, a deer's horn, ivory, a wild boar's tooth and a bull's horn and *fruges mellitos in vestigio ponat*. At the end of the *Precatio omnium herbarum* the same thought is found at line 20: *ponamque vobis fruges*. Herbal medicine evidently can slip over into magic and incantation.

21) Another version of this prayer is cited by Charles Joret, *Les Incantations Botaniques* (Paris 1888) p. 11.

22) Howald and Sigerist, op. cit., p. 218 f.

At the end of the appendix which was inserted into the codices of Apuleius Platonius²³) there are the following strange instructions regarding the *herba basilisca*, "It should be gathered in such a way that he who would gather it should first think of his safety, so that he would go clean from all defilements, have clothes intact, clean, nor when he goes should a menstruating woman or a defiled man touch him. When he would begin to gather this herb, before he would come to it, let him have in his hand the leaves of an oak tree and fountain water from three springs and with the same water let him purify or sprinkle himself with the bough of the oak tree just as the sun is sinking on his right hand. Let him pray as follows: *Domina sancta tellus et cetera* which is at the beginning of the book." The words at the end of these weird instructions refer to the *Precatio Terrae*, the subject of this paper. Obviously the anthem to earth was supposed to have magical and incantatory powers and this sheds new light on the lines of the poem which deal solely with earth, that is, the first 24 lines. They are not medicinal or herbal. Earth controls sky and sea, line 4, covers the underworld, shades and chaos, line 7, is the great mother of the gods, line 15, the parent of gods and men, line 17, and the great queen of divinities, line 19. It is this dread deity who is invoked in the form of a Latin poetic prayer.

In the light of the information gained from a study of these prayers to individual herbs and especially from the instructions concerning the magical herb *basilisca*, I conclude that lines 25 to 32 of the *Precatio Terrae* in the works of Baehrens and Riese should be rendered as prose and not as part of the anthem.

The same conclusion applies to the *Precatio omnium herbarum*. The text is preserved in the same codices as the anthem to earth. It also was copied in a continuous form as if it were prose in A, B, and C. In D it appeared as some type of verse. The same difficulty in emendation resulted. Both Baehrens and Riese decided that this prayer also was in verse in the original from which our manuscripts came. Their decision was influenced no doubt by the *Precatio Terrae*.

The objective, however, of textual criticism is to produce a text as close to the original as possible. To do this we must decide whether the original has or has not been transmitted. But to reach this decision we must first establish what has been transmitted, then examine the tradition to discover whether it contains the

23) Ibid. p. 298.

original, and, if not, by conjecture we must try to reconstruct it. These basic principles in the essay by Maas²⁴) in no way grant a scholar or editor permission for wholesale alteration of what is found in the codices, particularly when the changes are based upon *a priori* arguments or preconceived ideas.

A text of the *Precatio omnium herbarum* in prose is presented, based mostly on A, the oldest manuscript, and then the extensive emendations are considered with both Baehrens and Riese used to make the prose become verse.

Incipit precatio omnium herbarum.

Nunc vos potentes omnes herbas deprecor; exoro maiestatemque vestram, vos quas parens tellus generavit et cunctis gentibus dono dedit. Medicinam sanitatis in vos contulit maiestatemque ut omni generi humano sitis auxilium utilissimum. Hoc supplex exposco precorve. Huc adestote cum vestris virtutibus quia qui creavit vos ipse permisit mihi ut colligam vos, favente hoc etiam cui medicina tradita est. Quantumque vestra virtus potest, praestate medicinam bonam causa sanitatis. Gratiam, precor, mihi praestetis per tutelam vestram ut omnibus viribus quidquid ex vobis fecero, cuive homini dedero, habeat effectum celerrimum et eventus bonos, ut semper mihi liceat, favente maiestate vestra, vos colligere; ponamque vobis fruges et gratias agam per nomen maiestatis qui vos iussit nasci.

Whether by intention or accident the unknown Latin author of the lines in the opening words *nunc vos potentes omnes herbas deprecor* produced a perfect iambic senarius. Baehrens by his *correx*i changed the next words to *Exoro maiestatem vostram quas parens*. He tossed aside (*ieici*) the word *gentibus* as a gloss, dropped *humano* after *generi* and added *identidem* by his *supplevi* to make a line of verse. He then added *et* after *exposco* and emended *precorve* to be *precor velocius* and wrote *scripsi* in the apparatus criticus although he was really rewriting the text transmitted. *Huc adestote* became *huc, huc adeste*. In the manuscripts *adest te* is the reading of A, while B, C, and D read *adestote*. Baehrens had some justification for *adeste* but not for *huc, huc*. That was just to fill out the verse. *Quia qui creavit* became *quia quae creavit*. The word *vos* which came next was removed and *ipse*, the reading of the oldest codex, A, was changed to *ipsa*, the reading of the later manuscripts. This does violence to the content. Schanz-Hosius

24) Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1958) p. 1.

remarks²⁵) that the Latin has a Christian coloration especially at the end. Baehrens evidently did not think so. He then shortened *favente hoc* to *favit hic*, added *nunc* after *quantumque vestra* and *omnibus viribus* became *omnibus in rebus*. This was for the sake of meter as was changing *habeat* to *habeatis* and transposing *effectum celerrimum et eventus bonos* to be the reverse of what was transmitted. After *colligere* he postulated a lacuna simply because there were not enough words left to make three more lines of verse. Finally *gratias agam* was changed to *gratis agam* for metrical reasons and then again doing violence to the readings of the codices he changed *per nomen maiestatis* to *per nomen matris*. Consequently he chose *quae*, the reading of the latest manuscript, D, in preference to *qui*, which is found in the older codices, A, B, and C. Consistently he eliminated any element that might be an indication of Christian influence. Baehrens considered the diction to be of the age of Augustus and attributed both *precationes* to Antonius Musa, the physician of Augustus²⁶. If both are pagan writings, the thought would agree with that of Lucretius who used the verb *creare* of nature, in 1.56, 2.1150 ff. and 5.822-3. Even the fruits of the fields are ascribed to nature, 2.170, *fruges creare*. But in these passages the verb signifies "to beget" not "to create". If the reading of A, however, is maintained, since it is the oldest codex, then *qui creavit vos* and *qui vos iussit nasci* refer to God and not to nature, and the author of the *Precatio omnium herbarum* was influenced by Christian thought. This would place the text later than the age of Augustus.

To render the prose of the prayer into verse Riese reversed *cunctis gentibus*, dropped *dono*, transposed *auxilium utilissimum*, inserted *vos* before *huc adeste*, changed *cum vestris virtutibus* to *vestris cum virtutibus*, and dropped *vos* after *colligam*. *Favente* became *faveatis*, and *mihi* was added after *etiam*. From the *Precatio Terrae* he borrowed *quique id a me acceperit* and added *praestetis etiam* after *eventus bonos*. In the final words he dropped *maiestatis* and inserted *eius* instead. All this for the sake of metrics was liberally changed. However, Riese recognized that the text had a Christian influence present, since he kept *qui vos creavit* and noted in the apparatus criticus *Deum dicit*. He also kept *qui vos*

25) M. Schanz and C. Hosius, *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur* (Munich 1935) volume 2, p. 395.

26) *Miscellanea Critica*, p. 108 f.

iussit nasci at the end, even though he changed it to *nascier* for the sake of meter²⁷).

This wholesale alteration of a text to fit a preconceived idea does not seem justified. Moreover, the diction contains abstract nouns, *maiestas*, *sanitas*, *auxilium*, *medicina*, *effectus* and *eventus*, as well as superlative adjectives, *utilissimum* and *celerrimum*. The concrete details used by poets to stir the imagination are missing as well as poetic imagery and symbolism. In fact, the text should have been left as Latin prose and edited as such. Of course this would mean that Baehrens would have had to omit it from his *Poetae Latini Minores* and Riese from the *Anthologia Latina*.

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27) The words used in the prayer to betony and to basil do not settle the problem of Christian influence. However, Joret, op. cit. p. 14, states that the following words are found in manuscript 277 of the School of Medicine at Montpellier as the prelude to the *Precatio Terrae: In Christi nomine, amen. Incipit precatio terrae quam antiqui pagani observabant volentes colligere herbas*. Following this prelude is a text of both the *Precatio Terrae* and the *Precatio omnium herbarum* cited entirely in prose.