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ANCIENT BE-BOP

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diu absens moretur. Stultus eram, quod onus eius excepi. Numquam redibit, neque mala aurea feret. Hoc onus me necat.

*First Hesperid.* Miseri hominis me miseret. Mala ei demus. Sitim fortasse levabunt.

*Second Hesperid.* Mala tibi ferimus, Hercules. Haec cape et ede. Vim tibi addent.

*Hercules.* Qui estis, qui mihi tam dulce loquimini? Quomodo mala capere possum, qui tot mala iam habeo? Manibus ambabus hoc onus sustineo tam sacrum . . . (He straightens up a little and catches sight of the Hesperides.) . . . Hem! Tres puellas pulchras video, tam graciles et formosas quam numquam antea vidi. Unde venistis, puellae aureae? Ubi reliquistis istum ignavum Atlantem?

*Third Hesperid.* Hic nobiscum est Atlas, vir fortis et validus. Viros validos amo, sed credo te esse etiam validiorem quam Atlantem, quod caelum sustines.

*Atlas.* Nugas dicis. Miser iste paulisper solum caelum sustinuit et vix iam stare potest. Multos annos ego idem onus sustinui nec gravior ferebam.

*First Hesperid.* Potesne tu quoque caelum sustinere, Atlas? Credo solum quod oculis ipsa video. Hodie unum iam miraculum vidi. Raro duo uno die fiunt. Cave ne in periculum te mittas.

*Atlas.* Bono animo esto. Nullum est periculum. Onus meum mihi redde, Hercules. Caelum te opprimit. Ego melius feram.

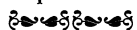
(The exchange is made once more with somewhat more haste than before, because Hercules is eager to get rid of the burden and Atlas is eager to show the maidens that he can take it.)

*Atlas.* Spectate nunc, O amicae, virum re vera validum. . . . (Then, with less spirit). . . . Sed onus non levius est quam antea, neque ego sum sapientior. Hoc oblitus sum.

*Hercules.* Vale, Atlas. Tibi gratias ago. Mala aurea beneficio tuo habeo, et amicas tuas admiror. Venite, dulces puellae, ad agros viridiores eamus.

*Hesperides Omnes.* Vale, Atlas! Viros validos semper amamus. Veni iterum ad hortum nostrum, cum non eris occupatus.

(Exeunt Hesperides et Hercules.)



### ANCIENT BE-BOP

BY LILLIAN B. LAWLER

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WE ARE told by serious students of the weirder manifestations of modern music that one of the distinctive characteristics of what is known as "Be-Bop" is a sort of chattering re-

citative of unintelligible syllables, uttered by a person who leaps to his feet as if inspired, and "sings" to the music. The syllables, while actually meaningless, are said to be intended as an approximation of the sound of musical instruments.

The use of such vocal symbols to represent instruments is very old. We are all familiar with the Gilbertian "tantantara zing boom" and similar examples from modern times. And it is no surprise to any student of Gilbert and Sullivan to find that the inspiration for the phenomenon probably came to the two famous Victorians from their literary progenitor, the comic poet Aristophanes.

Back in the fifth century B. C., Aristophanes on several occasions had an actor or the chorus use the unintelligible word *tenellos* or *tenella* in connotations which show that he thought it imitated the twang of a string on a musical instrument. It was used particularly in connection with victory songs or processions (*Acharnians* 1227-1233; *Birds* 1764; cf. *Knights* 276). The word, however, was not original with Aristophanes. The scholiast on Pindar's ninth Olympic Ode, 1-4, tells us that it was used by the seventh-century poet Archilochus, in the absence of music, to accompany a victory song in honor of Heracles; and apparently its use became traditional in victory odes. The lexicographer Hesychius gives us the alternative forms *teneblos* and *tenebla*.

Similarly, Aristophanes used the made-up word *threttanelo* to imitate a lyre in songs to accompany dancing, in *Plutus* 290 and 296. The scholiast on this passage tells us that Aristophanes derived the onomatopoeic word from Philoxenus of Cythera, a "new" dithyrambic poet of the fifth-fourth century, who used it in his *Cyclops* or *Galatea*.

The flamboyant, much-repeated *phlattothrat* of *Frogs* 1286-1296 has been taken by some scholars as merely a parody of a bombastic, flighty literary style; however, most students of the play regard it rather as a vocal imitation of the strings of a lyre, struck sharply. Like *tenellos* and *threttanelo*, the word is itself meaningless.

Aristophanes was fond also of using rather startling onomatopoeic words in other connections. His play *Birds*, for instance, is full of bird-sounds like *torotix* (266), *lililix* (262), *tittitina* (315), *tiotinx* (738), *epopoi* (59), and even the rather surprising *kikkabau* (261); and his *Frogs* contains, among other examples, the world-famous croaking chorus (209-269), with its reiterated "brekekekex koax koax."

The half-frenzied "be-bop" addict of 1951, uttering his strange mouthings to ultra-modernistic music, would perhaps be startled to hear his form of self-expression coupled with that of a Greek playwright of some 2400 years ago. Perhaps the true explanation is that the imitative urge in both cases is eternal, and essentially human.

### BOOK NOTES

*Puella Romana: Latin Reader for Beginners.* By Stanford M. Miller. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1949. Pp. iv plus 24. \$1.00.

In the Preface of this little book, the author states his purpose as twofold: (1) to present the Latin language to the uninitiated student, and (2) to orient the student to the Roman world. The Latin reading material consists of sixteen brief sections, the first four of which are in the form of a conversation between a little Roman girl and her father, who live on a farm near the Appian Way and who make a visit to Rome. The remaining sections are narrative in form and are entitled, respectively: "Roma," "Servi," "Montes Romae," "Forum Romanum," "Templum Vestae," "Vestis Romanae," "Toga Virilis," "Circus Maximus et Colosseum," "Domus Romana," "Schola," "Templa," and "Nomina Romana."

In spite of the variety of subjects discussed, the number of different words employed is surprisingly small, if the general vocabulary can be depended upon for completeness. Furthermore, the sentences are all of simple construction, and there is no attempt to teach grammar in any formal way. There are, however, under the headings "Notes" and "Reference Tables," some simple explanations for the benefit of anyone who might be curious about the fact that the same word may appear in variant forms in the reading sections. The author recommends that any formal study of grammar be postponed until the student later takes up his regular Latin textbook.

This little book would be especially useful as an introductory unit in school or college classes which use a beginner's textbook of the grammar-translation type. It would also prove useful as a supplementary reader to accompany beginners' textbooks of the reading-grammar type.

—W. L. C.

Course of Study in Latin (Bulletin 244). By Franklin B. Krauss, Juanita M. Downes, Ellis A. Schnabel, Mary