

**YALE STUDIES IN
ENGLISH. XXVI. SELECT
TRANSLATIONS FROM
SCALIGER'S POETICS**

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ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR

XXVI

SELECT TRANSLATIONS FROM
SCALIGER'S POETICS

BY

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TO
CHARLES GROSVENOR OSGOOD, JR.

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PREFACE

These select translations from Scaliger's *Poetics* are offered to the public in the belief that they will be welcomed by the many students of poetical criticism who, through lack of access to the original, have had to gain their impressions of this notable work from the meagre digests in handbooks and histories of criticism. Scaliger certainly should not be neglected by English students of poetics, for his treatise was not only the literary canon of the later Italian Renaissance, but it exerted a determining influence upon such English men of letters as Sidney and Ben Jonson. Indeed, Jonson strikingly resembled Scaliger in mental temperament, and if the father of classicism in England did not receive his bent from Scaliger, he was at least trained by him.

Those who have studied the *Poetics* will perhaps regret the omission of certain chapters from the translations, and question the judgment shown in the selection. I have tried, however, while keeping the volume within reasonable limits, to include such chapters or portions of chapters as bear most vitally upon the fundamental problems of poetics. Thus from these selections the reader will be able to learn Scaliger's attitude on such subjects as the end of fine art, the nature of imitation, poetic truth, poetry in relation to history and philosophy, the fundamental distinctions between tragedy and comedy, the tragic emotions, and the origin of poetry. He should also be able to determine to what degree Scaliger understood Aristotle, whom he professed to follow, and to decide whether or no in spirit Scaliger was closer to the Attic philosopher than to Horace.

The First Book, which is historical in character, and gives more attention to theory than any of the remaining books,

is generously represented in the translations. The Second Book is altogether taken up with the technical treatment of the classical metres, and is therefore not to the point. Books Three and Four are designed to offer a catalogue and discussion of everything that may be included in the subject-matter of poetry, and an exhaustive treatment of its rhetorical and stylistic principles. The illustrations, which are very full, are throughout taken from Virgil, whom Scaliger regards as the poet *par excellence*. I have selected some chapters from these books because of their intrinsic worth, or their bearing upon later criticism, and have supplemented these chapters by others, to give an idea of the books as a whole. The selection from the comparative criticism of Homer and Virgil is representative of the voluminous Fifth and Sixth Books, and finds a place partly because the reader will wish to see the critic's attempt to apply his own principles, and partly because Scaliger was the first influential writer to use this method of criticism. The Seventh Book is a potpourri of minor matters overlooked in the earlier books. This book was a salve to the exacting conscience of Scaliger, and also helped to keep up the pleasing delusion of his omniscience. For the student of to-day it contains one most interesting chapter, the third, in which Scaliger betrays how completely he failed to understand Aristotle's discussion of character and action.

The Table of Contents has been translated in full, in order that the reader may gain an impression of the *Poetics* in its totality.

The absence of notes may cause some surprise, but the proper annotation of these chapters would be the work of months, if not of years, and I feel that it is better not to delay the appearance of the translation. I am especially inclined to this course as I expect to follow the present volume with others, offering in part or in whole the criticisms of such eminent Renaissance writers as Robortelli, Minturno, Castelvetro, and others.

Any one who has attempted exact work in translating knows that, though the task is a humble one, it brings its own rewards. I must confess, however, to an ulterior purpose in working out these translations, for the preparation of them is largely incidental to acquiring such intimate knowledge of these writers as will enable me to contribute one or more worthy chapters to the history of poetic criticism. Though the contributions that have recently been made to this subject are of real value as pioneer work, there yet remains much to be done.

Another seeming oversight is the lack of an *Introduction*, but in this case the introductory word must be the concluding one, for how can one rightly place Scaliger without intimate knowledge of the writings of his contemporaries?

In my previous volume of translations¹ I attempted to reproduce the styles of the originals, but I have despaired of giving in English the stylistic equivalent of Scaliger's Tacitean Latin, and have merely attempted to express the meaning with clearness. In quotations from the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*, I have followed the translations of Lang, Leaf, and Myers, of Butcher and Lang, and of Lonsdale and Lee, respectively, because these versions have come to be recognized as standard.

I am glad to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Ewald Flügel, who generously lent me his copy of the *Poetics*; to Professor Albert S. Cook and Dr. Charles G. Osgood, who have read the proof, and made pertinent suggestions; and to my colleagues of the Classical Department of the University of Washington, Professors Thomas K. Sidey, David Thomson, and Arthur S. Hagget, who have helped me over many a hard stile. Finally, I owe more than I can readily express to Professor George D. B. Pepper, who became interested in my task while spending a winter in my home, and translated many chapters, some of which have been included in this volume. I shall always remem-

¹ *Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry, by Plutarch and Basil the Great, Yale Studies in English.*

ber with pleasure the animated discussions in which we tried to find some possible interpretation for Scaliger's perplexing Latin. It is only at Professor Pepper's earnest request that I have omitted his name from the title-page.

F. M. P.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON,
September 14, 1904.

THE INDISPENSABILITY OF LANGUAGE, ITS ORIGIN,
USES, END, AND CULTIVATION

Everything that pertains to mankind may be classed as necessary, useful, or pleasure-giving, and by an inherent characteristic of all these classes the power of speech was implanted in man from the very beginning, or, as time went on, was acquired. Since man's development depended upon learning, he could not do without that agency which was destined to make him the partaker of wisdom. Our speech is, as it were, the postman of the mind, through the services of whom civil gatherings are announced, the arts are cultivated, and the claims of wisdom intercede with men for man. It is of course necessary to secure from others those things which we need, to give orders to have things done, to prohibit, to propose, to dispose, to establish, and to abolish. Such were the functions of early speech.

Then the usefulness and effectiveness of language were increased by rules governing construction, dimensions, as it were, being given to a rude and formless body. Thus arose the established laws of speech. Later, language was adorned and embellished as with raiments, and then it appeared illustrious both in form and in spirit. As to an undefined body the metric science appoints breadth, angles, and length—the masters of harmony also add proportion, the *ῥυθμοί* of the Greeks—so to an unordered language law first gave the so-called rules. Next, more careful cultivation added knowledge of windings, of valleys and hills, of retreats, of light and shade. To speak figuratively, such cultivation afforded the soldier his necessary armor, the senator his useful toga, or the more elegant citizen his richer pleasure-robe. Not unlike these were the ends which lan-