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## CURRENT CONTRIBUTION

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## NOTE

This contribution is part of a larger dialogue of three articles and one responding piece that form the current issue of *JOLCEL*. The other contributions are “From the *Epistolae et Evangelia* (c. 1540) to the *Espejo divino* (1607): Indian Latinists and Nahuatl religious literature at the College of Tlatelolco” by Andrew Laird (pp. 2-28) and “Latinidad, tradición clásica y *nova ratio* en el Imperial Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Santiago Tlatelolco” by Heréndira Téllez Nieto (pp. 30-55). The response piece is “Beyond Europe, beyond the Renaissance, beyond the Vernacular” by Alejandro Coroleu (pp. 73-77).

# Nordic Gods in Classical Dress: *De diis arctois* by C. G. Brunius

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## ABSTRACT

The 19th century in Sweden, like in many other European countries, saw a large decline in the quantity of Neo-Latin literary production. However, a range of skillful Latin poets may be named from this period: Johan Lundblad, Johan Tranér, Emil Söderström, Johan Bergman and others, engaged as well in translating from Swedish into Latin as in composing poems of their own. It was also in the 19th century that the longest Latin poem ever written in Sweden came out – *De diis arctois libri VI* by Carl Georg Brunius (1792–1869), remarkably neglected by the scholars, although it was published twice during the lifetime of its author (1822 and 1857).

The subject of the poem fits perfectly in the intellectual movement of the period, namely national romantic interest in the Nordic antiquities. The six books represent a summary of Eddaic mythology from the creation of the Universe until the Ragnarök.

Brunius' admiration for the Scandinavian Middle Ages is apparent; later it turned out to be productive in architecture, the field in which Brunius is most remembered nowadays. Brunius does not seek to turn Scandinavian gods into Greek ones. He accurately follows his sources (both the prosaic and, to a somewhat smaller extent, the poetic Edda) in content, sometimes even in wording. However, it should be born in mind that the writer was a classicist by his education. Although many compositional traits of ancient epos are lacking in the poem, it is full of the allusions to classical authors at the phrasal level. Some of them are formulaic verse elements, others deliberate and exquisite quotations. It is this elegant combination of close adherence to the sources with the use of the ancient authors (Virgil, Lucretius, Ovid, Horace) that the paper is mainly focused on.

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As a result of Swedish defeat in the Great Northern War in the beginning of the eighteenth century, Latin lost its role as a vehicle of political and military propaganda. Sweden was reduced to a minor state again, and many of the conditions that had caused the heyday of Swedish Neo-Latin just before the war now disappeared. Almost simultaneously, in 1723, a debate started on its hitherto unchallenged role in the Swedish educational system: in Lund, a proposal was made to give university lectures in Swedish instead. The proposal

was refused, but many exceptions to the general habit of lecturing in Latin emerged already by the middle of the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the debate went on: in the 1730s, publisher Lars Salvius promoted the use of Swedish at the universities through his newspaper *Tankar öfver den swenska economien* (“Thoughts on Swedish economy”). In 1748, a special educational commission, created three years earlier, suggested that it should be allowed to defend dissertations on natural history, physics, mathematics and history in Swedish. The proposal was refused, and for some time dissertations were still written and defended only in Latin. An exception was made in 1786, when King Gustav III visited Uppsala and was present at some of the defenses. Otherwise, just a couple—among several thousands of dissertations—were written in Swedish in the eighteenth century, and that only after special permission.

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a continuation of lively debates on the role of Latin in Swedish newspapers. The opponents of Latin claimed that it took much time to learn, and that this time should be used more efficiently; international science and scholarship were less and less Latin, and thus its role as an indispensable tool of academic communication was undermined. This argument was sided by other motives, namely political (the promotion of vernacular was regarded as important for national prestige), pedagogical (to learn one’s own language first was thought to be more useful) and social (as learning vernacular instead of Latin contributed to the social equality). The supporters of Latin claimed that it would be more difficult to learn other languages without Latin and that Latin academic writings could hardly be translated into modern languages due to the lack of terminology.

As a result of a reform in 1807, Latin disappeared as a teaching language at school (where teaching was entirely in Latin from the fourth year onward throughout the eighteenth century), although it continued to hold a relatively strong position in education until the middle of the nineteenth century. At the universities, lectures given in Latin became rare by the end of the eighteenth century, and some decades later they disappeared altogether.

In other aspects of university life, Latin gradually retreated by the middle of the nineteenth century. The inaugural lectures were held in Latin until 1838. In the official invitations to academic festivities, the shift from Latin to Swedish took place in the 1830s and the 1840s. The exams and thesis defenses were held in Latin until the university reform in 1852. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Swedish was increasingly being used in some disciplines, especially when the dissertation could be of some direct practical use, although before the reform of 1852, seventy to seventy-five percent of the dissertations were still written in Latin.<sup>1</sup>

Not only did Latin suffer in academic context, the production of Neo-Latin literature also suffered greatly.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, its internationally most well-known authors, Emmanuel Swedenborg and Carl von Linné, wrote after the Great Power period, but it is not the elegance of their Latin that they are mostly remembered for. Latin poetry suffered decline, and such prosaic genres as, for instance, historiography ceased to exist at all.<sup>3</sup> Latin maintained its

<sup>1</sup> For further details on the position of Latin in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, see Emin Tengström, *Latinet i Sverige. En kulturhistorisk översikt* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1973), 72–105; Emin Tengström, *Broar till antiken. Antikens inflytande på svenskt samhälls- och kulturliv 1780–1850* (Göteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-Samhället, 2014), esp. 108–55.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden in the Period 1620–1720. Stylistics, Vocabulary and Characteristic Ideas* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2004), 9, 20.

<sup>3</sup> The last historiographer of the Realm to publish his main work in Latin (*Sueciae historia pragmatica*, 1731) was Jacob Wilde, who occupied this post from 1719 to 1755. His successor, Olof von Dalin, who wrote among other things a historical work *Svea Rikes historia*, counts as one of the pioneers of the late modern Swedish language.

position in oratory, but it was mainly restricted to universities.

Nonetheless, the nineteenth century may somewhat paradoxically be regarded as a sort of Silver Age of Swedish Neo-Latin poetry, the Golden one being the end of the seventeenth century. The overall quantity of the material is considerably smaller, but a wide range of highly productive and skillful authors may be mentioned: Johan Lundblad, Johan Tranér, Emil Söderström, Christian Fahlcrantz, Johan Bergman and others.<sup>4</sup>

Some differences may be noted in comparison with the seventeenth century. One can be aware of a stereotype still flourishing even among some classicists, that Latin verses in modern time were only written by some marginal highbrow academicians. This is not the case if one considers the seventeenth century, when the ability to write verses was a normal trait of any intellectual and several brilliant political careers were made by means of demonstrating Latin eloquence, among other things by writing Latin verses (Erik Lindschöld and Olof Hermelin may serve as Swedish examples here).<sup>5</sup> Regarding the nineteenth century, however, the aforementioned stereotype is significantly more likely. Latin poetry at that time was mainly written by university professors or priests, and their glory was almost exclusively limited to a circle of their students and colleagues. One extreme example is probably Emil Söderström: he lived in the countryside as a priest and composed Latin poetry, both elegant classical hexameters and medieval-inspired hymns, as a sort of hobby. Some public renown came to him only in his later years and posthumously.<sup>6</sup>

Thematically, the Latin poetic production underwent some changes. Occasional poetry remained the main genre, but previously it was mostly represented by poems on birth, marriage, and death. In the nineteenth century, the range of subjects is somewhat more diverse; Johan Lundblad, for instance, wrote some poems on contemporaneous political news, as in 1804, when rumors about the murder of Napoleon reached him and he wrote a poem about it. The rumors turned out to be false, so he wrote another one to correct himself.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, genres such as epigraphical poetry—i.e. poems carved on gravestones—virtually disappeared. When one enters a Swedish church and is lucky enough to find a poetic inscription in Latin, it always originates from the period between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth century.

While some genres disappeared and others underwent changes, a new phenomenon in this time were translations of Swedish poetry into Latin. Already in the eighteenth century, Samuel Älf translated some poems by Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht and Olof von Dalin.<sup>8</sup> In the nineteenth century, Swedish romanticism provided classicists with a rich trove of materials to render into Latin: K. E. A. Söderström translated *Hanna* by the famous Finno-Swedish poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg; Esaias Tegnér's *Nattvardsbarnen* (“Children of the

<sup>4</sup> The main survey of Swedish Neo-Latin poetry of the nineteenth century is Johan Bergman, “Den latinska diktningen i Sverige. Kortfattad historik, jämte några anmärkningar beträffande C. E. A. Söderströms skaldskap,” in *Valda dikter, hufvudsakligen latinska, af C. E. A. Söderström* (Nyköping: Aktiebolaget Södermanlands Läns Tidnings Tryckeri, 1895), LIII–LX; see also Tengström, *Broar till antiken*, 121–23.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Helander, “Latin,” in *Från Nyens skans till Nya Sverige. Språken i det Svenska Riket under 1600-talet*, ed. Bo Andersson and Raimo Raag (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademien, 2012), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Julius Centerwall, “Söderström,” in *Nordisk familjebok. 28:e bandet: Syrten-Vikarna – Tidsbestämning* (Nyköping: Nordisk Familjeboks Förlags Aktiebolag, 1919), 183–84.

<sup>7</sup> Johannes Lundblad, *Poemata et orationes. Tomus I* (Hamburgi: F. H. Nestler, 1821), 137–40; also printed in: Johan Bergman, *Suecia Latina. Valda prov på svensk medeltidslatinsk och nylatinsk litteratur* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1918), 98–100.

<sup>8</sup> Tengström, *Latinet i Sverige*, 86.

Lord's Supper"), known to the English speaking world through the translation by Henry Longfellow from 1841, was already translated into Latin (as *Juventus eucharistica*) in 1833–35 by Johan Tranér. A reviewer of this translation suggested that it was even better than the original. A masterpiece of Erik Johan Stagnelius, the epic poem *Wladimir den store* ("Vladimir the Great"), was translated by Per Johan Peterson, professor of Latin in Uppsala, and published in four parts as university dissertations in 1840–42.<sup>9</sup>

A particular stronghold of Neo-Latin poetry in nineteenth century Sweden was the University of Lund. The person regarded as the main reviver of Latin eloquence and poetry there was Johan Lundblad (1753–1820). As an early nineteenth-century professor of Latin eloquence and poetry, Lundblad contributed to such a blossoming of Latin speech in Lund that "[n]ot to talk or to write in Latin skillfully, correctly and classically was considered to be almost disgraceful for a student.", as Tegnér, one of Lundblad's students, puts it.

As a consequence, the first half of the nineteenth century saw an impressive variety of productive Latin poets in Lund. Matthias Norberg, professor of Oriental languages and Greek, imitated Horace and Phaedrus; besides that, he also translated Anacreon, Bion and Moschos into Latin. Apart from translations of Greek lyrical poets into Latin, the professor of Greek Carl Wilhelm Linder also left us a fictional letter from Ovid's wife to her exiled husband. One of Lundblad's successors as professor of Latin eloquence and poetry, Johan Gustaf Ek, translated parts of Tegnér's *Frithiofs saga*, the most renowned product of Swedish Romanticism, into Latin. Just like Peterson in Uppsala (see above), Ek published his translations as student dissertations. The metrical variety in these translations resembles Tegnér's original: Ek uses hexameters, elegiac distichs, Asclepiadean verses and Sapphic stanzas.<sup>10</sup>

One of Lundblad's successors in Lund was Carl Georg Brunius. He was born in 1792 in Tanum by the western coast of Sweden in the family of the priest Gomer Brunius. Thanks to his father, who gave his children a perfect home education, Brunius already acquired a decent command of Latin in his childhood. In 1803, he enrolled at the university of Lund. Initially, Brunius studied Law, but Johan Lundblad, after seeing his Latin verses, persuaded his father that the boy should change to Classics. The change was successful: in the 1810s, Brunius produced a large amount of Latin poetry, highly esteemed by both Lundblad and Tegnér (then professor of Greek). In 1814, he translated the second book of Apollonius' *Argonautica* into Latin, and in 1815 became associate professor of Greek. The defense of the thesis he wrote to obtain this position is said to be the first time in a long while that Greek speech was heard at the university of Lund. At the same time, Brunius became interested in Nordic antiquities, primarily after journeys to his home region undertaken in 1814–16, where he examined ancient stone carvings.

In 1824, Brunius succeeded Tegnér as professor of Greek. However, during the time of his professorship, Brunius' interests were turned away almost entirely from classical languages towards architecture. Similarly to Tegnér, who is well known as a Romantic poet, but hardly as a professor of Greek, Brunius is mainly remembered in our days as an architect and a historian of architecture. In the 1830s, he became the supervisor of the reconstruction of Lund cathedral, a task on which he worked for the following quarter of a century. Numerous churches in Scania (and elsewhere) were either reconstructed or built by him. Among his creations in Lund, one may still see his own house and that of the bishop.

<sup>9</sup> For a short—but the only existing—survey of Latin translations of Swedish poetry see Tengström, *Broar till antiken*, 123–27.

<sup>10</sup> Bernd Roling, "Charles Baudelaire und Carl Georg Brunius: Bilder des Mittellateinischen im 19. Jahrhundert," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 41 (2007): 271–73; Tengström, *Broar till antiken*, 126.

Both in his practice and in his writings, Brunius was a faithful and probably the most famous advocate of medieval style in Swedish architecture. He was also the first to produce systematic descriptions of Swedish medieval buildings, as a result of his numerous journeys throughout the country from the 1810s to the 1860s.

His passion for architecture is also said to have brought Brunius to his death. In 1858, he went into retirement from his professorship at the university, and the year after, he abandoned supervising the construction of the cathedral, leaving guidelines for its continuation. His successor, young Helgo Zettervall, was critical of Brunius' views and of his activity for the restoration of the cathedral. The conflict between the two lasted throughout the 1860s. Zettervall's main goal was to supply the cathedral with new towers—those we see today. The older ones, which despite Brunius' efforts were in a very poor condition, had to be demolished. In the autumn of 1869, on the day after Zettervall's plan was confirmed by the cathedral council, Brunius, who forcefully opposed it, suffered a stroke and died some days later.<sup>11</sup>

If we now turn to Brunius' less famous legacy, that of the Neo-Latin poet, we see that the main bulk of his production was written in the 1810s and 1820s, and published in 1857 as *Poemata, partim iam ante, partim nunc primum edita* (“Poems, partially before, partially now for the first time edited”).<sup>12</sup> Almost half of the volume is occupied by an epic poem, first published in 1822, which is regarded as the longest Latin poem ever written in Sweden.<sup>13</sup> It is entitled *De diis arctois libri sex secundum Eddas concinnati* (“Six books about the Norse Gods arranged according to the Eddas”) and contains 2820 hexameters in its original version (the edition from 1857 has a slightly shortened dedication and thus contains 2814 verses).<sup>14</sup>

The main content of the six songs is entirely based on Old Norse mythology as represented in the *Poetic Edda* and the *Prosaic Edda*, the latter being used more systematically than the former. Brunius did not adopt the kind of historicizing framework with the myth of migration of the Æsir to the North that was popular among Gothicists in his day. We do not know if Brunius used the brand-new Swedish translations from 1818 and 1819,<sup>15</sup> or earlier Latin and partial Swedish ones. In any case, the thread of the story follows the original very accurately, although the material is arranged differently, namely in a chronological manner. *De diis arctois* consists of a sequence of loosely connected myths; in this respect, it resembles Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, although apart from a couple of cases prompted by his sources, Brunius is not as careful as the great Roman poet to make the transition from one episode to another as smoothly as possible.

<sup>11</sup> Bo Grandien, *Drömmen om medeltiden. Carl Georg Brunius som byggmästare och idéfömedlare*. (Lund: Berlingska Boktryckeriet, 1974), 511; For biographical details, see the same book and Otto Rydbeck, “Carl Georg Brunius,” in *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon. 6:e bandet: Brant – Bygdén* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1926), 506–14. The grave of Brunius in the eastern cemetery in Lund is a rare exception of what we have said above regarding the disappearance of verse inscriptions in Latin around the middle of the eighteenth century, it being decorated with two distichs: “Qui quondam fuit hic opifex Graecaeque professor / Linguae, Romanus quique poeta fuit / Et cui firma manent monumenta per oppida perque / Rura aedes, jacet hoc Brunius in tumulo” (“Brunius, who once was an architect and a professor of Greek here, who was a Latin poet, whose monuments in cities and churches in the countryside stay firm, rests in this grave”).

<sup>12</sup> Carl Georg Brunius, “De diis arctois libri sex secundum Eddas concinnati,” in *Poemata partim ante, partim nunc primum edita* (Lund, 1857), 1–95.

<sup>13</sup> *Hexaemeron* by Andreas Sunesen, also written in the province of Scania, is longer (8040 verses), but at the time of its composition Scania was part of Denmark. See Grandien, *Drömmen om medeltiden*, 44.

<sup>14</sup> Apart from punctuational habits and several orthographical points, there are more than a hundred small changes in the second edition compared to the first one. These changes are, however, not substantial and in most cases encompass only one or two words.

<sup>15</sup> Arvid August Afzelius, trans., *Sæmund den vises Edda. Sånger af Nordens äldsta skalder* (Stockholm: Deleens och Granbergs Tryckerier, 1818); Snorri Sturluson, *Edda samt Skalda. Öfversättning från skandinaviska forn-språket*, trans. A. J. Cnattingius (Stockholm: Elméns och Granbergs Tryckeri, 1819).

The main subject of the first book is the creation of the universe. It narrates the birth of the giant Ymir, his slaying by Odin, Vili, and Vé; his bones are transformed into mountains, his blood into water, his brain into the heavens, and so on. Then follows a catalogue of the gods,<sup>16</sup> based on the catalogue used in the *Prosaic Edda*, but shortened in comparison with it. The end of the book contains the joyless predictions given to the gods by the Norns.

The second book begins with the construction of Asgard by a giant. Despite a harsh deadline (compensated by the terrible demands he lays down to the gods), he almost manages to finish it in time, but is impeded by the god Loki, who turns himself into a mare and deprives the giant of his stallion Svaðilfari. The next episode contains Loki's robbery of the apples of Iðunn, which gave eternal youth to the gods. The gods kill the giant Þjazi, who forced Loki to rob the apples, but to avoid revenge from his daughter Skaði, they give her permission to marry one of them. Skaði has to choose a bridegroom by only looking at the legs of the gods, and believes that the most attractive ones belong to the beautiful Baldr:

Eligit acclamans: 'Vitio te corporis omni,  
Te, Balder, credo solum caruisse per aevum!  
Sed Freiae genitor (pro caeca potentia fati!),  
Sed largitor opum, venti moderator et ignis  
Undarumque fuit, lecti cui foedere iuncta est'<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Skaði has to marry the sea god Njörðr. With the husband living by the sea and the wife preferring the mountains, the marriage becomes an annoyance for both. The end of the second book contains the story about the disappearance of Thor's hammer: the giant Þrymr demands to marry the goddess Freyja in return for the hammer, but Thor disguises himself as Freyja and kills the giant at the wedding party.

The third book describes the death of Baldr and is therefore the most dramatic one. Baldr's mother Frigg makes every object on earth vow never to hurt him, but she omits the mistletoe. As the treacherous Loki becomes aware of this, he makes a spear of this plant, and while the gods are having fun throwing and shooting things at the seemingly invulnerable Baldr, puts it into the hand of the blind god Höðr, who unwillingly kills the former.

Circumstant fratres. Non vox, non fletus in aula,  
Non gemitus. Tandemque: 'Quid est, moestissimus, Aesi?  
Hoedus ait, Numquamne placent conamina nostra?'  
Ecce tacent, saevusque gelat praecordia terror'<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> As for the treatment of proper names, Brunius usually adapts the Latin a-declension for female names (with several exceptions, e. g. 'Sifis' for Sif and 'Scade', gen. 'Scades' for Skaði) and o-declension for most of the male names. Those ending in -i in Old Norse (-e in Swedish) belong, however, to the third declension: 'Locho', gen. 'Lochonis', 'Brago', gen. 'Bragonis' etc. Brunius is, however, far from consequent. The variety of models may be illustrated by the names 'Mjöllnir', 'Skirnir', 'Mímir' and 'Ægir': in Brunius' Latin they become 'Miolnus', 'Scirnerus', 'Mimer (gen. Mimis)' and 'Aeger (gen. Aegri)' respectively. The prosody in the names is applied without respect to the vowel length in Old Norse, but it remains consistent for every name, without exceptions.

<sup>17</sup> "She makes her choice exclaiming: 'I believe, Baldr, that you are the only one whose body has always been flawless!' But it was—ah, blind power of fate!—the father of Freya, the lavish donor, the master of the winds, of the fire and of the waves, to whom she was united by the bond of marriage," Brunius, "De diis arctois," 24.

<sup>18</sup> "The brothers stand around him. No voice is heard in the yard, no cry, no groaning. And at last the gloomy Höðr says: 'What is it, Æsir? Do you never like our attempts?' See, they are silent, and the savage fear chills his heart", *ibid.*, 41.

Hermóðr, son of Odin, rides out to ask the underworld goddess Hel to release Baldr. Her condition is that every object on earth has to mourn Baldr’s death. They do, but again with one exception: Loki.

The fourth book starts off with the love story of the god Freyr and the giantess Gerðr. After long negotiations through his servant Skírnir, Freyr finally wins the consent of his beloved, albeit with nine days of respite. “Mihi lux spatiosior anno est”, sighs Freyr,<sup>19</sup> and this is one of the numerous instances where Brunius follows the wording of his source quite closely: “Of t mér mánaðr minni þótti en sjá half hýnótt” (“A month has often seemed to me shorter than that little night”) are the final words of the Eddaic *Skírnismál* (“Sayings of Skírnir”). The next part of the book is occupied by Thor’s journey to the land of the giants. They make a mockery of him again and again: the powerful blows of Thor’s hammer are perceived by the giant Skrímir to be the stings of a mosquito, the giants easily win all the competitions against Thor and his companions, and he is not even able to lift their cat or to wrestle down the old woman whom they set up against him. The next day, Skrímir reveals his tricks: the old woman was Old Age itself, the horn which Thor has failed to quaff, was connected to the world ocean—his efforts being quite remarkable nonetheless (“pelagi siccata bibente / Litora te, surguntque novae de fluctibus orae”).<sup>20</sup>

In the fifth book the feast of the sea giant Ægir is used as a framework for further stories the gods tell each other, e.g. about the emergence of the mead of poetry. The final of the recited episodes, based on *Hymiskviða* (“The lay of Hymir”) from the *Poetic Edda*, is the story about Thor’s failed attempt to catch the world serpent Jörmungandr.

Book six starts with Loki insulting all the gods. This episode is based on *Lokasenna* (“Loki’s wrangling”). Loki quits the summit of the gods and tries to hide in various ways, for instance by turning himself into a fish, but he is finally caught and bound with the entrails of his own son. Thereafter, the poet proceeds to Ragnarök: the gods fight their final battle against the giants and other monsters and perish.

Iamque vorant solemque lupi lunamque rapaces,  
Ex altoque cadunt stellae, spumantibus undis  
Et subsidit humus; mox tellus aequora coelum  
Conflamant flammis, immensaque moenia mundi<sup>21</sup>

After the great fire, a lovely new world emerges. The final verses are a praise to the places where the author himself was born (“regio Gothicae dulcissima terrae, Vichia”).

The verse technique of Brunius is highly refined and quite representative of his time. Sometimes he makes use of exquisite metric devices, such as having five dactyls in a hexameter, with the same aim as the classical authors, namely to underline the speed of what is going on.<sup>22</sup> Thus talking about the goddess Gná riding through the sky he puts it: “Saepe fatigat equo patuli vaga nubila coeli”(8) And when Ragnarök is coming and the gods are in a hurry, the text goes: “Nulla mora; unanimes superum sua quisque capessunt.”<sup>23</sup> Also the opposite

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>20</sup> “As you drank, the seashores were drained, and new banks rise from the waves.”

<sup>21</sup> “And the rapacious wolves are already devouring the sun and the moon, the stars are falling from the sky, and the ground becomes covered by the foaming waves. Soon the earth, the sea, the sky and all the immense structure of the world burn down in flames,” Brunius, “De diis arctois,” 94.

<sup>22</sup> About this and the following device, see for instance George Duckworth, *Vergil and classical hexameter poetry. A study in metrical variety* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), 4–5.

<sup>23</sup> Brunius, “De diis arctois,” 92. Here, and in the following citations of Brunius’ epic, I have opted not to give an English translation of the Latin source text because the main aim is to point out either stylistic or intertextual features.



device, spondaic hexameter, is used, creating an additional effect of slow motion: “Haeret mentis inops, et circumfert obtutu.”<sup>24</sup> One of Brunius’ favorite devices is repeating a word in a different metrical pattern, a feature in which he must have followed Ovid:

Quas ardes terras testor, mea sidera testor (16)

Laetatur salvo, laetatur hirundine salva (23)

Nec vani crepitus: istum letalibus istum (27)

The word list of the poem is quite classical, with only occasional instances of unclassical words like *revisitare* or *ferocire*.<sup>25</sup> On the phrasal level many formulas are borrowed from classical authors: *cognomine dicunt* (6; see Verg. *Aen.* I.530), *est locus* (13, IV.69, VI.289; see Enn. *Ann.* I.20, Verg. *Aen.* I.530), *tractusque maris coelumque profundum* (14; see Verg. *Ecl.* IV.51, Verg. *Georg.* IV.222), *discrimina rerum* (15; see Verg. *Aen.* I.204), *terraque marique* (21, 26; see Lucr. III.837, Verg. *Aen.* X.162), *ignis edax* (54, 67; see Verg. *Aen.* II.758, Ov. *Met.* IX.202), *lacrimis effatur abortis* (37, 75 with *exclamat*; see Verg. *Aen.* XI.41, Ov. *Met.* I.350), *vix ea fatus erat* (77; see Verg. *Aen.* I.586, Ov. *Met.* XV.843 ) etc. The hexameter clausula “Neptunia / Cyllenia / Aquilonia proles”, popular in ancient poetry (Prop. I.20.25, Verg. *Aen.* IV.258, *ibid.* VII.691), is modified into *Laufeia proles* (17) when talking about Loki or *Odinia proles* (28) when talking about the sons of Odin.

If we now turn to the specific authors who influenced Brunius, Virgil and Ovid are the most significant ones. Already the first line after the dedication, “Principio neque terra parens neque caerulea terram” (3), displays a collocation from the fourth book of the *Aeneid* (v. 178), *terra parens*. Most of the formulaic expressions I have just enumerated are also best represented in Virgil.

Brunius also follows (and in fact surpasses) Virgil in his love for short parenthetical comments like *mirabile visu, horrendum dictu, si credere dignum est*, etc. There are about fifty such expressions in the text of the poem, and Brunius clearly seeks not to use one and the same phrase of this kind more than twice. The only exception I have managed to find is *mirum* (21, 57 and 94). Sometimes these parenthetical expressions seem to be out of place: *horresco referens* (67; see Verg. *Aen.* II.204, Aeneas describing the death of Laocoon) is put into the mouth of a giant explaining Thor his own tricks.

Words that Brunius could find either only in Ovid or primarily in Ovid, are, for instance, *flammifer* (5), *revocamina* (18), *fontanus* (37) and *resequor* (40). Likewise, Ovidian phrases are not uncommon: *mentis inops* (21, 43; see Ov. *Met.* II.200), *cornua lunae* (26; see Ov. *Met.* III.682), *vera fateri* (50; see Ov. *Met.* VII.728) etc. Among many ways to mark the end of a direct speech, *hactenus* is specifically Ovidian (21, with a subject 55 and 81; see Ov. *Met.* II.610).

An important model, especially in the first book, which deals with the creation of the universe, but occasionally elsewhere, is Lucretius. From him, Brunius borrowed vocabulary connected with what might be called natural science: *primordia rerum* (3; see Lucr. I.55), *semina rerum* (4; Lucr. I.59), *vitalibus auris* (7; Lucr. III.577), *solis radiis* (5; Lucr. II.126), *luminis oras* (5; Lucr. I.22), *lunaeque meatus* (37; Lucr. I.128).

Some cases of correspondence to the phraseology of Silver Latin poets may also be found,

<sup>24</sup> Brunius, “De diis arctois,” 43.

<sup>25</sup> The former is attested just once, in Pliny the Elder (XVIII.13); all the instances of the latter (in Cato, Gellius and Apuleius) are enumerated in OLD s. v.

but they are not numerous and may sometimes be accidental.<sup>26</sup> On certain occasions, there are more exquisite models: thus, talking about Odin's visit to the well of Mimir where he acquired knowledge in exchange for his eye, Brunius describes his condition afterwards with an adjective *sapientipotens* which he could only have found in Ennius (Enn. *Ann.* VI.198).

Let us now turn to the quotations and allusions. Some of them are quite obvious and refer to well-known passages from canonical authors. About Baldr is told in the catalogue of gods in the *Prosaic Edda* that he is the best god and that he is praised by everybody. Brunius considers this close enough to the way in which Lucretius invokes Venus in the opening line of his poem:

Balder, Frigga, tuus, divorum hominumque voluptas (7)

Aeneadam genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas (Lucret. I.1).

To describe the malicious and treacherous god Loki further on in the same catalogue, a phrase from Horace is used:

Ingenio fallax, caput insanabile, Locho (8)

Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poetae,  
Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile numquam  
Tonsori Licino con miserit (Hor. *Ars* 300)

When it comes to Loki's wife Sigyn, she is called "worthy of a better husband" in a phrasing close to the one used by Ovid in an address to his wife, who was "worthy of a less miserable, not of a better husband":

At Signys sorti miserabilis invidet huius,  
Digna viro meliore frui (9)

Digna minus misero, non meliore viro (Ov. *Trist.* I.6.4)

The forest where Loki hides when he is transformed into a mare is borrowed from the opening line of the third book of Ovid's *Amores*:

Frondebat multos incaedua silva per annos (18)

Stat vetus et multos incaedua silva per annos (Ov. *Am.* III.1.1)

When Loki as mare seduces the stallion Svaðilfari who carried the materials for the construction of Asgard, the desperate builder follows the exclamation of Pandion in the Ovidian story of Procne and Philomela:

[...] Ingens advolvitur astris  
Clamor: equam linquens mihi, Suadilfare, redito (19)

Si pietas ulla est, ad me, Philomela, redito! (Ov. *Met.* VI.503)

After the death of Baldr in the third book, his mother Frigg goes mad and talks like Virgilian Dido:

<sup>26</sup> As for example in Brunius, "De diis arctois," 5, where "telluris in imis / Visceribus" resembles Sil. I.232: "Visceribus lacerae telluris mergitur imis".

Quo feror! Ah ubi sum? (43)

Quid loquor? aut ubi sum? (Verg. *Aen.* IV.595)

In the fourth book, Thor desperately struggles against an old woman who eventually turns out to be Old Age itself, and Thor's condition in this struggle is miserable enough to compare him to Hector as Aeneas saw him in his dream in the second book of the Aeneid:

[...] Quantum mutatus ab illo est  
Qui coeli perterricrepis convexa pererrat  
Limitibus, gaudetque polos involvere flammis (65)

Ei mihi, qualis erat, quantum mutatus ab illo  
Hectore qui redit exuuias indutus Achilli (Verg. *Aen.* II.274–75).

Finally, the exclamation *Hunc ego!*, uttered by Thor in the fifth book, is clearly modelled on the famous Virgilian *Quos ego!* (I.135). A funny detail is that in Virgil, the sea god Neptune is speaking, whereas in Brunius the sea god Aegir is the object of Thor's anger.

Sometimes Brunius uses the phrases from the classics in such a way that their meaning is changed:

Forsetes, placidi dulcis genitoris imago (7)

Obstipui; subiit cari genitoris imago (Verg. *Aen.* II.560)

*Imago* in Brunius' text means "copy", i.e. Forseti "looks like" his father, while in the Virgilian model *imago* is "a picture in the imagination",<sup>27</sup> i.e. Aeneas "is thinking of" his father.

Et nil praeter equam toto videt aequore demens (18)

Disiectam Aeneae toto uidet aequore classem (Verg. *Aen.* I.128)

*Aequor* means "plain field" in the text of Brunius (it is the aforementioned story of the stallion Svaðilfari pursuing the *mare*), whereas in Virgil it has the more usual meaning "sea".

Sometimes the phrase is put into such a context that considering its model may create an almost comical effect. Asgard, the fortress of the gods, cannot be overrun, as its builder promises: "Vobis aliud (date praemia) condam, / Uno adiutus equo, non exsuperabile castrum" (17). But is it then someone like the poor Sisyphus who is supposed to attack it? This seems to be suggested by the source of the clausula: "Immanemque rotam et non exsuperabile saxum" (Verg. *Georg.* III.39).

Hercules characterizes himself as *indefessus agendo* in Ovid: "Defessa iubendo est/ Saeva Iovis coniunx: ego sum indefessus agendo" (Ov. *Met.* IX.198–99). A slight change made by Odin in his respectful address to Hel, goddess of the Underworld, thus feels quite ironic: "Verum etiam divos, o indefessa nocendo" (40).

Of a similar kind is the expression *hircorum domitor* as an epithet of Thor (45), modelled after the Virgilian formula *equum domitor* (Verg. *Aen.* VII.189 etc.)—the change again sounds ironic. Another example is from Frigg's speech to her dead son Baldr:

[...] Mihi cur liventia brachia tendis,  
Amplexusque petis nostros, dulcissime rerum? (43)

<sup>27</sup> OLD s. v. *imago* 9 ("A duplicate, copy, reflection, likeness, image") and 6 ("A representation to the imagination, mental picture") respectively.

Has she in her grief forgotten that *dulcissime rerum* is only attested in the speech of a nasty person immortalized by Horace after meeting him on the Via Sacra (Hor. *Serm.* I.9.4)?

Did Brunius have some different sense of humor than we today? Or did he really want to add irony into his poem? In any case, it is very difficult to regard the whole poem as a mock epic. A solution that the examples of change in meaning or inappropriate context may suggest is that he did not often think about which context exactly his phrases came from and used them indiscriminately. However, the following examples demonstrate that Brunius was extremely deliberate in choosing his wording. Here I treat the instances where the allusion to certain classical passages is somewhat less obvious (although equally certain) than in the set of examples quoted above.

[...] Subitum tamen effugit aequor  
Cum consorte tori Bergelmus, et inde gigantum  
Servatur suboles (4)

*Consors tori* looks like just one of many ways of denoting “wife”. But as soon as one remembers the original context in Ovid, one is struck by the fact that it is the same as in Brunius, namely it is a wife of the only male who managed to save himself from the flood:

Hic ubi Deucalion (nam cetera texerat aequor)  
Cum consorte tori parva rate vectus adhaesit (Ov. *Met.* I.318–19)

Further on in the first book, Odin talks about how villainous the giants are and concludes his speech with the decision to punish them:

[...] Mihi cedere, divi,  
Stat terris Thursosque procul terrere profanos (13)

Apart from a hint of Virgilian *Procul, o, procul este, profani!* (Verg. *Aen.* VI.258), this last line of the speech contains the word *stat*, and this *stat* is supposed to recall another *stat*—the one from the concluding line of Jupiter’s speech in the *Metamorphoses* on how villainous and deserving of punishment the humans are:

[...] Dent ocium omnes,  
Quas meruere pati, (sic stat sententia) poenas (Ov. *Met.* I.242–43)

Njörðr is complaining to Skaði about the inhospitableness of the mountains:

Hic tardius horae  
Labuntur, saltusque acres ululatibus implent  
Triste lupi (25).

At first glance, *Ululatibus implent* is only accidentally identical with the clausula from an Ovidian verse: “Ut clamata silet, montes ululatibus implent” (Ov. *Fast.* IV.453). It is not difficult to imagine such a clausula being coined independently, and while in Brunius’ text the subject is *lupi*, in Ovid it is applied to friends of Persephone. However, one should remember the story of Skaði and Njörðr as a whole: Skaði became Njörðr’s wife against her will, and, being a giantess, she liked the mountains much more than the sea where Njörðr belonged, so they decided to change their residence every nine days. Does this story not bear some resemblance to the one of Persephone and Hades?

Another, similar instance is the following: “Contundit sponsum consanguineamque catervam” (32). *Consanguinea caterva* denotes the giants around Þrymr, who stole the hammer of Thor and requested to marry the goddess Freya in return. Thor dressed himself as

Freya, came to Þrymr as a bride and after obtaining the marriage gift, i.e. the hammer, killed Þrymr and his *consanguinea caterva*. The expression is deliberately coined to recall the Ovidian *consanguinea turba*: ‘Et consanguineae quondam centesima turbae’ (Ov. *Her.* XIV.121)—as Hypermnestra calls her sisters—the Danaids, and thus to recall the general context, i.e. a bloody marriage.

I would briefly touch on two more examples. The solitary isle of Lyngvi where the gods enfettered the monstrous wolf Fenrir is modelled after the abode of Morpheus from the Ovidian story of Ceyx and Alcyone:

Est mare cimberia caligine triste, profundo  
In medioque iacet penetrabilis insula semper  
Flatibus infecunda cavisque asperrima saxis (35)

Est prope Cimmerios longo spelunca recessu,  
Mons cavus, ignavi domus et penetralia Somni,  
Quo numquam radiis oriens mediusve cadensve  
Phoebus adire potest: nebulae caligine mixtae  
Exhalantur humo dubiaeque crepuscula lucis (Ov. *Met.* XI.592–96)

Another monstrous wolf Garmr, the guardian of the Underworld, resembles the Arcadian king Lycaon, turned into a wolf in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*:

Venit obuius illi  
Ore canis rabido, maculatus pectora tabe.  
Exululat, saevisque ciet latratibus umbras (39).

Exululat frustra loqui conatur: ab ipso  
Colligit os rabiem solitaeque cupidine caedis  
Vertitur in pecudes et nunc quoque sanguine gaudet (Ov. *Met.* I.233–35).

Finally, my three last examples show how Brunius depicted the Underworld so that it could conform to the Virgilian one from the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. The couch of Hel is made as purplish as Charon’s boat:

E ferrugineo surgit regina cubili (39)

Et ferruginea subuectat corpora cumba (Verg. *Aen.* VI.303)

Some architectural details of her palace are adamantine:

Mox stridet duris adamantina ianua mortis  
Obiicibus (47)

Porta aduersa ingens solidoque adamante columnae (Verg. *Aen.* VI.552)

And the long list of unpleasant beings that meet up with Odin’s son Hermod in the Underworld is clearly inspired by what awaited Aeneas there, although there is almost no verbal correspondence between the passages:

Hic somni cernit nocturna cubilia circum  
Mille vagas species variis animalia formis  
Insanamque famem mala monstra cruentaue bella  
Infandas curas inflammatosque furores  
Morborumque genus saevas scopulisque latentes  
Insidias tumidasque minas subitosque timores.  
Ultrices tandem poenas curvamque senectam,  
Innixam baculo, praetervolat alite cursu,  
Ingentisque quatit pontis pendentia saxa (45)

Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci  
 Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae,  
 Pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus,  
 Et Metus et malesuada Fames ac turpis Egestas,  
 Terribiles uisu formae, Letumque Labosque;  
 Tum consanguineus Leti Sopor et mala mentis  
 Gaudia, mortiferumque aduerso in limine Bellum,  
 Ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens  
 Vipereum crinem uittis innexa cruentis (Verg. *Aen.* VI.273–81)

It is almost needless to say that there are no traces of all these details in the relevant passage of the *Prosaic Edda*.<sup>28</sup>

The poem of Brunius did not cause much discussion even in the time of its publication. However, some replies are noteworthy. Esaias Tegnér, working at that time on *Frithiofs saga*, suggested in a letter to Brunius that a Nordic subject did not fit the classicistic form. The superiority of the Romantic treatment of the theme, he claims, had been demonstrated for instance by Oehlenschläger's *Nordens Guder* ("The Gods of the North"). Tegnér admitted nevertheless that the poem had some beautiful passages.

Peter Wieselgren, a famous historian and social activist, praised Brunius' language and verse technique, but supposed that writing Latin poetry in the nineteenth century was a waste of one's talents. The publisher and politician Lars Johan Hierta, upon receiving a copy of Brunius' poem as a gift, remarked that its only drawback was that it was not two thousand years old.<sup>29</sup>

A very negative attitude is observed in *Svensk literatur-tidning* ("Swedish literature journal"), the main forum for the Romanticists, where a review of the poem appeared shortly after its first publication. The reviewer claims that there is no need for rendering Scandinavian myths in Latin, as there were already Swedish, Danish and German translations of the *Eddas*; that the Latin language does not fit the Nordic subjects; that the Latin poetic mode is based on the Greek one and is therefore separated from its vernacular speech from the very beginning. According to the reviewer, the abstractedness and lack of poetic freedom in Latin verse only become more apparent when it is used to treat Nordic material. If the Eddaic myths were to be faithfully perceived, there should be a basis in the form of memory and tradition, and this tradition could only exist in the myths' original form and language. Another objection of the reviewer was that Brunius often added details to the passages where the Eddaic original was concise, whereas this conciseness in particular provokes the reader's own imagination and is therefore to be regarded and preserved as an important poetic device.

Brunius responded to this criticism, quite typical of his time, in the newspaper *Stockholmposten*. His poem, as the author explained, was not intended to be a tool to facilitate contact with the ancient Nordic world, but rather a work of art in its own right. The additions were thus justified, too, for they filled the scanty lineaments of the source.

The most positive judgement of *De diis arctois* was the one expressed by Achatius Kahl, a theologian and a classicist, some decades later in his essay on the decline of Latin in Swedish universities. He ranked Brunius as one of the foremost Neo-Latin poets ever and suggested that his choice of the subject was fine: if Ovid himself had heard in his exile about the deeds and adventures of Thor, Odin and Freyr, he would have thought them worthy of a similar

<sup>28</sup> Snorri Sturluson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København: Gyldendal, 1931), 67.

<sup>29</sup> Grandien, *Drömmen om medeltiden*, 44-46.

poetic monument.<sup>30</sup>

Still, such a book hardly matched the ambitions of the Romantic age, and soon fell into oblivion, despite the second publication. At the end of the nineteenth century, Johan Bergman, the last significant Neo-Latin poet in Sweden, did not even mention it in a survey of the history of Swedish Neo-Latin poetry. His acquaintance with Brunius' poetry did not go further than the fact that Brunius had been praised by Tegnér for some of his Latin verses.<sup>31</sup>

There still have not been any serious comprehensive studies on the poem, and it is only briefly mentioned in biographical literature on Brunius, as well as in general surveys of the history of Swedish Neo-Latin.<sup>32</sup> One exception is an article by Bernd Roling, published in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* a decade ago.<sup>33</sup> Roling offers a thorough account of the mythological sources of each story in the poem and an accurate paraphrase of it. His general judgement, however, is, in my opinion, highly questionable. Admiring Brunius for his close adherence to his mythological sources, Roling downplays the role of the classical heritage in the poem:

Vermeintliche Latinisierungen wie die Apostrophierung des *alfäðr* Odin als dem *moderator Olympi* verdanken sich eher metrischen Notwendigkeiten. Lateinische Patronymica wie die Umschreibung Lokis als *Laufeia proles* oder *Farbautiades* sind in Wirklichkeit bereits durch den Sprachgebrauch des altnordischen Originals vorgegeben.<sup>34</sup>

Of course, these specific examples cannot be refuted and Brunius is far from turning his Nordic gods into classical ones, but I do hope that I have shown that the presence of the classical heritage is felt throughout the poem, not only through language and style but also through conscious allusions. In a number of cases, Brunius seeks to hint at the resemblance between the classical and the Nordic myths, while in others, he further heightens the resemblance by adding details from canonical authors—and this is somewhat difficult to explain in terms of *metrische Notwendigkeit* (“metric necessity”). The feature to be admired in the poem is, in my opinion, this fine combination of accurate renderings of the source material with the diction of and allusions to Virgil, Ovid and others.

<sup>30</sup> Alfred Sjödin, “Anakronistisk kosmopolitism: Carl Georg Brunius’ De diis arctoïis,” *Edda* 105 (2018): 125.

<sup>31</sup> Bergman, “Den latinska diktningen i Sverige,” LVI.

<sup>32</sup> Rydbeck, “Carl Georg Brunius,” 508; Grandien, *Drömmen om medeltiden*, 44–46.

<sup>33</sup> Another exception is the recent article by Alfred Sjödin, where the public reaction to the poem is analyzed in terms of the so-called ecologies of world literature. Sjödin, “Anakronistisk kosmopolitism.”

<sup>34</sup> Roling, “Charles Baudelaire und Carl Georg Brunius: Bilder des Mittellateinischen im 19. Jahrhundert,” 264.

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