



DIURNA

NEWSPAPER OF THE 30TH LATIN SUMMER SCHOOL: DIES LUNAE, JANUARIUS XV

The Abbey's Bookstore website has been set up to give a 10% discount on all Latin titles that are in stock and not already discounted. The code that needs to be used, as in the past, is NUNCESTLEGENDUM (all caps, no gaps).

Here is the link to the Latin books on their website:

<https://www.abbey.com.au/category/latin.do?>

The discount is also valid in-store (again, on in-stock items only that are not already discounted). The discount (online and in-store) is available from 15 January to 31 January 2024 inclusive. In-store customers just need to mention they attended the Latin Summer School to receive the discount.

On Tuesday there will be a sale of new and virtually new books during the Morning Tea break, outside the café in the Business School. All the books are in excellent condition – the subject matter is mainly classical, with a little more modern literature, history, and music. Price from \$40 downwards.

Editorial by Robert Forgács:

Comments on Matthias Depoorter's *Flemish Masters From Van Eyck to Bruegel* (2023) I

This recently-published book on Renaissance Flemish art is very well-written and beautifully produced. The publisher is the German specialist Arts Press, Hatje Cantz. A first reaction may be, of what relevance is this book to the Sydney Latin Summer School. In fact, it is quite relevant, as both the text and the paintings reproduced in the book contain a considerable amount of Latin – ecclesiastical and neo-Latin mainly, but there is also one classical quotation. One of the book's strengths is the number of close-up photos of details of the paintings, which usually cannot be

appreciated even when the paintings are viewed in an exhibition. Such close-ups allow short textual extracts, which are often included in the paintings themselves, or have been painted on the original frames, be to read more easily. These short passages of text are in French, Flemish and Latin, with Latin predominating. To begin with classical subject matter, there is the portrait by Hans Memling of Bernardo Bembo, the Venetian ambassador to the Netherlands. It dates from c.1474 and depicts the subject holding a classical coin, on which there is profile portrait of the emperor Nero, with the inscription (in abbreviated form) 'Imperator Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Pontifex Maximus Tribunicia Potestas Pater Patriae' (The Emperor Nero Claudius Augustus Germanicus, High Priest, [invested with] Tribunician Power, Father of the Homeland). Memling clearly copied the coin from an ancient Roman original, and its prominent inclusion, in the left hand of the sitter at the bottom right of the painting, emphasizes the subject's classical humanist education and interests, which were normal for an Italian statesman of this date. Less usual is the painting by Joachim Patinir depicting Charon crossing and Styx, which dates from c.1520-24. As Depoorter notes, Patinir was the first great landscape painter in Western art, and this painting illustrates that observation very clearly. The small figure of Charon is placed in the very centre of the painting in a small boat, together with an even smaller human figure whom he is rowing across the Styx. However, most of the space of the canvas is devoted to a beautiful depiction of an imaginary landscape, with the cool serenity of the left-hand side, characterized by dark blues and greens, contrasting strongly with the dramatic black and red background of the right-hand side, where behind a peaceful green foreground, the souls of

the damned are shown in torment. The mixture of pagan and Christian imagery is striking.

Some Latin inscriptions included in the paintings illustrated in the book function as signatures of the artist, for example Jan van Eyck's well-known inscription in the Arnolfini Portrait of 1434 'Johannes de Eyck fuit hic 1434' (Jan van Eyck was here, 1434). On the frame of what is presumed to be van Eyck's self-portrait is the Latin inscription (expanded from its abbreviated form) 'Johannes de Eyck me fecit anno 1433, 21 Octobris' (Jan van Eyck made me in the year 1433, on the 21 October), while on the picture-frame of the portrait of his wife is the inscription (similarly expanded from its abbreviation) 'Coniunx meus Jan me complevit anno 1439 15 Junii, aetas mea triginta trium annorum (My husband Jan completed me in the year 1439 on 15 June, my age being thirty-three years).

To be continued in Diurna 2

Memling, Portrait of Bernardo Bembo c.1474
(wikimedia commons)



Patinir, Charon crossing the Styx c.1520-24
(Wikipedia)



Jan van Eyck, presumed self-portrait, 1433