

Calpurnius Siculus and pastoral beyond the canon

Trinity Term 2026

Trinity College, Sutro Room, Mondays 11.00–12.30 (weeks 1–3 and 5–8); same time and place on Wednesday in week 4 (20 May). Organised by Gail Trimble.

Calpurnius Siculus' oeuvre consists of seven pastoral poems, transmitted together with four similar poems by the third-century Nemesianus, but since the mid-nineteenth century generally (?) considered to date from the reign of Nero. We have no external evidence about the poet. The poems are a fascinating next step in Latin pastoral after Virgil's *Eclogues*, offering herdsmen with (sometimes) familiar names who compete in singing-matches, take pride in their livestock, pine after their beloveds and speak in allegorical riddles – but also discover mysterious prophecies written on trees, perpetrate domestic violence, argue explicitly about how to praise Caesar, and give each other suspiciously didactic advice. Theocritus, Ovid and love elegy are important presences alongside Virgil.

This text-based seminar should appeal to landless veterans of last summer's reading class on Virgil's *Eclogues*, and to anyone interested in reading some clever, allusive and almost certainly unfamiliar Latin poetry. For DPhil students, attendance and presentation at the seminar fulfil the respective requirements for transfer of status. Each session will have two presentations of 20–25 minutes; presenters should complement each other, whether by taking half the poem each or approaching it from different angles. Please also see the attached bibliography.

Accessibility: the Sutro Room is up two short flights of stairs, but there is an access lift. If you need step-free access, please let me know.

Week 1: *Eclogue 1* (the prophecy of Faunus)

- (a) Gail Trimble (+ general introduction)
- (b) Daniel Jolowicz

Week 2: *Eclogue 2* (Crocalle's lovers)

- (a) Charlie Baker

Week 3: *Eclogue 3* (Lycidas and Phyllis)

- (a) Elettra Domini
- (b) Valentina Brizio Falletti di Castellazzo

Week 4: *Eclogue 4* (competing to succeed Tityrus in poetry for Caesar)

- (a) Stephen Heyworth
- (b) Melina McClure

Week 5: *Eclogue 5* (Micon's *Georgic*)

- (a) Luke Pitcher
- (b) Eve Harrington

Week 6: *Eclogue 6* (a singing match that never starts)

- (a) Paige Ashley
- (b) Grace MacDonald

Week 7: *Eclogue 7* (Corydon at the amphitheatre)

- (a) Hanna Koban
- (b) Matthew Wainwright

Week 8: *Requests* (further adventures beyond the canon)

- (a) Clara Bykvist on the early Carolingian *Eclogae Modoini Nasonis*
- (b) Barnaby Taylor on Petrarch, *Bucolicum carmen*