

# *Non sinit esse feros*

## An essay on Ovid and the motto of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

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**ABSTRACT** Questions are not infrequently asked about the meaning of the motto displayed on the College Arms (see Figure 1). When a translation is offered – usually along the lines of ‘It is forbidden to be cruel’ – there is often puzzlement about why a College of Physicians should have chosen such a phrase to embody its aims and aspirations. In this essay I discuss the motto’s relation to the couplet of Latin verse from which it derives and offer a possible explanation of how the misquotation – for such it is – that forms the motto may have come about. Then I say a little about the circumstances under which, some 2000 years ago, the Roman poet Ovid composed the poem which is its source. Finally, I show how consideration of an accurate text of Ovid’s whole original couplet offers an interpretation of the motto that was apposite at the time of the College’s foundation and is no less so more than three centuries later.

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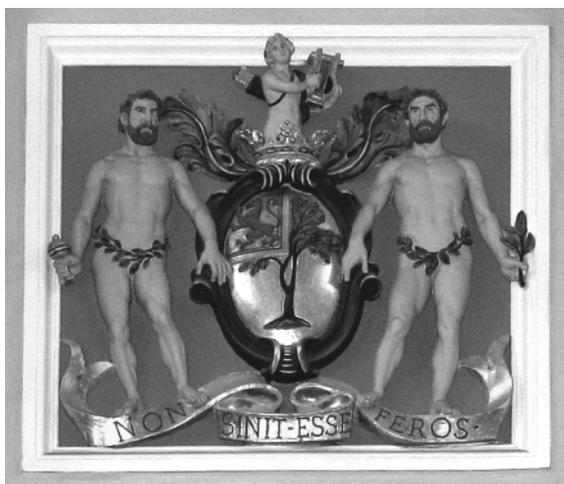
**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** No conflict of interests declared.

From the earliest days of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh the motto on its Arms has been *non sinit esse feros*. The history of the College’s most distinguished Arms<sup>1</sup> and the details of the heraldry that relates to them are described by Emslie-Smith.<sup>2</sup> However, this learned article, to which my attention was drawn by the College Librarian, Mr Iain Milne, does not discuss the motto itself though it quotes it.

The College was founded by Royal Charter granted by King Charles II in 1681 and its motto *non sinit esse feros* appears in a seal impression of 1682 and in an illustration

of 1684 in *Scotia Illustrata* by Sir Robert Sibbald, one of the College’s founders, in both the Latin<sup>3</sup> and the ‘English’<sup>4</sup> editions of this work (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup> It seems, then, that within a year of its foundation by Royal Charter the College was using this motto, for all that its arms had not been registered with the proper heraldic authority, the Lord Lyon King of Arms.<sup>1</sup> As it stands the motto might be translated: ‘it is not permitted to be cruel’ or ‘savage’ or ‘barbarous’ or ‘uncivilised’ according to how one wishes to interpret the word *feros*. This, at first sight, seems to mean very little.<sup>6</sup> An alternative possibility might be ‘It [presumably the College] does not permit someone [perhaps its Fellows] to be savage’ which might perhaps make a little sense if one supposed that in 1682 Scots were generally expected to be barbarians.<sup>7</sup> Neither translation seems to provide a credible meaning for the College motto.

Emslie-Smith repeats the usual opinion<sup>8</sup> that the motto is from a poem by the Roman poet Ovid (43 BC to AD 17 or 18). The line in question is *Pontics* book 2, poem 9, line 48 (*Pont.* 2,9,48) which reads: *emollit mores nec sinit esse feros*. However, Emslie-Smith does not point out that, if the motto comes from this poem, it is a misquotation in that it differs in its initial word, having *non* in place of Ovid’s *nec*. Craig, in his *History of the College*,<sup>9</sup> believes that the motto is probably derived from Ovid’s poem and points out that, if it is, *nec* has been replaced by *non* and, as we shall see later, makes a suggestion about why this



**FIGURE 1** The College Arms as displayed in The Great Hall (built 1865).



**FIGURE 2** The earliest illustration of the College Arms from Sibbald, *Scotia illustrata*.<sup>3</sup>

might be so. It should perhaps be explained that, while *non* simply negates the action of a verb, *nec* generally has the meaning 'and not' or 'nor' when used singly. However, obviously, simply adding 'and' to the beginning of the translations given above does not at all improve their sense as a motto.

Thus the difference between the motto and Ovid's line may be roughly summarised – though this is a little of a caricature – as the absence in the motto of the linkage between the phrase and its antecedents that is present in the poem; this small change in the text produces a significant change in its effect. I suggest that it is this linkage to the immediately preceding ideas in the poem that is the key to understanding the motto.<sup>9</sup>

### IS THE MOTTO DERIVED FROM OVID?

It is very difficult to believe otherwise. The couplet containing the line has been widely quoted and was certainly known to seventeenth-century writers. For example, the line was quoted by Edmund Spenser<sup>10</sup> in a piece written in 1596, *A veue of the present state of Ireland*:

Eudox: Is it possible? how comes it then that they are so unlearned still, being so old schollers? For learning (as the Poet saith) *Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros*: whence then (I pray you) could they have those letters?

The Puritan divine Thomas Goodwin (1600–80) quotes the line in his second sermon on *The Glory of the Gospel*:

For when the earth, or any land, is filled with 'the knowledge of the Lord,' it takes fierceness and

wildness away from the inhabitants of it. Not from these only whom it converts, but whom it convinceth, Isa. 11, from the wolves and the lions, so as not to hurt, verse 9. 'Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.'

Notably, Spenser and Goodwin both quote the whole line, correctly.

But the most interesting quotation I have found from this period is by no less a person than Francis Bacon, who gives our line correctly but misquotes the previous line of the couplet; this merits separate discussion a little later.

If the motto was newly minted by someone close to the College just after its foundation<sup>11</sup> – and, as we have seen, Emslie-Smith shows that the motto on the College seal of 1682 and (as Figure 2 reminds us), Sibbald's illustration of 1684, begins with *non* and not with *nec* – then it is a quite extraordinary coincidence that a new phrase was coined that is, frankly, obscure in its relevance to the College and also happens to be identical but for one word to part of a quite well-known Ovidian couplet which, correctly rendered and understood in its context, is very relevant indeed to the purposes of the College. I find the notion that the motto was newly minted singularly improbable.

### If the line is Ovid's, is it quoted from a corrupt textual source?

There seems to be no doubt that the motto is not simply a recognised variant reading of the couplet; neither of two modern recensions of Ovid's text<sup>12,13</sup> gives *non* as a variant for *nec*. This is not entirely surprising since replacing *nec* by *non* makes nonsense of Ovid's line as it stands in the couplet (though it must be admitted that variants, often scribal copying errors, do sometimes destroy the sense). Is it possible that the line is accurately quoted from a text which erroneously prints *non* for *nec*? Of course this possibility cannot be eliminated with complete certainty. However, a check of the seven printed editions of Ovid in Edinburgh University Library containing the *Pontics* and published between 1471 and 1683 shows that none substitutes *non* for *nec* nor, incidentally, does any contain Bacon's version of the couplet's previous line (see below). One might be entitled to claim, then, that if such a misprint were around in the seventeenth century it was not a common error. In any case, anyone with enough Latin to understand Ovid would find that the couplet did not make sense with *non* in place of *nec* and so would not, one would think, copy it blindly. Overall, then, it seems that the motto is most probably a misquotation of *Pontics* 2, 9, 48 – but not a copy of an erroneous text – and that this misquotation was adopted at the very beginning of the College's history.

### Ovid's couplet and its context

Let us now turn to Ovid's lines and look at their context and meaning. The relevant couplet is to be found in:

*P. Ovidii Nasonis. Epistularum ex ponto liber secundus epistola IX. Cotyi Regi*

Publius Ovidius Naso. *Letters from Pontus. Book II. IX. To King Cotys*

The poetry through which Ovid has influenced the literature of the last two millennia was largely complete by the time that his life as a comfortable Roman aesthete was shattered by the Emperor Augustus's edict that sent him into exile – for the rest of his life as it proved. His exile (from AD 8 until his death in AD 17 or 18) to Tomis, on the western shore of the *Pontus Euxinus*, the Black Sea, took Ovid to the very edge – or, as he often said sadly, beyond the edge – of the civilised world. His poetic composition did not cease in exile but his energy was channelled into a series of letters, the *Tristia*, addressed to unnamed recipients, and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* in which the correspondents are addressed by name. Many of these letters were pleas for his correspondent to intercede with the Emperor Augustus to end his exile, others were complaints of his miseries, yet others were exchanges of gossip with friends in Rome. His miseries seem to have been real enough – they pervade the *Pontica* – though perhaps Ovid exaggerated his physical discomforts.<sup>14</sup> The exact reason for Ovid's exile by Augustus has never been satisfactorily explained though it has given rise to not a little speculation; Thibault,<sup>15</sup> who should be consulted for a full account of these speculations, lists 111 authors between 1437 and 1963 who have proposed new hypotheses or modified old ones on the causes of Ovid's exile. Ovid himself says it was because of a poem and a mistake, but not a crime. The poem in question was the *Ars amatoria*, published about 1 BC, a poem 'no more immoral than other erotic works . . . but explicitly didactic'<sup>16</sup> the *Ars* is, effectively, a manual of directions for adultery. Augustus, at least in his public pronouncements as distinct from his private life, was attempting to regenerate the morals of Roman society and, in his eyes, Ovid as *praeceptor amoris* – chief erotic expert – was a most undesirable person. The nature of Ovid's mistake is unclear; it is generally believed that he had seen something that he should not have, and that this had offended Augustus who used the occasion of the 'mistake' as a reason to get rid of Ovid from Rome. Just what he had seen is not known. Technically, Ovid was 'relegated' rather than 'exiled'; this was a less severe penalty and his property was not confiscated nor his civil rights removed. However, in Ovid's case, the penalty was harsh for he was required to reside in one prescribed place, Tomis, and was not free to go elsewhere. The climate of Tomis (the modern port of Constantza in Romania) was, and is, harsh in winter and the region was

barely civilised. Wheeler<sup>16</sup> says, 'The townspeople were a mixed crowd of half-breed Greeks and full-blooded barbarians . . . It was a rude community.' Ovid was miserable there. His pleas to Augustus, and to Tiberius after the death of Augustus in AD 14, fell on deaf ears and he never returned from his hated exile to his beloved Rome.

King Cotys, the recipient of *Pont. 2,9*, was, it seems, well read and something of a poet. He was one of the two kings of Thrace, a client kingdom of Rome that included Tomis. Tacitus relates (*Annales* 2, 64) that, when Cotys's father died in AD 12, Augustus divided the kingdom of Thrace between Cotys and his uncle. Ovid addresses him in very flattering terms as a fellow craftsman. The poem to King Cotys, like almost all of Ovid's extant work – the exception is the *Metamorphoses* – and all the poems of exile, is in elegiac couplets, a verse form that Ovid made his own and of which later ages have acknowledged him as the master in Latin. Each couplet consists of a hexameter (six metrical feet) followed by a pentameter (five metrical feet). The pentameter is always divided in two by a break in rhythm (caesura) and its second half, of two-and-a-half feet, has a rather rigidly defined metrical structure. The College motto – presuming its Ovidian origin – is a modification of the second half of a pentameter, that of line 48.

This is the passage in question – there are many sources for the text; for example, Wheeler<sup>16</sup>

*Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
emollit mores nec sinit esse feros (48)  
nec regum quisquam magis est instructus ab illis  
mitibus aut studiis tempora plura dedit.*

A rather literal translation would be:

Add that faithful application to the liberal arts softens behaviour and does not permit barbarism. Nor is there any king who has been more instructed by these (arts) nor who gives more time to mature study.

It must be pointed out that Craig's remark about the translation of Ovid's half pentameter ('nec . . . feros') 'translated the original part read "and he is not permitted to be cruel"' – is nonsense since there is no antecedent noun in the couplet to which the pronoun 'he' could conceivably refer.<sup>17</sup> The remark is odd indeed since Craig quotes, though without acknowledgement, an accurate translation – almost certainly Wheeler's<sup>16</sup> since the words are exactly his with his American spelling anglicised – a couple of lines before.

Wheeler<sup>16</sup> translates the two couplets thus:

Note too that a faithful study of the liberal arts

humanizes character and permits it not to be cruel. No king has been better trained by them or given more time to humane studies.

These remarks are the culmination of an encomium of Cotys, in fulsome terms.<sup>18</sup> In the immediately preceding lines Ovid says that Cotys comes from a noble line, son of a father who, unlike others, was no tyrant and, though as fierce and valorous in battle as the god of war, was no lover of slaughter once peace had been made. The two couplets are followed by a plea to Cotys to be gracious to Ovid, an exile stranded in Cotys's land and a fellow poet, and to give him protection in his exile since he is guilty of no real crime. Though the couplet was originally part of Ovid's flattery of a 'civilised' barbarian in his place of exile, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the lines had acquired a much more general significance as a comment on the value of liberal and literary education, as the examples above show. Here are two more:

Addison<sup>19</sup> used the couplet of lines 47–8 as the heading for an essay on the value of education in improving and regulating the mind in *The Spectator* in 1711. In the original issue of the daily folio half-sheet it was untranslated but some later editions of the collected essays of *The Spectator* contain the rather charming rendering:

Ingenuous arts, where they an entrance find,  
Softens the manners, and subdue the mind

David Hume uses the couplet (less its two initial words) to support his discussion in his Essay in 1742 *Of the delicacy of taste and passion*:

But perhaps I have gone too far in saying, that a cultivated taste for the polite arts extinguishes the passions, and renders us indifferent to those objects, which are so fondly pursued by the rest of mankind. On farther reflection, I find, that it rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions. *Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes, Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*<sup>20</sup>

These instances, with the earlier quotations given above, will suffice as examples of how Ovid's couplet has been used. But there is one more passage from the early seventeenth century that both adds another dimension to the couplet's use in the defence of learning and also suggests a possibility for the origin of the 'misquoted' motto.

Francis Bacon comments rather nicely in *The advancement of learning*:

VIII. I. To proceed now from imperial and military

virtue to moral and private virtue: first, it is an assured truth, which is contained in the verses:

*Scilicet ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,  
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*

It taketh away the wildness and barbarism and fierceness of men's minds; but indeed the accent had need be upon FIDELITER: for a little superficial learning doth rather work a contrary effect.

*The Advancement of Learning Book I.*<sup>21,22</sup>

The first word *scilicet*, appears to be an error – it is not given as a variant by André<sup>12</sup> or Richmond<sup>13</sup> in their recension of the text; all the standard texts – indeed all the texts I have found including those published before 1683 – have *adde quod*. But Bacon's line scans correctly and makes perfectly good sense, 'Certainly faithful application ...' and his error does not destroy the flow of ideas in the couplet. Perhaps, then, Bacon quoted inaccurately from memory. As experience shows, this is easily done and, if the misremembered line scans correctly and reproduces what one recalls as the meaning of the quotation, one may feel no uncertainty and so neglect to check the source. If Bacon quotes inaccurately from memory a line of Latin verse that one supposes he could perfectly easily have checked, might not others do likewise? So, might the origin of the College's motto not be an imperfectly recalled quotation that was not checked? It seems to me that the weakness of this argument is that, while Bacon's version of the whole couplet both scans and makes perfect sense (even if that sense differs a little from Ovid's statement) the replacement of *nec* by *non*, though it scans, detaches the last phrase from its subject. It also destroys the linkage of ideas which is almost invariably found between the first and second halves of the pentameter in elegiac couplets so the kindest thing that can be said is that it produces a very clumsy, and most un-Ovidian, effect. But perhaps this is not a serious objection – we need only extend the speculation to supposing that the author recalled only the half pentameter. In that case he might indeed unconsciously replace *nec* by *non* since this makes the phrase make sense as a statement though it spoils the couplet. As to why the error was not corrected later, one might suggest that, if the motto was devised by Sibbald or one of the other founding Fellows, no one with the necessary knowledge may have had the temerity to suggest that what had now been made public as a motto should be publicly retracted to the embarrassment of its originator. If this speculation is sound the motto was intended to be *nec sinit esse feros*.

## WAS THE MISQUOTATION INTENTIONAL?

Craig argues that the misquotation of Ovid's line was deliberate.<sup>17</sup> He suggests (quoting a personal communication from RF Robertson as his source) that *nec* was deliberately changed to *non* to make a complete

sentence, *Non sinit esse feros*, from the half line so that the motto would stand alone as a grammatically correct sentence. In effect the Robertson/Craig suggestion differs from mine only in that it proposes a deliberate mutilation while I suggest an unconscious and unintentional one. This difference of imputed motive, is, however, of some interest. Craig says ‘By substituting “non” (not) for “nec” (and not) in the original wording a motto was devised which was independent of anything in the nature of the original extraneous context.’ [my italics]. So he appears to believe that the ‘original context’ of the rest of the couplet is irrelevant to a motto suitable for the College. I take exactly the opposite view, that the motto only makes relevant sense through its context – that is, by recall of the whole couplet and particularly by recall of how it was used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It seems to me that, if the mutilation were deliberate, it would be a most curious thing to have done since the resulting sentence, though grammatically correct, cannot be said to convey much meaning. Mutilating the phrase to make a sentence destroys its context – and the context is essential for the phrase to mean anything much. After all, ‘It is forbidden to be barbarous,’ which is what we have inherited, does not seem to mean much in relation to a College of Physicians; whereas the whole couplet from *ingenuas* to the end (*adde quod* really does not do much except, of course, make the hexameter scan . . .) does mean something very sensible in the context of the College and its purposes – in the twenty-first as much as in the seventeenth century. Liberal arts<sup>23</sup> would easily stretch to include medicine and the couplet less its first two words:

*ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
emollit mores nec sinit esse feros*

Faithful application to the liberal arts improves behaviour and discourages barbarism

would have made explicit the whole idea of the importance of (medical) learning. But the truncated couplet was probably simply too long to use as a motto.

As to the idea (or moral if you will) to be implied, surely, as Bacon said, the *faithful* application is what matters – and surely the College has always taught that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing? – after all, one of the principal reasons for its foundation was to weed out incompetent practitioners. The highest standards of practice are unlikely to be reached by the half-baked in any century.

If the couplet, whole or truncated, was too long to use on the arms then *nec sinit esse feros* would have been an effective tag to recall the whole couplet in a way that the existing motto is not; this, again, suggests to me that the mutilation was unintentional.

### Need a motto be a complete sentence?

The implication of the Robertson/Craig ‘complete sentence’ notion seems to be that it is somehow undesirable to put up a piece of Latin that does not, as it stands, make sense even grammatically. But this is nonsense; such phrases are quite common and make sense fully only through the recall of their context. Thus the words of the City of Edinburgh’s motto ‘*nisi Dominus frustra*’ perhaps just about mean something as they stand (‘unless the Lord, in vain’) in spite of making no grammatical sense. But by calling to mind:

*nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam*  
(Psalm 126, Vulgate, Latin; and 127, English, King James Version)

Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain

its effect is appropriate, apposite and gives a little glow of self-satisfaction to the learned and the pious. But then, the origin of *nisi Dominus frustra* is, I think, pretty widely known even today. Interesting, though, that a city that was one of the centres of the Reformation should retain as its motto a phrase from one of the Latin Psalms . . . but that, I suspect, is quite another story.

### A FINAL TWIST

There is one final twist to the tale. Until recently I had been unable to find any other instance of the phrase as it appears in the College motto. However, I have now discovered a single occurrence of this phrase in an obscure neo-Latin work, the *De arte iocandi* (The art of jesting) by an almost unknown German author, Mattheus Delius the younger (1523–44). An illuminating discussion of this obscure work and its significance for the study of renaissance wit is given by Bowen<sup>24</sup> who also provides interesting biographical information about the young author – a student of theology who died at 21 from consumption – who was a friend of the famous humanist, theologian and reformer Phillip Melanchthon and an acquaintance of Martin Luther. Is it possible that this obscure poem rather than Ovid’s well-known couplet might be the source of the College’s motto?

The poem ‘*De arte iocandi libri quattuor*’ was first published in 1555 with a lengthy preface by Melanchthon who edited the book as a memorial to his young friend.<sup>24</sup> Later editions, including that of 1578<sup>25</sup> (in a digital copy of which I found the phrase) have a much abbreviated preface that omits all the biographical details of Delius; in this edition Delius’s work is sandwiched between a long poem on the art of drinking and an elegy on drunkenness. However, the work is in no way dissolute and is, in fact, a serious discussion of the place of *facetiae* (loosely, jokes) in

oratory and discourse.<sup>24</sup> The *De arte iocandi*, a poem in four books, is written in elegiac couplets, as are the other works in the volume. Both poems are modelled on that *Ars amatoria* which was one of the causes of Ovid's exile. Their opening stanzas, both in their images and sometimes in their actual words, closely resemble the opening couplets of the *Ars*. To make the homage to Ovid quite clear, the title page of the 1578 edition<sup>25</sup> presents three couplets which draw an explicit parallel between Ovid's rules for the conduct of love affairs and the rules to be set out here by Vincentius Opsopoeus for the conduct of drinking. Delius, in turn, models his poem on jesting on that of Opsopoeus on drinking. He seems to have liked Ovid's *Pont.* 2,9,48 since he models two pentameters on it; the first, speaking of the Muse: *et regit et pellit, nec sinit esse feros*, 'rules and drives [poets], nor does she permit barbarism' need not concern us further. The second, our phrase, is found towards the end of the last book of *De arte iocandi*:

*Ille hominum mores non sinit esse feros.*<sup>26</sup>

This pentameter forms a complete sentence, 'It forbids men's behaviour to be barbarous.' To understand what 'It' is we need to examine the preceding text:

*Quid moror exemplis? iocus est recreatio vitae.  
Ille dat auctori commoda multa suo.  
Ille fugat curas, tristisque e corde dolores,  
Et recreat miris pectora fessa modis.  
Ille alios aliis placans coniungit amicos,  
Ille hominum mores non sinit esse feros.*

Why should I waste time on examples? A jest restores life.  
It brings its author many benefits.  
It puts cares to flight, drives sadness from the heart,  
and restores the weary breast marvellously.  
It unites friends one to another pleasantly.  
It forbids men to behave barbarously.

So, here, it is a jest or joke that prevents behaviour degenerating into barbarism. It is very difficult to believe that this was the sentiment that the College motto was intended to convey.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Emslie-Smith D. The arms of the College. *Proc R Coll Physicians Edinb* 1994; **24**:104–13.
- 2 *Ibid.* 'The College's Arms are Royal, Caroline and, heraldically, beautifully simple. They are outstandingly different from the Arms of any other medical corporation in the United Kingdom. Except for the substitution of rue for a lancet, they are the Arms assumed by the College in the year after its Charter of Foundation. Arms of such great distinction should be the pride of all Fellows and Members.'
- 3 Sibbald R. *Scotia illustrata, sive prodromus historiae naturalis* / auctore Roberto Sibbald. Edinburgh: ex officina typographica Jacobi Kniblo, Josuae Solingensis & Johannis Colmarii, sumptibus

A remote speculation – though perhaps not quite beyond the bounds of possibility – would be that this half pentameter from an obscure neo-Latin pseudo-Ovidian poem might be connected in some way to the creation of the motto, by a process of what one might call double erroneous recall. Suppose that whoever devised the motto had read Delius's poem. To anyone familiar with Ovid's couplet in *Pont.* 2, 9 the conjunction of the words *mores non sinit esse feros* is quite striking – as no doubt Delius intended it to be. If then, as I have suggested, the motto's author was thinking of Ovid's poem and deciding that the sentiment of the couplet of lines 47–8 would be apposite to the purposes of the College and suitable for its motto, might it be that, influenced unconsciously by his reading of Delius, he might have recalled Ovid's half pentameter '*nec sinit esse feros*' erroneously as Delius's '*non sinit esse feros*'?

There is a certain charm in imagining a grave seventeenth-century physician whiling away his time reading obscure neo-Latin verse on the right use of jokes – and the proper use of alcohol. We shall never know; on the whole it seems a good deal more likely that the error was a simple and direct mis-recollection of Ovid.

## CONCLUSION

What then can one conclude? First, it seems hardly conceivable that the motto does not derive from Ovid's *Pontics* but the question of whether its misquotation was deliberate can probably not now be resolved with certainty. My feeling, as I hope I have shown, is that the replacement of Ovid's *nec* by *non* is more likely to be due to an initially unperceived, and later uncorrected, lapse of memory than to a deliberate mutilation of Ovid's couplet. In any case, if we turn rather to the meaning of Ovid's couplet than to attempts to force meaning from its mutilated truncation as it has come down to us, we see that the College's founders had in mind a sentiment that has been sound for rather more than three centuries and should remain so into the future – that the foundation of medical practice must be in diligent application to study.

auctoris, Edinburgi; 1684.

- 4 Sibbald R. *Scotland illustrated, or, An essay of natural history*. Edinburgh: Printed by JK, JS and JC, and are to be sold by Dorman Newman; 1684.
- 5 The 'English' edition is a curious volume indeed since it consists of the complete Latin text of *Scotia Illustrata*, including its title page, preceded by an additional English title page – the only English in the book. It might be described as *Scotia Illustrata* with an English wrapper. In the copies I have seen of this edition, the engraving of the College Arms precedes the English title; in the (all) Latin edition it is found between the end of the text and the first plate. In both editions the Arms stand alone in the centre of an otherwise blank folio page.
- 6 For example, in the more recent of the two proposals that have

- been made to change the Arms and the motto (Emslie-Smith, *op. cit.* ref. 1 ) in 1947, the proposer Dr Watson Smith complained that he could not understand the motto saying: 'I had thought the present College Motto vague and impossible to fathom, cryptic in connotation and relevance and without meaning that satisfies or having any medical meaning.' (Letter of 8th February 1947 in the College Muniments, Coat of Arms Papers)
- 7 I am grateful to Dr John Forrester, FRCPE, for this observation.
  - 8 Craig WS. *History of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific; 1976.
  - 9 The whole line (correctly quoted) *emollit mores, nec sinit esse ferus* has also been adopted by the University of South Carolina as its motto; once again it makes sense in this context only through knowledge of its antecedents in Ovid's poem.
  - 10 Campion E, Hanmer M, Ware J, Spenser E. *Two histories of Ireland. The one written by Edmund Campion, the other by Meredith Hanmer Dr of Divinity*. Dublin: Printed by the Society of Stationers [and London: by Thomas Harper]; 1633.
  - 11 The Lord Lyon's records contained no information at all about the College Arms before they were finally registered in 1900 (letter of 1830 from the Lyon Office in the College Muniments) nor is there information in the records of the College that casts light on the motto's origins.
  - 12 Ovid, André J. *Pontiques*. Paris: Belles lettres; 1977.
  - 13 Ovid, Richmond JA. *P. Ovidi Nasonis ex Ponto libri quattuor*. Leipzig: Teubner; 1990.
  - 14 Richmond J. The latter days of a love poet: Ovid in Exile. *Classics Ireland* 1995; 2:97–120.
  - 15 Thibault JC. *The mystery of Ovid's exile*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1964.
  - 16 Ovid, Wheeler AL. *Tristia, Ex Ponto*. London/New York: W Heinemann/GP Putnam's Sons; 1924.
  - 17 *Op. cit.* ref. 8, p 937.
  - 18 Interestingly, Ovid expresses a very similar sentiment in an earlier poem in the *Pontics* (1,6,7) again in an encomium addressed to a friend.
  - 19 Addison J. *The Spectator* No 215 Tuesday, November 6, 1711 (Old Style). The tags, usually Latin but occasionally Greek, that head each daily sheet of the original *Spectator* were deliberately left untranslated in the original issues and in the early editions of the collected essays. The translation given is from the edition of 1744 (see below). The authors of some of the translations are given but that of *Pont.* 2, 9, 47–8 which heads No. 215 is unattributed. *The Spectator* Volume the third. London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson; 1744; p 180.
  - 20 Hume D, Miller EF. *Essays, moral, political and literary*. Revised edition. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics; 1987.
  - 21 Bacon F. *The two bookes of Francis Bacon. Of the proficience and advancement of learning, diuine and humane: To the King*. London: Printed for Henrie Tomes and are to be sould at his shop at Graies Inne Gate in Holborne; 1605.
  - 22 Bacon F, Johnston A. *The advancement of learning and New Atlantis*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1974.
  - 23 See the commentary of Pontanus on the *Pontics* for seventeenth century remarks on the meaning of *ingenuas artes* which is generally translated (as here) as 'liberal arts'. Pontanus J. *Iacobi Pontani de Societate Iesu in P. Ouidii Nasonis poetarum ingeniosissimi, Tristium et De ponto libros noui commentarii: item Hortuli Ouidiani, id est, Sententiae et proueria, ex quotquot poetae monumentis ab eodem conquisita, in locos communes redacta, et commentationibus explicata*. Ingolstadt: Ex typographeio Adami Sartorii; 1610.
  - 24 Bowen BC. A neglected renaissance art of joking. *Rhetorica* 2003; 21(3):137–48.
  - 25 Opsopoeus V, Delius M, Frischlinus N. *De Arte Bibendi Libri Tres, Auctore Vincentio Obsopoeo Germano. Quibus adiunximus De Arte locandi Libros Quattuor, Matthiae Delii Hamburgensis, cum luculenta in eosdem Praefatione*. Frankfurt: Impressum Francoforti ad Moenum; ex officina haeredum Christiani Egenolphi, impensis Adami Loniceri, Ioannis Cnippii Andronici secundi, Doctorum, et Pauli Steinmeyers; 1578.
  - 26 *Ibid.*, Sig. O 3 line 20.