

THE READER AND THE POET

*THE TRANSFORMATION OF LATIN POETRY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY*

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Cornell University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Aaron David Peltari  
August 2012

© 2012 Aaron David Peltari

The Reader and the Poet: The Transformation of Latin Poetry in the Fourth Century  
Aaron Pelttari, Ph.D.  
Cornell University 2012

In Late Antiquity, the figure of the reader came to play a central role in mediating the presence of the text. And, within the tradition of Latin poetry, the fourth century marks a turn towards writing that privileges the reader's involvement in shaping the meaning of the text. Therefore, this dissertation addresses a set of problems related to the aesthetics of Late Antiquity, the reception of Classical Roman poetry, and the relation between author and reader. I begin with a chapter on contemporary methods of reading, in order to show the ways in which Late Antique authors draw attention to their own interpretations of authoritative texts and to their own creation of supplemental meaning. I show how such disparate authors as Jerome, Augustine, Servius, and Macrobius each privileges the work of secondary authorship. The second chapter considers the use of prefaces in Late Antique poetry. The imposition of paratextual borders dramatized the reader's involvement in the text. In the third chapter, I apply Umberto Eco's idea of the open text to the figural poetry of Optatianus Porphyrius, to the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, and to the centos from Late Antiquity. These novel forms of poetry are all structurally dependent upon their reader. The fourth chapter turns to a particularly Late Antique form of allusion, in which the poet reproduced the exact words of his source in a different sense. This transpositional mode of allusion is characteristic of the Late Antique creation of a classical past; for it allows the poet to be, in a radical sense, a reader. Because the text's struggle to mean was of central importance in Late Antiquity, poets came to create space for reading. The fragmented surface of a Late Antique poem draws attention to the necessary presence of the reader, and it draws that reader in.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Aaron David Peltari was born on 28 December 1982 in Rockford, Illinois to Kal and Carole Peltari. He graduated with a BA in Classical Studies from Hillsdale College in 2004. In 2006, he graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara with an MA in Classics, and he began the PhD program at Cornell University in August of 2006. He has been married to Natalia Tobar since May of 2004 and has two sons, David Timoteo and Lucas Samuel.

For Natalia

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am glad to have accumulated many debts in writing this dissertation. Éric Rebillard read more drafts than either of us probably care to remember. His incisive reading lies behind whatever structure and clarity the final form possesses. Michael Fontaine was a careful and enthusiastic reader, and he corrected my thought and language in many places. Joseph Pucci was the best of external readers. His kindness and encouragement reminded me to enjoy the long days of working on Late Antique Latin poetry. Hayden Pelliccia improved the whole of my dissertation with his perceptive questioning. Erik Kenyon, Zachary Yuzwa, and Jeffrey Leon read early drafts of each chapter. A number of other friends and colleagues read or discussed with me various parts of this dissertation at various stages in my writing of it. In particular, my thanks go out to Kim Bowes, Kim Haines-Eitzen, Gavin Kelly, Cillian O'Hagan, Christopher Polt, Suzanne Rebillard, and Catherine Ware.

Despite the wise counsel I received, I stubbornly stuck to my ideas more often than I probably should have. Any faults of fact or judgment that remain are entirely my own.

My greatest debt is to my wife, who encouraged me to begin, continue, and finish this project. My son David has grown with this dissertation, and Lucas was born just as I was completing the final draft. I owe them many sleepless nights and countless joys.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	v
Introduction: Late Antique Poetry and the Figure of the Reader	1
Chapter one: Text, Interpretation, and Authority	13
I. Jerome and Augustine on Scriptural Interpretation	14
a. Jerome and the Writing of Scriptural Commentary	14
b. Augustine and the Reader's Involvement	19
II. Macrobius and the Reading of Vergil	27
a. Macrobius on Authority and Imitation	28
b. Interpreting Vergil in Late Antiquity	35
III. Conclusion	48
Chapter two: Prefaces and the Reader's Approach to the Text	50
I. Prefaces and Post-Classical Poetry	54
II. The Allegorical Prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius	62
III. The Prose Prefaces of Ausonius	70
a. The Rules of the Game	70
b. Distant Texts	73
c. The Reader's Control	76
IV. Conclusion	80
Chapter three: Open Texts and Layers of Meaning	82
I. The Figural Poetry of Optatianus Porphyrius	84
a. Pattern Poems	85
b. A Proteus Poem	86
c. <i>Versus Intexti</i>	90
II. Prudentius' <i>Psychomachia</i>	96
a. The Predecessors of Prudentius	97
b. The Allegory of the <i>Psychomachia</i>	103
III. The Latin Centos	109
a. The Reader and the Cento	112
b. The Cento in Late Antiquity	119
IV. Conclusion	128
Chapter four: The Presence of the Reader: Allusion in Late Antiquity	131
I. The Referentiality of Classical Allusion	132
II. Current Approaches to Allusions in Late Antique Poetry	145
III. Non-Referential Allusions	150
IV. Juxtaposed Allusions	157
V. The Apposed Allusion in Late Antiquity	163
VI. The Canon of Classical Literature	171
VII. Towards a New Theory of Appropriation	176
VIII. Conclusion	181
Conclusion: The Space that Remains	184
Bibliography	189

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

For the poems of Ausonius, Claudian, and Prudentius, I have used the abbreviations employed by Cunningham, Hall, and Green, in their separate editions. For other authors and texts, I have used the abbreviations in the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. For authors and texts not cited by the *OCD*, I turned to the second edition of the *Index to the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

## Introduction

### Late Antique Poetry and the Figure of the Reader

Claudian began the *De raptu Proserpinae* by asking the gods of the underworld to uncover for him their deepest secrets (*vos mihi sacrarum penetralia pandite rerum / et vestri secreta poli*, *Rapt.* 25-6). He imagines poetry as something hidden that needs to be uncovered. In contrast, Vergil began the *Aeneid* by asking the Muse to remind him of the reasons why Juno hated the Trojans (*Musa, mihi causas memora*, *Aen.* 1.8). In the *Aeneid*, the poet asks for a reminder and not for a revelation of some deeper truth. Between the first century BCE and the fourth century CE there occurred a broad shift in how poets conceived of the reader's role in making meaning of the words on the page. In Late Antiquity, poets came to describe their material as needing interpretation, recovery, and activation. The figure of the reader structures the poetry of the period, and so my focus upon the reader will reveal how a series of fragmentary and performative tropes work for poets such as Ausonius, Claudian, and Prudentius. I focus upon the long fourth century, because that period saw the full development of this characteristically Late Antique aesthetics, in which poets constructed their identity in and through their readers' presence.

When I describe the reader as central to Late Antique poetics, I am making a comparative and historical claim. Excellent scholars have suggested both that Late Antique aesthetics is a misleading category and that such literary historical arguments are not worth making. Before Michael Roberts published *The Jeweled Style* (1989), it was common for authors writing in

English to describe imperial poetry as having declined from a high point under the rule of Augustus.<sup>1</sup> But rather than change or decline, some scholars have preferred to see a continuity between earlier and later imperial poetry. Thus, John Hall rejected Roberts' arguments concerning Late Antique style, because some later authors (he names Prudentius and Claudian) "are fine writers, have something to say, and know how to say it."<sup>2</sup> In this view, all Latin poets of quality aspire to the same Classical ideals. We would, he implies, be better off to avoid talk of aesthetic change since some authors could still meet the standards of Vergil, or at the least of Statius. But if we remove historical change from our understanding of later Latin poetry, we remove the context that gave it life. If we describe Ancient Latin poetry as an ideal space, essentially continuous from Livius Andronicus to Claudian, we ignore the individual contours within that tradition. To be sure no one has actually argued for continuity in so extreme a form as this.<sup>3</sup> However, I do think it important to balance explanations of similarity with arguments for difference. While the historical arguments in this dissertation point to a series of differences between Classical and Late Antique poetics, I would never want to suggest that there are not also important similarities. And, if we knew more about the literature of the second and third centuries CE, we would probably be able to say more about the historical development of Latin poetry.<sup>4</sup> Nor do I want to suggest that Late Antique poetry is itself uniform. Ausonius and Claudian are quite different authors, and much work remains to be done on the relation between individual poets within Late Antiquity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rose (1936), Hadas (1952), and Williams (1978) are typical examples.

<sup>2</sup> Hall (1991), 361. In contrast and on account of their stylistic preferences, Ausonius and Sidonius are "at best second-rate."

<sup>3</sup> But Ernst Robert Curtius' magnum opus *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* is an equally grand vision of continuity from Classical to Modern.

<sup>4</sup> Cameron (1980) showed how little we know about the Latin poetry of the second century CE.

In describing an aesthetic peculiar to Late Antiquity, I employ a form of argument indebted to Hans Robert Jauss's reader-response criticism. In "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," Jauss proposed that criticism ought to reconstruct a work's "horizon of expectations" in order to "pose questions that the text gave an answer to, and thereby to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work."<sup>5</sup> Michael Roberts expressed his debt to Jauss in the introduction to his treatment of Late Antique aesthetics,<sup>6</sup> and my own debt to both scholars should be obvious. Objections, however, have been raised about Jauss's literary historical method. Charles Martindale suggested that Jauss's ideal reader should be rejected as a figment of the critic's imagination, and Stephen Hinds observed that every literary history is tendentious and partisan.<sup>7</sup> I do not dispute that a dogmatic account of the ideal reader would crowd out the pluralism inherent in any work's reception, nor do I contest that my own account of Late Antique poetry must be tendentious even in ways that I do not realize. Nevertheless, if we describe a particular Latin poem we necessarily set it, either explicitly or implicitly, in some narrative context. Therefore, while recognizing that Late Antiquity is a modern concept which necessarily obscures the particularity of each poem, I still use the term as a heuristic device to describe a set of common expectations shared by some contemporary poets.<sup>8</sup>

I have for the most part avoided consideration of the tendentious ways in which Late Antique poets constructed their own identities. Instead, I describe a set of literary techniques, poetic forms that construct the reader's involvement in the text. Every single technique that I discuss could be paralleled with earlier examples from Classical Latin and even Greek literature. Even the figural poetry of Optatianus Porphyrius could be seen as an extension of the acrostics

---

<sup>5</sup> (1982), 28.

<sup>6</sup> (1989), 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Martindale (1996) and Hinds (1998), esp. 52-98. For a recent overview of reception theory, see Hexter (2006).

<sup>8</sup> Elsner (2004) comes to a similar conclusion as regards the field of art history. Formisano (2007 and 2012) describes the textual system of Late Antiquity but not in historical terms.

found in Aratus or Vergil. Nevertheless, the combination and development in the fourth century of a constellation of tropes that draw out the reader's involvement marks a shift away from earlier, Classical poetry. The shift towards this Late Antique aesthetic was a shift away from the direct precedents and exemplars employed by the Late Antique poets studied here. For this reason, I do not apply to this period terms such as "neo-alexandrianism," because they give the impression that the poetry of the fourth century is essentially continuous with earlier periods.<sup>9</sup> There are some very important similarities between Ausonius, Catullus, and Callimachus; but the Late Antique poets seem not to have been particularly influenced by the Hellenistic poetics of Callimachus or Parthenius, perhaps because Catullus and Vergil had already appropriated their work for a Roman audience. I use the term Classical—which can also be misleading—quite often in reference to Vergil and Horace, but also to describe any of the poetry identified as ancient and authoritative in the fourth century. I have always tried not to flatten the contours of Classical poetry, but a different study could have followed the course of Latin poetry more fully along its many twists and turns. It has been my aim to mark only one turn and that within the fourth century.

That turn may be glimpsed briefly in two introductory passages, one written by Nemesianus in the third century and the other by Claudian in the fourth. Each poet reflects upon the past, but they negotiate a markedly different set of expectations. The *Cynegetica* of Marcus Aurelius Olympius Nemesianus, composed in either 283 or 284, begins with an extended *recusatio*, in which the poet promises to avoid the common path, since the muse will lead him through places untouched by any wheel (*qua sola numquam / trita rotis*, *Cyneg.* 8-9).

---

<sup>9</sup> On the so-called neo-alexandrianism of Late Antique poetry, see Charlet (1988).

Nemesianus repeats a well worn trope of both Greek and Latin poetry,<sup>10</sup> and he follows that topos of originality with a list of tired mythological themes, the poems that he will not sing. Niobe is an old story (*nam quis non Nioben numeroso funere maestam / iam cecinit*, 15-16), as are the seventeen others that he mentions (17-45). Nemesianus concludes by noting that every story has been told already:

*haec iam magnorum praecepit copia vatum,  
omnis et antiqui vulgata est fabula saeculi* (Cyneg. 46-7).

A multitude of great poets has already handled them,  
and every myth of ancient times has been made common.

Like the trope of originality, the listing of vulgar myths is also a commonplace. Vergil had given a shorter but similar list at the start of the third book of his *Georgics*, which he begins by observing that everything was already common (*omnia iam vulgata*) before going on, like Nemesianus, to cite examples (*G.* 3.4-8). The pseudo-Vergilian *Aetna* also begins with a *recusatio* of the tired stories that the poet will not recount (9-23). Even the cento *Hippodamia* enumerates the myths that the poet will not sing. Although he ostentatiously refuses to write a traditional poem about mythology, Nemesianus begins exactly where his predecessors had left off. He marks not the end but the survival of an earlier poetics.<sup>11</sup>

A genuinely new tradition would confront a different anxiety, as Claudian does in his preface to the first book of the *De raptu Proserpinae*. Claudian transforms the topos of originality in order to mark his departure from Classical epic. His preface describes the first sailor and explains how he came gradually to venture out into the open sea from shallower

---

<sup>10</sup> Compare Verg. *G.* 3.291-3, Lucret. 1.926-7, and Call. *Aetia* 1, fr. 1.25-28 (Pfeiffer). Macrobius quotes the Vergilian and Lucretian passages at *Sat.* 6.2.2-3.

<sup>11</sup> Thus, I disagree with Martin Hose, who reads this passage as marking a crisis for traditional poetry (2007, 538-541). Hose does not take seriously enough the conventional nature of Nemesianus' *recusatio*.

waters.<sup>12</sup> It is universally interpreted as an allegory of Claudian's poetic career: He is said to progress gradually from shorter, lighter poetry to the grander themes of epic, despite the fact that there is no agreement as to how the narrative matches Claudian's writings or when in his career it could have been written.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the biographical point, the preface imagines Claudian as a transgressive and original poet, and thereby it posits a gap between Claudian and the past. The preface both begins and ends with the poet's venture out onto the open sea:

*Inventa secuit primus qui<sup>14</sup> nave profundum  
 et rudibus remis sollicitavit aquas,  
 qui, dubiis ausus committere flatibus alnum,  
 quas natura negat, praebeuit arte vias,  
 tranquillis primum trepidus se credidit undis  
 litora securo tramite summa legens;  
 mox longos temptare sinus et linquere terras  
 et leni coepit pandere vela Noto;  
 ast ubi paulatim praeceps audacia crevit  
 cordaque languentem dedidicere metum,  
 iam vagus inrumpit pelagus<sup>15</sup> caelumque secutus  
 Aegaeas hiemes Ioniumque domat.*

He who first cut the deep on his new-found ship  
 and who troubled the waters with his rough oars,  
 who dared to entrust his bark to the uncertain waves,  
 and offered a path by art, where nature had denied a way,  
 he first entrusted himself to still waters,  
 browsing the tips of the shore in a safe path;  
 soon he began to test the long bays and to leave land  
 and to spread his sails before the smooth South Wind;  
 but when gradually his headlong audacity grew  
 and his heart forgot its pale fear,  
 then wandering he bursts on the sea; and he follows heaven  
 and he tames the Aegean storms and the Ionian sea.

---

<sup>12</sup> Jason is surely the sailor in mind (as stated by Charlet 1991, 4-5 and 83, n. 1), although it is true that Jason was not the only one credited with that feat (on other possibilities, see Charlet 1991, 83, n. 1; on the Hellenistic establishment of Jason as the first sailor, see Jackson 1997).

<sup>13</sup> For the possibilities, see Felgentreu (1999), 162; Gruzelier (1993), 81; and Charlet (1991), xx-xxii.

<sup>14</sup> J. B. Hall, with some of the manuscripts, prints these words in the order *primus secuit qui*. For the reading *secuit primus qui*, Charlet marshals some manuscript support (unconvincing either way) and considerations of meter and rhythm (which are convincing), at (1991), 83, n. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Charlet defends *pelagus* in place of Hall's *pelago* (1991, 84, n. 6).

The image of poetic production as a voyage is common throughout Latin poetry,<sup>16</sup> but this allegory can also be read of the tradition. While Claudian initially only tread, or read (*legens*), over the surface of the tradition, as his audacity increased he forgot (literally “unlearned”) the languishing fear that kept him close to shore. While the *primus qui* motif and the theme of the poet’s originality were well worn paths of Roman poetry,<sup>17</sup> Claudian imagines his invention as a transgressive act. Jason was a problematic exemplar, for the invention of the arts was said to be spurred by greed and often marked as a transgression of the natural, golden-age world.<sup>18</sup> In his *propemptikon* for Vergil (*Carm.* 1.3), Horace had described the audacity of Jason in strongly moralistic terms. Therefore, if Claudian’s poem is like the first voyage of the Argo, it is a reckless task that rewrites what had been a settled landscape (*sollicitavit aquas*). For, by comparing himself to Jason, Claudian describes himself as a poet who is transgressive of the natural order of poetry. Rather than expressing an anxiety that he has nothing original to say, Claudian conquers his (audience’s) fear of actual originality. The figure of the first mariner makes a problem of originality rather than conventionality. This figure works for Claudian and his audience because it negotiates the poet’s response to working within and against the Classical tradition.

By examining the ways in which reading and authority were constructed in Late Antiquity, it becomes clear that Late Antique aesthetics are intimately conjoined to problems of interpretation, meaning, and communication. I will explore, therefore, the ways in which reading was constructed in Late Antiquity, on the level of text, paratext, intertext, and commentary. In

---

<sup>16</sup> See Curtius (1953), 128-30.

<sup>17</sup> See Hinds (1998), 52-6.

<sup>18</sup> See Charlet (1991), 4-5.

this way, I hope to contribute to the study of reading in the ancient world,<sup>19</sup> particularly to the study of the Reader as figured in and through poetry.<sup>20</sup> My Reader is not an individual or historical person, but an abstraction drawn from the particular textuality of Late Antiquity. I have been influenced by the work of Reinhart Herzog on exegetical Christian poetry (1966), by the articles of Patricia Cox Miller (1998) and Georgia Nugent (1990) on literary theory and Late Antiquity, by Joseph Pucci's work on the reader (1998), and by Marc Mastrangelo's observations on Prudentius and his reader (2008).<sup>21</sup> In approaching the figure of the reader, I have left aside the social and material realities of reading.<sup>22</sup> Further study could address how the relative absence of patronage affected the poetry of Late Antiquity or what effect the spatial separation of author and reader had upon the poetry of this period, since an audience was no longer centered in Rome. But I have constrained myself to investigating the reader as the figure who activates or realizes the meaning of poetic discourse. My thesis is that this imagined Late Antique reader played an active and influential role in the poem in ways that he had not in earlier periods. Again, I do not wish to imply that the reader played no role in earlier periods or that reading was unproblematic until the fourth century. David Konstan (2004 and 2006) has shown that the reader played an important role in the literary theory of Plutarch and in the poetry of Vergil. Rene Nünlist has shown that ancient literary theory, as embedded in Greek scholia,

---

<sup>19</sup> Johnson and Parker (2009) provides a series of exemplary papers on different aspects of reading in the ancient world, including an extensive bibliography organized thematically. For a good overview of reading from antiquity to the present day, see Cavallo and Chartier (1999).

<sup>20</sup> Citroni (1995) is an exemplary study of the reader of Ancient Roman poetry, from the Republic to the early Empire.

<sup>21</sup> Dykes (2011) also considers Prudentius and the reader of the *Hamartigenia*, but he does not pay particular attention to the Late Antique aspects of Prudentius' poetry or audience. On the reader in the *Hamartigenia*, Conybeare (2007) and Malamud (2011) are more reliable.

<sup>22</sup> Dawson (1992) and Johnson (2010) have provided excellent studies of the social implications of reading in, respectively, Alexandria in the first to third centuries and Rome in the first and second centuries. Gamble (1995) and Haines-Eitzen (2000) survey the role of literacy within early Christianity.

acknowledges the reader's role in covering the gaps in a text.<sup>23</sup> And Sean Gurd (2007) has shown that Cicero incorporated readers suggestions into revised versions of his texts in such a way as to instantiate an open textual community. However, in the fourth-century Latin West the reader gained a new prominence that manifested itself throughout the literary system. Poets structured their work around its future activation, and they invited their reader to participate in making sense of the text. Although the importance of reading in Late Antiquity is relative, it marks the shift towards the aesthetics of Late Antiquity.

I have written for several distinct audiences, beyond those already interested in Late Antique poetry. In the first place, historians who work on Late Antique religion or society have often taken literary approaches to their texts but paid comparatively little attention to the poetry of the period. I hope that my work on the poetry of the fourth century will lead to a better understanding of Late Antique textuality in general. I have also had in mind those who work on Latin literature and for whom Macrobius, Servius, and Ausonius are usually sources rather than objects of interest in their own right. A better understanding of Late Antiquity will hopefully provide a new perspective on Classical poetry and a more careful use of these sources. Lastly, I hope that those interested more broadly in literature or reading will benefit from this focused treatment of reading on the cusp of the Middle Ages. I approach theoretical questions of interpretation and authority in a particular context, but I have tried to signal ways in which these problems may have broader relevance. I have attempted to make myself clear to each of these audiences, though I have undoubtedly said too little in some places for one group and too much in another.

The following four chapters each address a different aspect of the textuality of Late Antiquity. Chapter one addresses the broader context of reading by looking at the practice of

---

<sup>23</sup> (2009), 164-72 and 225-37.

interpretation. I look at how questions of reception and authority were handled by readers of either the Christian Scriptures or of Vergil. Jerome, Augustine, and Macrobius each celebrate their role as readers of these canonical texts. And they shared an approach to their texts that went beyond their religious and political differences. They celebrated the depths of their texts and the wisdom of their authors, in such a way as to legitimize their own work of interpretation. This chapter provides a frame through which to understand the poets who played with the canonical texts, with their own status as authors, and with their contemporary readers. In addressing the role of the reader and the construction of Classicism, I am indebted to Pucci (1998) and Catherine Chin (2008). By looking at how these writers viewed reading and textual authority, we see that they did not necessarily expect a contemporary author to be original. Instead, creative adherence to a continually renewed tradition was the hallmark of these Late Antique authors.

Chapter two uses Gerard Genette's idea of the paratext to interrogate the development of prefaces to Latin poetry. The prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius are shown to be distinct from earlier poetic forms, and the prose prefaces of Ausonius are addressed in terms of the poet's construction and imagined reception of his work. Because a paratext stands apart from the work, it allows the author a space in which to read his own poem. In this way, prefaces allow poets to enact for their readers one possible approach to the text. Claudian, Prudentius, and Ausonius use their prefaces to invite, to interrogate, or sometimes even to ward off the reader's influence over their text. In this chapter, I consider only prefaces and not titles or other such devices, because the preface allows the poet the most scope to create a paratextual frame around the text.

In chapter three, I apply Umberto Eco's idea of an open text to a series of Late Antique poems. The figural poetry of Optatianus Porphyrius, the allegorical *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, and the sixteen surviving Vergilian centos create space for the reader to resolve the discrepancies

and gaps within the text. I chose these poems because they are clear and powerful demonstrations of the openness of Late Antique poetry. By focusing upon the reader, I show the level at which these works were meant to cohere.

The final chapter is devoted to intertextuality. I focus upon a characteristically Late Antique form of allusion. Allusions of this type approximate a quotation, as they set a fragment—typically of Classical poetry—off against its new context within the Late Antique poem. These allusions also resemble a cento, for they aim to reproduce the exemplar in a new sense. Even when they were not writing centos, Late Antique poets employed such allusions to reveal themselves as readers of the Classics and to further dramatize the openness of their texts. This kind of allusive fragmentation resembles the use of spoliation and segmentation in artwork from the fourth century, but I limit myself here to the poetic creation of textual continuity.<sup>24</sup> Such allusions are often participatory rather than emulative, but I should stress that I am not trying to make a claim about every allusion in every Late Antique poem. Rather, I focus upon this particular form, because it reveals the reader at work activating the potential of the text. In order to clarify the scope of my argument, I include in this chapter a discussion of modern theoretical approaches to allusion in both Classical and Late Antique poetry.

Some readers will no doubt recoil, with Jerome, against the strong versions of reading presented here. Others will embrace them as the only way to read. I hope that most will fall in between these two extremes. And I hope even more that a fuller understanding of the context of later Latin poetry will aid its enjoyment. It is a nice irony that such tendentious readers as the Late Antique poets have so often been read through the lens of Classical poetry. The view is different from the fourth century, and even our understanding of Augustan poetry is deeper for having explored its first, post-Classical reception. For what makes a Classic is a combination of

---

<sup>24</sup> On the fragmentations of Late Antique art, see Elsner (2000) and Hansen (2003).

its own presentation and its subsequent reception. In learning to read Ausonius, we also become better readers of Vergil. If I wanted a rationale, I would start there. But I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with these Late Antique poets, and their poems are well worth the trouble they take to understand.

## Chapter One

### Text, Interpretation, and Authority

In Late Antiquity, the readers of Christian Scripture and of Vergil's poetry played a visible role in making meaning of the texts at their disposal. These readers of Vergil, in particular, have often been charged with mindlessly yielding to a dogmatic belief in the poet's infallibility. Alan Cameron, for example, recently described the explanatory notes of Servius and Macrobius as misguided attempts at defensive criticism, at saving Vergil from the charge of ignorance.<sup>1</sup> But in describing their canonical texts as deeply meaningful, Augustine, Macrobius, and others made room for their own creative and positive interpretations. At the same time, Late Antique writers lent importance both to the work of exegesis and to the status of secondary authors. In this chapter, the construction of the culture's canonical works and the rise of literature whose fundamental concern was the interpretation of that canon will serve as indices to mark the privileged status of reading in Late Antiquity. Once this privileging of reading has been established, the cultural significance of Macrobius' or Augustine's exegesis will become evident. Rather than focus on the social or material conditions of reading in Late Antiquity, I approach reading as a literary activity. Thus, I draw upon the work of Joseph Pucci, who has shown that both Macrobius and Augustine legitimate the reader's involvement in the text.<sup>2</sup> I build upon his results, in order to show that this legitimation is one of the ways in which Late Antique authors came to reflect upon the importance of their reading. Because the textual reverence of Late

---

<sup>1</sup> Cameron (2011), 590-4.

<sup>2</sup> (1998), 51-82.

Antiquity conceals a powerful turn towards appropriation, the reader's role became more significant as the Classical canon became more distant from the contemporary world.<sup>3</sup> Further, by construing writing itself as an act of reading, Macrobius and Jerome provided a theoretical basis for the reader's involvement in the text. I will begin with the exegetical programmes of Jerome and Augustine before turning to the more literary reception of Vergil, by Macrobius in particular and especially in his *Saturnalia*.

## I. Jerome and Augustine on Scriptural Interpretation

Augustine wrote carefully about how and why he read the Scriptures. Though he sometimes embraces the reader's free participation in making sense of the text, he also set strict limits upon the proper interpretation of Scripture. While Augustine admitted the reader's ability to understand something other than the author's intended meaning, the somewhat elder Jerome emphatically sought to restore the text's original sense. Both authors valued the work of reading. Jerome focused upon the depths of Scripture and upon the writing of commentaries; his example will serve as a foil to Augustine's more theoretical focus.

### a. Jerome and the Writing of Scriptural Commentary

Jerome was famous already within his lifetime as a scholar, commentator, and translator of the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> A concern for historical context and for the literal interpretation of Scripture

---

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent study of textual reverence and of the grammatical fragmentation of Classical texts, see Chin (2008).

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive study of Jerome and the Scriptures, see Jay (1985); Brown (1992) and Williams (2006) consider his scholarship; Cain (2009) considers Jerome's self-fashioning in his letters, including as an exegete.

was fundamental to his exegesis.<sup>5</sup> Though he drew upon earlier Greek and Hebrew scholars (and especially Origen), Jerome was himself an original thinker.<sup>6</sup> And despite his concern for historical philology and a concomitant disdain for what he saw as overly rhetorical interpretations, Jerome described the Scriptures as a mysterious text whose sense remained to be uncovered by the diligent reader.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to Paulinus (soon to be) of Nola written in 394 and destined to be used as a preface to the Scriptures during the Middle Ages, Jerome explains the contents and proper interpretation of the Scriptures. He quotes Psalm 118:8 on the inner wisdom of the sacred text<sup>8</sup>:

*revela, inquit David, oculos meos, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua; lex enim spiritualis est et revelatione indiget, ut intellegatur ac revelata facie dei gloriam contemplemur (Ep. 53.4).*

“Unveil my eyes,” says David, “and I will consider the wonders of your law.” For the law is spiritual and requires unveiling in order to be understood and for us to contemplate the glory of God in his unveiled appearance.

Jerome describes Christ as the divine Wisdom and as the one who holds the key to Scripture’s unveiling (*Ep. 53.4-5*). His description of Scripture is obviously dependent upon Psalm 118; it also alludes to Paul’s description of the veil hanging over the Hebrew Scripture, a description often quoted by Christian exegetes.<sup>9</sup> But Jerome need not have emphasized this particular point in a relatively short letter on Scripture. And when Jerome goes on to give Paulinus a brief overview of each book of the Old and New Testaments, he pays special attention to the

---

<sup>5</sup> Williams (2006), 116-23; and Jay (2004), 1104-5.

<sup>6</sup> Williams (2006), 73-95; and Vessey (1993).

<sup>7</sup> See Jay (2004), 1105-7. For a brief, recent study of Jerome’s allegorical interpretation and his commentary on Galatians, see Raspanti (2009). On Jerome’s ideal of a *prudens lector*, see Williams (2006), 235-40.

<sup>8</sup> Compare *Ep. 58.9* (also to Paulinus), where Jerome quotes the same verse, compares the inner truth of Scripture to the inner core of a nut, and specifies that the writings of the evangelists and apostles are also veiled.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. 3:14: *usque in hodiernum enim diem idipsum velamen in lectione Veteris Testamenti manet non revelatum, quoniam in Christo evacuatur.*

mysterious sense of each text. In particular, he accentuates the hidden wisdom of the Apocalypse of John:

*Apocalypsis Iohannis tot habet sacramenta, quot verba. parum dixi et pro merito voluminis laus omnis inferior est; in verbis singulis multiplices latent intellegentiae (Ep. 53.9).*

The *Apocalypse* of John has as many mysteries as words. I have said too little, and every praise is inferior to the book's merit. Multiple meanings are latent in individual words.

The concealed meanings of Scripture appeal to Jerome, and for him even single words do not have a simple meaning.<sup>10</sup> Rather, he tells Paulinus that the simplistic surface of the text conceals a further meaning. The surface is simple so as to appeal to the unlearned; but the learned will understand Scripture in a deeper way.<sup>11</sup> For Jerome, its hidden meanings obligate the reader to interpret the text in more than its literal sense. And the authoritative text accepts and even requires its reader's active participation. In this way, even a literal-minded exegete like Jerome emphasized the mystical aspects of the Scriptures; for it is those mysterious passages that require the reader's participation and the commentator's elucidation.

Having described Scripture as a mysterious text, Jerome made a literary career out of scriptural exegesis. He was a student of Aelius Donatus, and in many ways his numerous Scriptural commentaries follow the pattern set by commentators on Classical texts.<sup>12</sup> However, unlike earlier commentators, Jerome viewed exegetical writing as the highest form of literature. In so doing, he canonized an ideal of literature as exegesis, and so lent weight to the work of reading.

---

<sup>10</sup> On Jerome's acceptance of multiple interpretations (not to be equated with a systematic, four-fold interpretation of Scripture) and on Origen as his predecessor, see Jay (1985), 330-3.

<sup>11</sup> . . . ut . . . in una eademque sententia aliter doctus, aliter audiret indoctus (Ep. 53.10). Elsewhere, Jerome says that both senses are edifying for both learned and unlearned alike (Jay 2004, 1107-8).

<sup>12</sup> On the similarity between Jerome's commentaries and their Classical predecessors, see Williams (2006), 102-9. In a polemical context (*adv. Ruf.* 1.16), Jerome himself claims the traditional commentators (including Donatus) as his model. For an excellent overview of Scriptural commentary in Late Antiquity, see Pollman (2009).

In 392 or 393, Jerome wrote a work on Christian authors, *De viris illustribus*, modeled upon Suetonius' work of the same name.<sup>13</sup> In his prologue, Jerome explained that his goal was to review "all those who have published anything memorable on the holy Scriptures" (*omnes qui de Scripturis sanctis memoriae aliquid prodiderunt*). He begins with Peter and ends with himself. His list includes poets, bishops, and exegetes. Thus, in Jerome's arrangement, "writing on scripture takes many forms and arises in many different contexts," and yet "all Christian writing worthy of the name is writing on scripture."<sup>14</sup> The common thread behind Jerome's ideal of Christian authorship is the Scriptural and exegetical thrust of his own scholarship.

In the follow-up to the letter to Paulinus discussed above, Jerome invited his addressee to begin writing works of Scriptural exegesis. Upon receiving a panegyric (no longer extant) that Paulinus had written in honor of Theodosius, Jerome praises Paulinus' eloquence; yet he longs for the chance to train Paulinus in the Scriptures, rather than have him continue in the poetic and rhetorical training which he had already received.<sup>15</sup> If Paulinus should learn to understand the Scriptures, Jerome says, there would be nothing "more beautiful, more learned, or more Latinate than his works."<sup>16</sup> Because Jerome goes on to compare Paulinus to a series of prose authors (Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Lactantius, and Hilary), he seems to have intended Paulinus to write exegetical works in prose, rather than Christian poetry.<sup>17</sup> Further, Mark Vessey has shown that Jerome appropriated for his own scholarship the Horatian ideal of laborious art.<sup>18</sup> But, in place of Horace's *ars poetica*, Jerome substituted an *ars scripturarum*, the art of interpretation (*Ep.* 53.6). As Vessey says, "This substitution was not to be the labour of a day or of a single pair

---

<sup>13</sup> Jerome mentions Suetonius' work in the prologue to *De viris illustribus*. In *Ep.* 112.3, he says the title of his work should be either *De viris illustribus* (as it is commonly known today) or *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*.

<sup>14</sup> I quote Vessey (2002), 56, on whom I depend in this paragraph.

<sup>15</sup> *Ep.* 58.8.

<sup>16</sup> *si haberes hoc fundamentum, immo quasi extrema manus in tuo opere duceretur, nihil pulchrius, nihil doctius, nihilque Latinius tuis haberemus voluminibus* (*Ep.* 58.9).

<sup>17</sup> This is the view put forward by Vessey (2007).

<sup>18</sup> Vessey (2007).

of letters. It was Jerome's life work, the combined effect of all his literary exertions."<sup>19</sup> By constructing an ideal of literature as Scriptural writing, Jerome made the work of reading the central task of any (Christian) author.

Jerome himself wrote voluminous commentaries on the Scriptures,<sup>20</sup> and he insists upon his role as commentator. In the preface to the third book of his commentary on *Galatians*, Jerome apologizes for the rhetorical simplicity of his writing, in order to insist upon the generic difference of commentaries:

*. . . sit responsum me non panegyricum, aut controversiam scribere, sed commentarium, id est, hoc habere propositum, non ut mea verba laudentur sed ut quae ab alio bene dicta sunt ita intelligantur ut dicta sunt. officii mei est obscura disserere, manifesta perstringere, in dubiis immorari. unde et a plerisque commentariorum opus explanatio nominatur (in Gal. 3, prol.).*

. . . I would reply that I am not writing a panegyric or *controversia* but a commentary; that is, my aim is not for my words to be praised but for the admirable words of another to be understood in the same way as they were spoken. It is my job to discuss what is obscure, to pass over what is obvious, to linger in doubtful places. For this reason, most people call the product of commentaries an explanation.

Jerome asserts elsewhere the generic difference of commentaries; and he also states that his aim is to set out the meaning of his author, rather than to speak on his own authority.<sup>21</sup> There is no reason to doubt that other commentators had the same aim or to think that Jerome was the first person to realize that a commentary was different than a panegyric. But, for Jerome, the unique qualities of a commentary reveal their worth within the world of Scriptural literature, as outlined by his *De viris illustribus*. In short, Jerome emphatically describes his work as a commentary,

---

<sup>19</sup> (2007), 40.

<sup>20</sup> For a good overview of Jerome's commentaries, see Jay (1985), 69-80.

<sup>21</sup> *in Soph.* 3.14-18 (CC 76a, 708.549-54); *in Ion.*, prol. (CC 76, 377.20-378.24); *in Zach.* 2.7.8-14 (CC 76a, 806.218-22); *in Ezech.* 12.40.44-49 (CC 75.587.1151-3); *in Eph.* 2, prol. (PL 26, 701a); *in Is.* 5, prol. (PL 24, 155A); *in Is.* 8, prol. (PL 24, 281B-C); *Ep.* 49.17.7; and *adv. Ruf.* 1.16. These passages were collected by Lardet (1993), 78; and Jay (1985), 70-1.

and he views his adherence to the text of the Scriptures as the mark of his own value as an author.

Jerome, therefore, stands as the ideal author-as-reader. He wrote monumental commentaries on the individual books of the Old and New Testaments, and he defined (Christian) literature as a form of writing essentially indebted to the Scriptures. In Jerome, the autonomy of the author yields to an avowed dependence upon the Scriptures as a source. Far from presenting himself as an autonomous author free to write on whatever topic he should choose, Jerome constrained himself to explaining Scripture and its meanings. This move, however, was hardly a limit on his literary output; as a reader, he retained the role of interpreter and gatekeeper of the canonical text. Thus, in writing commentaries, Jerome made the work of interpretation the source of his own literary authority.

#### b. Augustine and the Reader's Involvement

Whereas Jerome portrayed his own scholarship as the key to Scriptural exegesis, Augustine viewed interpretation as existing within communities.<sup>22</sup> He thought that readers should attempt to recover the intention of the individual authors of the sacred text, but he also celebrated the Scripture's ability to contain multiple meanings.<sup>23</sup> This apparent contradiction derives from a radical skepticism towards the possibility of human communication, as well as a delight in the act of reading.<sup>24</sup> The primary texts in which Augustine discussed the ambiguities of reading are chapters 10-13 of the *De utilitate credendi*, book 12 of the *Confessions*, and books 2-

---

<sup>22</sup> On Augustine's semiotics, see Markus (1996).

<sup>23</sup> On Augustine's legitimation of the reader's activity in the text, see Pucci (1998), 69-82. On Augustine's multiple interpretations of scripture, see Moreau, Bochet, and Madec (1997), 558-62, with further references.

<sup>24</sup> On Augustine's philosophy of language, see Ando (1994). On God's role in effecting the reader's understanding, see Bochet (2004), 25-89.

3 of the *De doctrina Christiana*. Brian Stock (1996) and Isabelle Bochet (2004) have treated extensively the role that the Scriptures and the processes of reading played in Augustine's thought.<sup>25</sup> Because it reveals how Augustine understood his own reading, I discuss here only the ways in which Augustine's theory of reading enabled him to find various meanings in his authors' words. And though Augustine's comments on reading are not entirely restricted to Christian texts, the creativity of his reading is only fully theorized in his reading of the Scripture.<sup>26</sup>

In the *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine says that readers of Scripture seek the intention of its various authors, as a means to discovering God's intention. He describes this as the normal course of events.

*quam [scripturam] legentes nihil aliud appetunt quam cogitationes voluntatemque illorum a quibus conscripta est invenire et per illas voluntatem Dei, secundum quam tales homines locutos credimus (doc. Chr. 2.6).*

In reading the Scripture, they seek nothing other than to discover the thoughts and intention of those by whom it was written, and through them the intention of God, according to which we believe those men to have spoken.

Elsewhere in the *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine prescribes a reading directed towards the author's intention.<sup>27</sup> He thinks that it is the safest approach and the one most conducive to obtaining an accurate knowledge of the text.

Despite his insistence on seeking an author's intentions, Augustine allows that reading need not depend upon correctly recovering the author's thoughts. In chapters 10-11 of the *De utilitate credendi*, Augustine describes readings that are ethically justified, even though they do

---

<sup>25</sup> On Augustine and the Scriptures, see also the essays in Bright (1999) and Nauroy and Vannier (2008). Bochet (2004a) is a review of scholarship on Augustine's hermeneutics from the past fifty years.

<sup>26</sup> In the *De utilitate credendi*, Augustine suggests that any text can be read usefully. On Augustine's reading of the philosophers, see Bochet (2004), 331-500, along with Brittain (forthcoming), which rightly points out that Augustine never advocated an intentional misreading.

<sup>27</sup> *doc. Chr.* 1.40-41. Compare also *util. cred.* 11.

not accurately reproduce the intentions of the author. Augustine describes these readings as mistakes (*errores*), from the point of view of the reader; from the perspective of the text, he describes them as useful applications. He explains as follows those interpretations that are wrong but useful:

*tertium [genus errorum] est, cum ex alieno scripto intellegitur aliquid veri, cum hoc ille qui scripsit non intellexerit. in quo genere non parum est utilitatis, immo si diligentius consideres, totus legendi fructus est integer*

The third type of error is when something true is understood from someone else's writing, even when the author did not understand it. In this kind there is no little utility. Indeed, if you consider it carefully, the whole profit of reading remains intact (*util. cred. 10*).

Augustine, therefore, leaves open the possibility of useful readings unrelated to an author's intentions. In this model, reading is an ethical activity whose final aim extends beyond the recovery of those intentions.<sup>28</sup> Though Augustine would try to understand his text in the same way as its author, he goes on to say that it can be quite difficult to understand an obscure text and that in such cases a reader is constrained to believe the author to have been a good person and therefore to interpret the text as intending an ethical meaning.<sup>29</sup> That is, when communication breaks down, the reader ought to understand an acceptable meaning.

In book 12 of the *Confessions*, Augustine goes beyond his suggestion in the *De utilitate credendi*; for he strongly implies that a proper reading of the Scriptures need not recover the individual author's intentions. In an extended reading of the first verse of *Genesis*, Augustine lays out a series of possible interpretations. In a response to critics who would accuse him of reading philosophical meaning into the creation account, Augustine responds that sometimes, in

---

<sup>28</sup> For a similar statement on interpretations of the Scriptures, see *De doctrina Christiana* 1.40. There, Augustine says that readers who understand the Scriptures as teaching love of God and neighbor in some other way than the author intended are "neither seriously mistaken nor in any way deceiving themselves" (*non perniciose fallitur nec omnino mentitur*).

<sup>29</sup> *util. cred. 11*.

reading the Scriptures, the honest interpreter will arrive at a meaning authorized directly by God, even if his meaning is not the one imputed to the text by its human author.

*quid, inquam, mihi obest, si aliud ego sensero, quam sensit alius eum sensisse, qui scripsit? omnes quidem, qui legimus, nitimur hoc indagare atque comprehendere, quod voluit ille quem legimus, et cum eum veridicum credimus, nihil, quod falsum esse vel novimus vel putamus, audemus eum existimare dixisse. dum ergo quisque conatur id sentire in scripturis sanctis, quod in eis sensit ille qui scripsit, quid mali est, si hoc sentiat, quod tu, lux omnium veridicarum mentium, ostendis verum esse, etiamsi non hoc sensit ille, quem legit, cum et ille verum nec tamen hoc senserit? (conf. 12.27).*

What, I say, is the problem if I understand it differently than someone else understands him who wrote it to have understood it? All of us who read aim to discover and comprehend that which he whom we are reading wanted to be understood. And when we believe that he was truthful, we dare not think him to have said anything which we know or suspect to be false. Provided, therefore, that each of us attempt to understand, in the holy scriptures, that which he who wrote them understood in them, what's the harm if he should understand that which you, o light of all true minds, show him to be true? What's the problem, even if that person whom he is reading did not understand this, since he understood some other truth?

Although Augustine thinks that authorial intent should be sought, in the end he suggests that the exegete should also bring to the text his own knowledge and direct enlightenment. Thus Augustine admits a plurality of subjective readings, provided they respect authorial intentions and align with the truth.

At *Confessiones* 12.42, Augustine again suggests that there is no reason not to interpret the Scripture in multiple true ways. If he were Moses, he says, he would want his readers to interpret every possible, true meaning.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, he thinks it right to believe that Moses intended all of these possible meanings.

*ego certe, quod intrepidus de meo corde pronuntio, si ad culmen auctoritatis aliquid scriberem, sic mallet scribere, ut, quod veri quisque de his rebus capere posset, mea verba resonarent, quam ut unam veram sententiam ad hoc apertius ponerem, ut excluderem ceteras, quarum falsitas me non posset offendere. nolo itaque, deus meus, tam praeceps esse, ut hoc illum virum de te meruisse non*

---

<sup>30</sup> Augustine also imagines himself as Moses at *conf.* 12.36.

*credam. sensit ille omnino in his verbis atque cogitavit, cum ea scriberet, quidquid hic veri potuimus invenire et quidquid nos non potuimus aut nondum potuimus et tamen in eis inveniri potest (conf. 12.42).*

For my part—I say this boldly from my heart—if I were writing anything authoritative, I would prefer to write in such a way that my words would echo with that bit of truth which each person would be able to receive from these things, rather than putting one true thought openly so as to exclude the others whose error would not offend me. I would not, therefore, want to be so rash, my God, as to believe that that man [Moses] did not deserve this from you. He certainly intended in these words and considered, as he was writing them, whatever truth we could find in them and whatever *we* cannot or cannot yet find but is nevertheless discoverable in them.

In this case, Augustine says he is constrained to think that Moses really did intend all of the true meanings in his text. If he were an inspired author, Augustine would want to write a text that was open to multiple interpretations. Therefore, for Augustine, reading a divine text means that interpretation is limited only by an exterior truth. And Augustine legitimates his own reading of Genesis by crediting Moses with every possible true meaning.

Although Augustine warns against the danger of unguided interpretation,<sup>31</sup> he celebrates the text's ability to yield multiple interpretations. In the *Confessions*, he interprets the command in Genesis to “increase and multiply” as a command to understand and expound the Scripture fruitfully, i.e. in multiple ways.<sup>32</sup> In the *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine celebrates this multiplicity as a divine gift; for, while he specifies that the interpretation of ambiguous passages should be guided by the non-ambiguous, he is also glad that they may be resolved in more than one way:

*nam quid in divinis eloquiis largius et uberius potuit divinitus provideri, quam ut eadem verba pluribus intellegantur modis, quos alia non minus divina contestantia faciant adprobari? (doc. chr. 3.38)*

---

<sup>31</sup> *doct. chr.* 3.39. The first book of the *De doctrina Christiana* establishes charity as the rule of Christian interpretation. On the ancient practice of determining the meaning of a text before interpreting individual passages, see Young (1997, 29-45).

<sup>32</sup> *conf.* 13.36-7.

For in divine communications what could God provide more generously and more richly than that the same words be understood in multiple ways, to which other, no less divine words, should bear witness and whose approval they should effect?

According to Augustine, the ability to find multiple meanings in Scripture is a gift provided by God.<sup>33</sup> And reading is a pleasurable activity; it provides the mind opportunity not only for discovery but also for exercise.<sup>34</sup> Augustine, therefore, was glad to see that multiple interpretations could each be authorized by different parallel passages.

Augustine presented the Scriptures as a diverse and multi-faceted text whose realization depends upon the involvement of its reader. Though he at times prescribed a literal reading of the author's intention, he views the obscure and ambiguous passages as a blessing of divine providence. By understanding the author to have intended all true meanings, Augustine gives the reader room to interpret the text. The limits of his concern for the author's intentions are an indicator of the pressure applied to the text by contemporary readers. For, rather than reject non-authorial readings, Augustine accepts that authoritative texts accumulate meaning as they are read.

Despite his acceptance of the reader's involvement, Augustine formulated, in the *De doctrina Christiana*, a series of prescriptive exegetical rules to guide his readers' interpretations. As Tyconius, a fellow African of the previous generation, had done in his *Liber Regularum*, Augustine attempted to set limits upon the practices employed by contemporary readers.<sup>35</sup> The exegetical treatises of Tyconius and Augustine are the first such works to survive in the Latin tradition.<sup>36</sup> Because of the difficulty of understanding Scripture and because of the proliferation

---

<sup>33</sup> On *doc. chr.* 3.38 and Augustine's idea of God's interior illumination, see Bochet (2004), 48-50; and Fuhrer (2008).

<sup>34</sup> *doc. chr.* 4.9.

<sup>35</sup> The rules offered by Tyconius and Augustine also, of course, enable readers to construct new meanings from the text.

<sup>36</sup> This does not seem accidental. Tyconius and Augustine are the earliest *introduciores scripturae divinae* cited by Cassiodorus (*Inst.* 1.10), as noted by Pollman (1996, 32, n.1).

of interpretive approaches, each author attempted to provide a theoretical framework through which to interpret the Scriptures. By constructing their own interpretive systems, Tyconius and Augustine sought to control the influence of their readers.<sup>37</sup> Their works, therefore, reveal both the theoretical sophistication of reading in Late Antiquity and also the perceived need for a limit upon the interpreter's influence.

The *Liber regularum* was written in or around 383.<sup>38</sup> In the first paragraph of the work, Tyconius says that he found it necessary to write a book of rules in order to devise keys and lights to illumine the secrets of Scripture.<sup>39</sup> These keys will guide the reader, through the immense forest of Scripture (*prophetiae immensam silvam*) and away from heresy (*ab errore*).<sup>40</sup> After his preface, Tyconius goes on to offer seven typological schemata, or “rules,” by which to interpret Scripture.<sup>41</sup> For example, the rule “*De Domino et corpore eius*” explains that the referent of a given passage may be either Christ or the Church. Thus, Tyconius says that the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53 refers in some lines to Christ and in others to the Church.<sup>42</sup> By understanding that the text switches between two different referents, Tyconius avoids readings that had given rise to Christological or ecclesiological controversies; and his rules can be read as a defense of Donatist ecclesiology.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in order to clarify contested passages, Tyconius imposed a definite structure upon the reading of the Scriptures.

---

<sup>37</sup> On the role of Tyconius' and Augustine's exegesis in the fight against heresy, see Pollman (1996), 4-33. Because Jerome's interpretations were more closely focused, the direct limits that he would place on interpretation are those imposed by his scholarly and historical method, as outlined in *Ep.* 53.7.

<sup>38</sup> For the *Liber regularum*, Jean-Marc Vercruyssen has published a recent edition with notes in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series (2004). Camastra (1998) and Bright (1988) are interpretive monographs. Pollman (1996) devotes a chapter to Tyconius' work. And Babcock (1989) provides an English translation.

<sup>39</sup> *Necessarium duxi ante omnia quae mihi videntur libellum regularem scribere, et secretorum legis veluti claves et luminaria fabricare (Prooemion, 1-3 [Vercruyssen]).*

<sup>40</sup> (*Prooemion, 3-9 [Vercruyssen]*).

<sup>41</sup> On the term *regula*, see Pollman (1996), 33-8.

<sup>42</sup> I.3-7 [Vercruyssen], with Camastra (1998), 25-35.

<sup>43</sup> Vercruyssen (2004), 70-82; and Camastra (1998), 260-4.

Some of Tyconius' rules (*De specie et genere*, *De temporibus*, and *De recapitulatione*) were drawn from his presumed rhetorical education, and Karla Pollman has suggested that synecdoche is the master trope behind Tyconius' reading.<sup>44</sup> In borrowing from the rhetorical tradition, Tyconius reverses the direction of such tropes, from the production of texts to their analysis.<sup>45</sup> And while Quintilian and other authors had already explored the value of rhetorical analysis for the understanding of both prose and poetic texts, Tyconius' treatise is different in so far as it is wholly devoted to discovering the meaning of a single text. Whereas interpretation had previously been a by-product of rhetoric, Tyconius used it as a means to the end of exegesis.

*De doctrina Christiana*, which was begun around 396 but not finished until 426-427, was one of Augustine's most influential works.<sup>46</sup> It is divided into four books: The first defines love of God and neighbor as the limit upon Christian interpretation; the second book lays out Augustine's theory of signs and surveys the knowledge useful for decoding the Scriptures; the third book discusses ambiguity; and the fourth book covers the *modus proferendi*, that is the rhetorical exposition of Scripture. Augustine incorporates Tyconius' seven rules at the end of his third book (3.42-56), and the scope of his work is broader than the scope of Tyconius' treatise. Unlike Tyconius, Augustine sought to provide a comprehensive guide to the use of Scripture, in ethics, in interpretation, and in preaching. Moreover, Karla Pollman has argued that Augustine envisioned a universal hermeneutics, in which one's interpretation of Scripture came to play the predominant role in one's own rhetoric.<sup>47</sup> By centering his treatise around the individual's use of Scripture, Augustine provides a theoretical manual for his Christian readers. In this way, his

---

<sup>44</sup> Pollman (1996), 61-5.

<sup>45</sup> Pollman (1996), 56.

<sup>46</sup> On the *De doctrina Christiana*, see Pollman (1996); Stock (1996), 190-206; the essays in Markus (1996); and Moreau, Bochet, and Madec (1997).

<sup>47</sup> Pollman concludes as follows: "Augustin setzt in seiner Auslegungstheorie Auslegung und Sprache in eins, Auslegung ist der christliche Gebrach von Sprache par excellence . . ." (1996, 248).

work both sets limits upon the ideal reader and also marks Augustine's interest in the individual's use of Scripture.

Both Tyconius and Augustine wrote treatises on the proper interpretation of the Scriptures, because there was a perceived need for hermeneutical guidance. Jerome had sought to fill that need with his own scholarly expertise instead of with theoretical reflection. In part, this need for hermeneutical guidance was related to a desire to set limits around what counted as Christian orthodoxy.<sup>48</sup> Yet their interpretations were also something more than constructions of orthodoxy. While Augustine offered guidance in the *De doctrina Christiana*, he also celebrated the fact that Scripture could have different meanings for different individuals. Therefore, even after one obtained the correct notion of Christianity, reading the Scriptures was still not a simple or transparent process. Rather, authors expended time and energy reflecting on how it was that they read. As we will see, these readers of Scripture shared with contemporary readers of Vergil a focus upon the indirect meanings of literature and an interest in their own role as interpreters.

## II. Macrobius and the Reading of Vergil

Late Antique readers of Vergil interpreted the poet within their own cultural and literary framework. By describing Vergil as the supreme poet, they justified their own interpretive work. By viewing him through their own lens, they gained a model for their own literature. The *Saturnalia* of Macrobius is both an interpretation of Vergil and a literary statement in its own right. In that work, Macrobius creates a theory of authorship that privileges reading. And in so doing, he justifies his own appropriative reading of Vergil. For, as reading becomes re-reading, Macrobius' reverence becomes a justification for his re-alignment of Vergil's aims and methods.

---

<sup>48</sup> On the fourth-century construction of orthodoxy, see Vessey (1996) and Rebillard (2000).

In extending to Vergil allegorical methods of reading already employed by Greek writers on Homer's poetry, Late Antique readers of Vergil brought to Latin literature a whole series of interpretive possibilities. Therefore, their frequently elaborate praise of Vergil should be understood as enabling their own work as interpreters, rather than as misplaced or unfounded adulation. In this way, the Late Antique transformation of Vergil legitimates the reader's role in making sense of the text.

a. Macrobius on Authority and Imitation

Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius wrote the *Saturnalia* probably in the 430s and probably after the *In Somnium Scipionis*.<sup>49</sup> In the *Saturnalia*, he collects earlier learning and describes Vergil as an imitator of Greek and Latin poetry. In so doing, Macrobius valorizes secondary authorship.<sup>50</sup> By describing writing as reception, Macrobius lends weight to his and others' reading of Classical literature. Thus, Macrobius' literary reverence is a form of appreciation for the work of reading.<sup>51</sup> In the preface to the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius sets out his own approach to writing; and throughout the *Saturnalia*, his treatment of Vergil implies a theory of writing as imitation.<sup>52</sup>

Macrobius begins the *Saturnalia* with a preface addressed to his son Eustathius. He explains that the work is meant as a compendium of learning for his son's use, and he defends

---

<sup>49</sup> For a concise explanation of this order and dating, see Cameron (2011), 231-9, who provides further references on the dating of Macrobius' life and works.

<sup>50</sup> On the structure and purpose of the *Saturnalia*, see Kaster (1980). On Macrobius and the reader's role in identifying allusions, see Pucci (1998), 64-9.

<sup>51</sup> On Macrobius' literary reverence, see Chin (2008), 54-60.

<sup>52</sup> On the preface to the *Saturnalia*, see Goldlust (2009), Lausberg (1991), and De Rentiis (1998). On the importance of imitation in the *Saturnalia*, see Vogt-Spira (2009).

his habit of borrowing from earlier authors.<sup>53</sup> Eustathius should not consider it a fault, Macrobius says, if he copies the ideas and even the exact words of earlier authors.<sup>54</sup> Immediately following this pronouncement, Macrobius borrows a series of thoughts from Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* 84. In so doing, he reveals the scope of his explicit statement on secondary writing.

In letter 84, Seneca advised Lucilius that he should take breaks from writing in order to read, since reading will refresh his mind.<sup>55</sup> Seneca then compares his task to the work of bees, to the stomach's digestion, and to the harmony of a chorus: Bees collect pollen from various sources; the stomach breaks down and re-synthesizes its material; a chorus produces a single sound from numerous voices.<sup>56</sup> Seneca concludes that an imitated work should resemble its model in the way that a son imitates his father. That is, the resemblance should not be too exact:

*Etiam si cuius in te comparebit similitudo quem admiratio tibi altius fixerit, similem esse te volo quomodo filium, non quomodo imaginem: imago res mortua est (Ep. 84.8).*

Even if the resemblance in you of someone else is apparent, someone for whom your admiration lies quite deep, I want you to be similar like a son, not like an image: an image is a dead object.

For Seneca, reading provides the raw material from which the author will construct his own work. But, to ensure its originality, the secondary work must not become a copy.

In his preface, Macrobius borrows each of Seneca's comparisons, often transposing whole sentences at a time. The central point of Macrobius' preface is that the compiler must make the borrowed material part of a new whole, but the borrowings also reveal his more circumspect approach to imitation:

---

<sup>53</sup> *Sat.* 1.1.1-4.

<sup>54</sup> *nec mihi vitio vertas, si res quas ex lectione varia mutuabor ipsis saepe verbis quibus ab ipsis auctoribus enarratae sunt explicabo . . . (1.1.4).*

<sup>55</sup> *aliter lectio ingenium et studio fatigatum . . . (Ep. 84.1).*

<sup>56</sup> On Seneca's comparison, see Castelnérac (2007), and Henderson (2004), 46-8.

*ex omnibus colligamus unde unum fiat, sicut unus numerus fit ex singulis. hoc faciat noster animus: omnia quibus est adiutus abscondat, ipsum tantum ostendat quod effecit . . . (Sat. 1.1.8).*

From all sides we should collect what will be one, just as one number comes to be from other individual numbers. Let our mind do this: Let it hide everything from which it is helped; let it reveal only that which it produces . . . .

Macrobius apparently endorses the Classical view represented by Seneca, according to which the secondary author creates a work that is distinctly his own. To what extent does Macrobius actually hold this view? Macrobius' own form of appropriation is best understood by comparing this statement with its source in Seneca:

*adsentiamur illis fideliter et nostra faciamus, ut unum quiddam fiat ex multis, sicut unus numerus fit ex singulis cum minores summas et dissidentes computatione una comprehendit. hoc faciat animus noster: omnia quibus est adiutus abscondat, ipsum tantum ostendat quod effecit (Sen. Ep. 84.7).*

Let us assent to them faithfully and make them our own, so that one thing should come to be from many, just as one number comes to be from other individual numbers when a single notation collects lesser and different sums. Let our mind do this: Let it hide everything from which it is helped; let it reveal only that which it produces.

Although Macrobius does edit Seneca and although he does go on to borrow a different analogy from Chalcidius' translation of the *Timaeus*,<sup>57</sup> he clearly has a different view of imitation than that expressed by Seneca in his letter to Lucilius. For Seneca, imitation requires a change in the actual material. Macrobius, however, produces a compendium that incorporates Seneca's exact material, but in a new way. Macrobius changes the frame rather than the picture. The novelty of Macrobius' approach is that verbal reproduction does not preclude actual artistry; and Macrobius' reception of Seneca is a literary act, because it effects a new reading of Seneca's letter. Whereas Seneca insists that the secondary author must reshape the material at his disposal, Macrobius allows him to blend his reading and writing into one whole.

---

<sup>57</sup> The borrowing from Chalcidius was pointed out by Lausberg (1991), 175.

In so far as Macrobius follows Seneca's advice to create a new work that is a unified whole, he distances his compilation from Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. In his preface, Gellius explains that he collected his own material at random and by chance (*indistincte atque promisce*) so as to create a storehouse of learning (*penus litterarum*).<sup>58</sup> Macrobius also intends to create a storehouse of learning,<sup>59</sup> but he emphasizes the unity and structure of his work. He uses the same phrase (*indistincte atque promiscue*) to describe the collection of his material, but he does so in order to explain that he has made his material fit together like the coherent members of a body (*in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent*).<sup>60</sup> Macrobius rejects Gellius' chance in favor of Seneca's coherence. The deliberate planning of Macrobius' compilation reflects his shaping of the material at his disposal. Thus, Macrobius' borrowing does not, in his own view, preclude him from writing a coherent and artistic work.

The implicit theory of Macrobius' introduction is expressed in the *Saturnalia* through the participants' reverence for the past. Robert Kaster described the dynamic relationship between the characters of Macrobius' dialogue and their past in his article on "Macrobius and Servius: Verecundia and the Grammarian's Function." As Kaster explains, Macrobius' characters have a reverence for antiquity that does not exclude self-confidence or even criticism.<sup>61</sup> And the purpose of the *Saturnalia* is to effect cultural and social continuity through their memory of the past. The *verecundia* of Kaster's title, therefore, consists of the "willingness to preserve [the] past, and blend it with the present, expressing due *reverentia* for both."<sup>62</sup> This *reverentia* is a form of reading that both accepts the input of one's *auctores* and also allows for their renewal. That is, Macrobius endorses a theory of originality that takes full account of the importance of the

---

<sup>58</sup> *praef.* 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Sat.* 1.1.2.

<sup>60</sup> *Sat.* 1.1.3. On Macrobius' appropriation of this phrase, see Goldlust (2009).

<sup>61</sup> Kaster (1980), esp. 230-2.

<sup>62</sup> Kaster (1980), 231.

transmission, tradition and reception (in a word the *reading*) of the past for any consciousness of the present.

As Kaster noted, Macrobius describes Vergil's imitation of Latin and Greek authors in terms of a confident respect for the past.<sup>63</sup> Books five and six of the *Saturnalia* set out Vergil's relation to earlier Greek and Latin authors. In these books, the "competitive element," that is "the ἀγών emphasized by both ancient and modern readers" is "entirely absent."<sup>64</sup> As Kaster explains, the competitive element in *imitatio* is neutralized by Macrobius' interest in continuity rather than conflict. Macrobius' approach to Vergilian *imitatio* is neatly revealed in his description of the *Aeneid* as a mirror of Homer and in a discussion of Vergil's borrowing from Pindar.

The image of the *Aeneid* as a mirror recurs in books five and six of the *Saturnalia*. In book five, the character Eustathius expounds upon Vergil's knowledge of Greek literature. After naming some of Vergil's principal models (Theocritus, Hesiod, Homer), Eustathius begins to detail Vergil's borrowings from Homer, and he compares the *Aeneid* to a mirror<sup>65</sup>:

*quid quod et omne opus Vergilianum velut de quodam Homerici operis speculo formatum est?* (5.2.13).

What about the fact that the whole of Vergil's work is shaped as a kind of mirror-image of Homer's?<sup>66</sup>

In this view, the *Aeneid* is a kind of Roman Homer, designed to reproduce its Greek original. Most of book five goes on to compare Homer and Vergil. Sometimes Eustathius prefers Vergil's version, and sometimes he prefers Homer's; but the focus throughout is on the community of

---

<sup>63</sup> Kaster (1980), 231.

<sup>64</sup> Kaster (1980), 232.

<sup>65</sup> On the relation of this image to the reader's involvement in allusion, see Pucci (1998), 66.

<sup>66</sup> I borrow here Kaster's Loeb translation, with slight modifications.

authors, rather than on any struggle between different authors.<sup>67</sup> In book six, Rufius Albinus recalls Vergil's Latin models, works whose memory Vergil preserved in his borrowing.<sup>68</sup> He says that he will cite first the verses borrowed directly by Vergil and then the ones that Vergil borrowed with modification; Rufius does so in order that his audience might "recognize the model after which its mirror image was formed."<sup>69</sup> By describing Vergil's work as a mirror of Greek and Latin literature, Macrobius privileges the interpretive work of imitation. Rather than as an *agon* between opponents, literary history is imagined as the re-presentation of earlier *auctores*.<sup>70</sup>

The difference between Macrobius' approach and other more competitive approaches to *imitatio* is neatly revealed in his discussion of Vergil's borrowing from Pindar, a discussion which is itself borrowed from Gellius. After Eustathius finishes discussing Vergil's imitation of Homer, he goes on to survey Vergil's knowledge of other Greek authors.

*videamus utrum attigerit et Pindarum, quem Flaccus imitationi inaccessum fatetur. et minuta quidem atque rorantia<sup>71</sup> quae inde subtraxit relinquo, unum vero locum quem temptavit ex integro paene transcribere, volo communicare vobiscum quia dignus est ut eum velimus altius intueri. cum Pindari carmen quod de natura atque flagrantia montis Aetnae compositum est aemulari vellet, eius modi sententias et verba molitus est ut Pindaro quoque ipso, qui nimis opima et pingui facundia existimatus est, insolentior hoc quidem in loco tumidorque sit (Sat. 5.17.7-8).*

---

<sup>67</sup> Thus Eustathius thinks that Vergil would not mind being unable to match his *auctor*'s work: *et quia non est erubescendum Vergilio si minorem se Homero vel ipse fateatur, dicam in quibus mihi visus sit gracilior auctore* (5.13.1). In contrast, Gellius enjoyed Roman comedy only until he read its Greek sources (*NA* 2.23).

<sup>68</sup> . . . *transferendo fecit ne omnino memoria veterum deleteretur* ("by incorporating [their work] he made it so that the memory of the ancients should not be wholly lost" 6.1.5).

<sup>69</sup> . . . *ut unde formati sint quasi de speculo cognoscas* (6.2.1). I use here Kaster's Loeb translation.

<sup>70</sup> On the idea of an *auctor* as source and on Vergil as an imitator in Macrobius, see Kelly (1999), 55-9. Macrobius' interest in reception explains the phenomenon too easily disparaged by Curtius: (1953), 444: "[Macrobius'] conception of Vergil is surprisingly similar in approach to the medieval conception of poetry. He feels that he is no longer sharing in a living literature but that he is the conserver and interpreter of a consummated tradition. For him the classics are already 'the Ancients.'" On the difference between living and dead languages, see Agamben (2010), 45-60.

<sup>71</sup> The phrase *minuta atque rorantia* is borrowed from Cic. *Sen.* 46.

Let's see whether he touched on Pindar as well, whom Horace confesses to be impossible to imitate. I'll leave behind everything "small and dewy" that he drew from Pindar. There is one passage that I want to share with you, the whole of which he tried almost to copy, because it is worth looking at more closely. When he wanted to imitate Pindar's poem, which concerns the nature and the burning of mount Aetna, he fashioned his thoughts and words in such a way that in this passage he should be more unusual and more inflated even than Pindar himself, whose speech is thought altogether rich and altogether extravagant.

Eustathius continues with a comparison of *Pythian* 1.21-6 and *Aeneid* 3.570-7. While he offers a straightforward assessment of Pindar's and Vergil's lines, Eustathius does not doubt that recognizing the Pindaric in Vergil will only increase his listeners' appreciation for the Roman poet. Because Eustathius views imitation as a form of respect rather than as a competition, he does not need to criticize either poet.

Macrobius' approach in this passage becomes even clearer when set against its source. In the *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius had recalled that Favorinus once praised Vergil's work, but with a qualification: Whatever Vergil had finished was of the highest quality; but he asked on his deathbed that the *Aeneid* be burned, because some passages were not yet worthy of his name.<sup>72</sup>

Favorinus singled out for censure this same passage, in which Vergil imitated Pindar's description of mount Aetna.

*in his autem, inquit, quae videntur retractari et corrigi debuisse, is maxime locus est, qui de monte Aetna factus est. nam cum Pindari veteris poetae carmen quod de natura atque flagrantia montis eius compositum est aemulari vellet, eiusmodi sententias et verba molitus est ut Pindaro quoque ipso, qui nimis opima pinguique esse facundia existimatus est, insolentior hoc quidem in loco tumidiorque sit (NA 17.10.8).*

But in these, he said, which seem to have needed to be gone over again and corrected, an especial case is the passage concerning mount Aetna. For, when he wanted to imitate the ancient poet Pindar's ode, which concerns the nature and the burning of this mountain, he fashioned his thoughts and words in such a way that in this passage he should be more unusual and more inflated even than Pindar himself, whose speech is thought altogether rich and altogether extravagant.

---

<sup>72</sup> This is also the view of Macrobius' Evangelus, discussed below on p. 43.

Whereas Macrobius had introduced this comparison as an example of Vergil's knowledge of Greek poetry, Gellius uses the same description to reject what he sees as Vergil's inferior poetry. Because they view imitation differently, the same words and the same description are quite different in each of their texts.<sup>73</sup> In Macrobius' conception of literature, tradition is quite as important as originality; and the quintessential Roman poet serves as a gateway to ancient Greek and Latin literature.

By describing Vergil as a looking glass, Macrobius lends full weight to the idea of writing as an act of reception. And, by privileging Vergil's secondary poetics, Macrobius gives credence to his own reading of the Classical poets. For, in Macrobius' view, writing is virtually inseparable from reading. The poetics of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* depends upon a full appreciation for the active participation of first readers and then authors in the continuance of any literary tradition. Rather than as a passive reception, this participation is viewed as an artistic and creative renewal. In this way, Macrobius envisions an active reading as fundamental to any literary activity.

#### b. Interpreting Vergil in Late Antiquity

Macrobius' notion of writing as reading lends a theoretical depth to Late Antique interpretations of Vergil's poetry. For, in Late Antiquity, Vergil came to be interpreted as containing all of wisdom, in ways similar to how Homer had already been interpreted by Greek authors writing under the Roman empire.<sup>74</sup> Domenico Comparetti, the nineteenth century Italian

---

<sup>73</sup> On the role of context in determining the import of identical words, compare Borges' famous character Pierre Menard, who sought to compose an early twentieth-century version of *Don Quixote*.

<sup>74</sup> On the allegorical interpretation of Homer, see Struck (2004), Lamberton and Keaney (1992), and Lamberton (1986).

scholar, misunderstood this phenomenon when he described Late Antique readers approaching Vergil's poems as though they were a puzzle waiting to be solved: "The art of the greatest of Roman poets seemed to these people a mystery, the clue to which could only be found in vast and recondite learning. Hence it was considered a sure proof of refined taste and superior erudition to be able to discover hidden in his verses scientific dicta and profound philosophical doctrines of every kind."<sup>75</sup> While Comparetti considered these discoveries evidence of cultural decline, I take them as an index of the period's interest in the transitive power of interpretive reading. They mark a shift from authorial to readerly habits of interpretation, and thus conceal the creativity of Late Antiquity under the guise of simple exposition.

While Homer had already been read as a divine poet, totalizing readings of Vergil—that is, allegorical interpretations that treat Vergil as a compendium of all learning—seem not to appear before the fourth century.<sup>76</sup> Thus, both Seneca the Younger and Quintilian treat Vergil as the supreme Latin poet; but neither treats his poems as a profound text in need of thorough interpretation. Seneca the Younger, in his *Epistulae Morales*, contrasted two approaches to Vergil: the grammarian's and the philosopher's. Neither approach is allegorical.<sup>77</sup> The grammarian reads *fugit irreparabile tempus* (*G.* 3.284) and notes that Vergil uses the verb *fugere* every time he speaks of time's swift passing. The philosopher reads the same words, and remembers the brevity of his own life.<sup>78</sup> In the same letter, Seneca gives a general plea for the

---

<sup>75</sup> (1997), 73. This edition is a reprint of the English translation of Domenico Comparetti's *Virgilio nel medio evo*, with a new introduction by Jan Ziolkowski.

<sup>76</sup> For the reception of Vergil, Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008) and Courcelle (1984) are marvelous compendia. Rees (2004) collects a series of essays on Vergil in the fourth century. Zetzel (1981) and Timpanaro (2001) provide different views of Vergil's ancient textual critics.

<sup>77</sup> Therefore Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008, 463) are wrong to group this passage with several others from Macrobius and Servius as treatments of "Virgil as philosopher and compendium of knowledge." Seneca offers only a philosophical reading of the poem, and he does not introduce a separate, allegorical meaning.

<sup>78</sup> *Ep.* 108.24-5.

ethical reading of poetry.<sup>79</sup> Seneca, however, gives no indication that either philosophers or grammarians were reading Vergil for abstruse, non-ethical wisdom.<sup>80</sup> Quintilian, in the *Institutio Oratoria*, compares Vergil to Homer; but he does not praise the two poets in the same terms. Homer is the “model and source of every part of eloquence.”<sup>81</sup> Quintilian also praises at length the marvelous qualities of Homer’s work; and asks whether it does not in fact exceed the measure of human genius.<sup>82</sup> For Quintilian, Vergil was a Roman Homer, the second greatest poet and the one who gave Latin poetry its beginning (*ut apud illos Homerus, sic apud nos Vergilius auspicatissimum dederit exordium, omnium eius generis poetarum Graecorum nostrorumque haud dubie proximus*).<sup>83</sup> Their qualities, however, are distinct. Vergil’s excellence is in his *labor*:

*Et hercule ut illi naturae caelesti atque immortalis cesserimus, ita curae et diligentiae vel ideo in hoc plus est, quod ei fuit magis laborandum* (Inst. 10.1.86).

I swear, just as we yield to [Homer’s] heavenly and immortal character, so is there more attention and diligence in [Vergil], because he had to work harder.

In the early empire, Vergil was the supreme Latin poet; but readers had neither mined his text for deeper wisdom nor treated it as a compendium of learning. These steps were taken in the fourth and early fifth centuries.

Tiberius Claudius Donatus—not to be confused with the famous grammarian Aelius Donatus who wrote commentaries on Terence and Vergil—treated the *Aeneid* as a compendium of rhetorical learning, in a lengthy rhetorical commentary on the *Aeneid* written for his son,

---

<sup>79</sup> *illud admoneo, auditionem philosophorum lectionemque ad propositum beatæ vitæ trahendam, non ut verba prisca aut ficta captemus et translationes improbas figurasque dicendi, sed ut profutura praecepta et magnificas voces et animosas quæ mox in rem transferantur* (Ep. 108.35).

<sup>80</sup> In *Dial.* 10.9.2, Seneca introduces a quotation from Vergil with the words *clamat ecce maximus vates et velut divino ore instinctus salutare carmen canit*. The *velut* is essential. The verse introduced, which is on the brevity of life, was also quoted in *Ep.* 108; in both passages, it is read for its ethical content.

<sup>81</sup> *omnibus eloquentiæ partibus exemplum et ortum dedit* (10.1.46). This view was already developed by Pseudo-Plutarch in his *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, on which see Keaney and Lamberton (1996).

<sup>82</sup> *Quid? in verbis, sentiis, figuris, dispositione totius operis nonne humani ingenii modum excedit?* (Inst. 10.1.50).

<sup>83</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.85. Before Vergil’s death, Propertius had already compared the *Aeneid* to the *Iliad*: *cedite, Romani scriptores; cedite, Grai: / nescioquid maius nascitur Iliade* (*Carm.* 2.34.65-6).

probably in the second half of the fourth century.<sup>84</sup> Though Claudius Donatus explains just the literal sense of the *Aeneid* and does not give physical or philosophical allegories, he claims that the work is intended as praise of Aeneas and, therefore, suggests that rhetors rather than grammarians ought to expound the text.<sup>85</sup> He counters criticisms of Vergil's poetry, by claiming that all difficulties will be removed if one only remembers that Vergil's intention was to praise Aeneas; and he contrasts his own position with that of those who think Vergil's intention is "to take up some inner knowledge or philosophy as if he were its advocate" (. . . *non ut aliquam scientiae interioris vel philosophiae partem quasi adsertor adsumeret*). However, in the following sentence Claudius Donatus claims that the praise of Aeneas is so wonderfully composed that every kind of learning comes together in it and that from it one may learn everything necessary for life and action.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, in the preceding paragraphs Claudius Donatus had already said that Vergil has shown himself a most skillful teacher (*peritissimus doctor*) and useful for all sorts of people, including sailors, fathers, sons, husbands, wives, commanders, soldiers, citizens, patriots, those interested in religion and divination, and those who find themselves in various ethical dilemmas.<sup>87</sup> Claudius Donatus does not think that Vergil was a philosopher, but he does think that the poet touches on all topics and that he is useful for all readers. Thus, although he presents himself as a more rational interpreter than some other contemporaries, Claudius Donatus asserts that the *Aeneid* is universal in scope. By reading the *Aeneid* as a storehouse for learning, he validates his own desire to search in the poem for

---

<sup>84</sup> Murgia dates this commentary to between 363 and 395, because it draws from Aelius Donatus' commentary and because Claudius Donatus speaks of sacrifices in the present tense (2003, 47-8).

<sup>85</sup> *Interpretationes Vergiliana* 1.2.7-25 and 1.4.24-8. On Claudius Donatus' commentary, see Pirovano (2006) and Starr (1992). On the importance of epideictic rhetoric under the empire, see Pernot (1993).

<sup>86</sup> *Interea hoc quoque mirandum debet adverti, sic Aeneae laudem esse dispositam, ut in ipsam exquisita arte omnium materiarum genera convenirent. quo fit ut Vergiliani carminis lector rhetoricis praeceptis instrui possit et omnia vivendi agendique officia reperire* (1.6.13-17).

<sup>87</sup> 1.5.4-24.

rhetorical techniques and for every kind of rhetorical meaning. In this way, he shows the power of a universal reading of the *Aeneid*.

Servius, who was born around 360 and probably wrote his commentaries on Vergil before 410, reads Vergil's poems as containing profound allegorical meanings.<sup>88</sup> In order to justify such readings, Servius' predecessor Donatus had called Vergil a divine poet and stated that he always touched upon some truth.<sup>89</sup> While Servius implicitly accepts Donatus' opinion of Vergil, he usually focuses upon the text itself and its multiple possibilities. In his brief preface to the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Servius makes his understanding of the *Aeneid* explicit:

*Totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum, cuius ex Homero pars maior est. et dicuntur aliqua simpliciter, multa de historia, multa per altam scientiam philosophorum, theologorum, Aegyptiorum, adeo ut plerique de his singulis huius libri integras scripserint pragmatias (ad Aen. 6 praef.).*

Though all of Vergil is full of knowledge, in that category this book has pride of place. The greater part of this book is from Homer. And some things are said directly, many things are about history, many others are said through a profound knowledge of the philosophers, the theologians, and the Egyptians, to such an extent that many people have written entire treatises about those individual aspects of this book.

---

<sup>88</sup> On the date of Servius' birth, see Cameron (2011), 239-41; Kaster (2011, xxxi) has renounced his earlier opinion that Servius was not born until the 370's. Murgia tentatively dates the commentary to before 410 (2003, 61-4). On Servius' career, see Kaster (1988), 356-9; on the social and intellectual context of Servius' work, see Kaster (1988), 169-97; on his teaching of Latin, see Uhl (1998); on the lack of pagan agenda in Servius' commentary, see Cameron (2011), 567-626; for a detailed introduction to the context of Servius' work, see Pellizzari (2003); on Servius' allegorical interpretations, see Jones (1961).

<sup>89</sup> The *DS* commentary *ad Aen.* 3.349 notes that what many take as fiction is supported by better geographical knowledge and then concludes: *unde apparet divinum poetam aliud agentem verum semper attingere* ("from this it is clear that the divine poet always touches on the truth, even when he is engaged in some other matter"). On the relation between the *DS* recension (a compilation dated to the seventh century) and the commentaries of both Donatus and Servius, see Goold (1970), 102-21. For a statement on Vergil's method similar to that given by Donatus, see Macrobius, *Sat.* 3.4.5 (*suo more velut aliud agendo implet arcana*). Where it is impossible to determine whether or not Servius was following an earlier commentary, I credit him with the formulation given in his commentary; for, like Macrobius, Servius borrows extensively and yet constructs his own whole.

Servius expects to find deeper meanings in his text.<sup>90</sup> His expectation leads him to find such meanings. Thus, when Deiphobus asks Aeneas whether he came to the underworld because he was driven off course or because the gods told him to do so (*pelagine uenis erroribus actus / an monitu diuum?*),<sup>91</sup> Servius says that there are two ways of interpreting the first half of the question. In the first interpretation, Deiphobus does not ask how Aeneas got to the underworld, which is within the earth, but rather how Aeneas arrived at the *entrance* to the underworld. The second interpretation finds a deeper meaning:

*alii altius intellegunt: qui sub<sup>92</sup> terra esse inferos volunt secundum chorographos et geometras, qui dicunt terram sphaeroeide esse, quae aqua et aere sustentatur (ad Aen. 6.532).*

Others understand this more deeply: they want the ones below (*inferos*) to be under the earth, in accordance with the geographers and geometers, who say that the earth is spherical and that it is supported on water and air.

On this reading, the *infern*i live in the southern hemisphere; and Aeneas really could have visited them by ship. This deeper reading understands Deiphobus' question as a covert allusion to Vergil's geographical learning.

At times, Servius interprets the text of the *Aeneid* on multiple levels.<sup>93</sup> For, rather than simply giving his reader various options on how to interpret the text, he also accepts some multiple meanings.<sup>94</sup> In his commentary on the twin gates of sleep, Servius gives to the passage intertextual, poetic, physiological, and oneiric interpretations. Thus, Servius says first (*ad Aen.*

---

<sup>90</sup> Though Servius can also attribute what he sees as flaws in the *Aeneid* to its unfinished publication, as in his comment *ad Aen.* 1.565. He also distinguishes at times between Vergil's use of words and the "correct" use (Kaster 1988, 169-97).

<sup>91</sup> *Aen.* 532-3.

<sup>92</sup> I do not know of any other example of *sub* where the word has to mean "on the other side of"; I find it likely that Servius was using *terra* in this first clause to refer (somewhat illogically) to the earth as popularly conceived.

<sup>93</sup> Though he also at times rejects what he sees as superfluous allegories, *e.g. ad Ecl.* 1.1 and 3.47.

<sup>94</sup> Starr (2001) rightly takes the options presented by ancient commentators as revelatory of the reader's role in constructing the text. I am trying to show here, however, that, in some cases, Late Antique readers admitted a text's ability to contain multiple, non-contradictory meanings. In Greek, Porphyry had already interpreted Homer on multiple levels, on which see Lamberton (1986), 120-1.

6.893) that Vergil has followed Homer (*est autem in hoc loco Homerum secutus*)—with the appropriate qualification that Homer has all dreams pass through the gate of both horn and ivory, whereas Vergil has the true dreams pass through the gate of horn but the false ones pass through the gate of ivory. Next, Servius says that the poetic sense is obvious (*poetice apertus est sensus*): Vergil wants his description of the underworld to be understood as fictional.<sup>95</sup> Then, there is a physiological sense (*physiologia vero hoc habet*): Horn is associated with the eyes, ivory with the mouth; false dreams pass through the gate of ivory because what we say with our mouth is less reliable than what we see with our eyes. Servius introduces his final interpretation as a further meaning (*est et alter sensus*). Those who have written about dreams say that those dreams which are likely to come true are associated with horn, whereas those dreams that are more extravagant than believable resemble ivory (i.e. because ivory is an extravagant material). While Servius also accepts multiple meanings for other passages,<sup>96</sup> this is the most extensive interpretation that he offers. Because Servius viewed the *Aeneid* as a profound work containing different sorts of learning, he accepts multiple interpretations of the text. In this way, he extends his reading of the *Aeneid* beyond the literal interpretations offered by earlier traditions. Thus, the elevation of Vergil's text prepares the way for the supplemental readings proposed by Servius.

By the early fifth century, Vergil's authority had increased to the point that in his commentary on the Dream of Scipio Macrobius says that the poet was free of all error. As Vergil came to be read as the source of Roman culture, he came to play the role that Homer had filled for both Greek and Roman literature. Macrobius consistently finds in Vergil a source of great learning and profound wisdom. In the *Saturnalia*, the symposiasts' authoritative reading of Vergil is explicitly contrasted with the character Evangelus' non-allegorical reading. And, in the

---

<sup>95</sup> For this understanding of Servius' *vult autem intellegi falsa esse omnia quae dixit*, see Pollman (1993), 244-47.

<sup>96</sup> e.g. *ad Aen.* 4.58, 4.244, and 6.719.

*In Somnium Scipionis*, a revealing digression offers several ways to save Vergil—whom Macrobius says was never wrong—from an apparent mistake. Rather than being a reflex of his unimaginative reverence for Vergil, Macrobius’ reading of Vergil’s poetry should be understood as an active and constructive approach to the past. For, by treating Vergil as the most learned Roman poet, Macrobius created a literature to match the Greek interpretations of Homer’s poetry.<sup>97</sup>

In the *Saturnalia*, the character Evangelus provokes the banqueters’ discussion of Vergil, by expressing his skepticism of their reading habits.<sup>98</sup> In the first book, Praetextatus gives a long speech explaining how the different gods are reflexes of the sun god Apollo. His speech occupies the first morning of the *Saturnalia*, when Macrobius’ band of noble Romans had just begun to celebrate the holiday with learned conversation. Although the rest of the group was amazed by the speech and praised Praetextatus’ memory, learning, and religion, the uninvited and uncouth Evangelus intrudes and accuses Praetextatus of misusing Vergil. He says:

*equidem . . . miror potuisse tantorum potestatem numinum comprehendere; verum quod Mantuanum nostrum ad singula, cum de divinis sermo est, testem citatis, gratiosius est quam ut iudicio fieri putetur. an ego credam quod ille, cum diceret Liber et alma Ceres<sup>99</sup> pro sole ac luna, non hoc in alterius poetae imitationem posuit, ita dici audiens, cur tamen diceretur ignorans? nisi forte, ut Graeci omnia sua in immensum tollunt, nos quoque etiam poetas nostros volumus philosophari . . . . (Sat. 1.24.2-4).*

I myself am impressed that you could comprehend the power of such great divinities; but as for the fact that you cite our Mantuan as a witness to details, when the discussion is on the divine, this is more a pleasant thing than something that could be thought discerning. Or should I believe that when Vergil said “Liber and kind Ceres” in place of “sun” and “moon” he did not do this in imitation of another poet, hearing it said in this way but not knowing why it was so? Unless, perhaps, we also want our poets to philosophize, just as the Greeks treat all of their own literature as profound . . . .

---

<sup>97</sup> On Macrobius’ use in the *In Somnium Scipionis* of Porphyry’s Homeric exegesis, see Setaioli (1966).

<sup>98</sup> On the character Evangelus, see Cameron (2011), 253-4; and Kaster (2011), vol. 1, xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>99</sup> *G.* 1.7.

Evangelus reads Vergil as a poet indebted to other poets, rather than as a theologian or philosopher. And he explicitly compares Praetextatus' reading of Vergil with the Greeks' reading of their own poets, presumably Orpheus and Homer. When Symmachus asks whether Evangelus thinks Vergil only suitable for educating children or whether he thinks he contains something deeper (*instituendis tantum pueris idonea iudices, an alia illis altiora inesse fatearis*),<sup>100</sup> Evangelus replies that Vergil would not have asked for the *Aeneid* to be burned if he did not know that it was flawed.<sup>101</sup> Then, after Evangelus laughs at Symmachus' suggestion that Vergil was an orator no less than a poet, Symmachus finally realizes that Evangelus really thinks that Vergil only intended his work as poetry (*Maro tibi nihil nisi poeticum sensisse aestim[a]tur*).<sup>102</sup> The poetic sense is all that Evangelus accepts, and he reserves the right to criticize Vergil even on that level. Symmachus and the rest of his group are shocked, and they respond with a spirited defense of the poet.

Macrobius introduced Evangelus into his dialogue in order to explain and defend the interpretive methods of his group. To begin this defense, the character Symmachus accuses Evangelus of reading Vergil like a child at school.<sup>103</sup> Further, he quotes a letter from Vergil to Augustus in which the poet excuses the delays in the writing of the *Aeneid* as being caused by the various difficult studies to which he had turned.<sup>104</sup> Then, in a pivotal passage, Symmachus says Vergil's excuse to Augustus is confirmed by the contents of his poem. Because the *Aeneid*

---

<sup>100</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.5.

<sup>101</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.6.

<sup>102</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.8-10.

<sup>103</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.5: *videris enim mihi ita adhuc Vergilianos habere versus qualiter eos pueri magistris praelegentibus canebarum.*

<sup>104</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.11: *de Aenea quidem meo, si mehercle iam dignum auribus haberem tuis, libenter mitterem, sed tanta inchoata res est ut paene vitio mentis tantum opus ingressus mihi videar, cum praesertim, ut scis, alia quoque studia ad id opus multoque potiora impertiar.*

is a profound text, Symmachus earnestly objects to the merely “grammatical” reading of Vergil<sup>105</sup>:

*nec his Vergilii verbis copia rerum dissonat, quam plerique omnes litteratores pedibus inlotis praetereunt, tamquam nihil ultra verborum explanationem liceat nosse grammatico. ita sibi belli isti homines certos scientiae fines et velut quaedam pomeria et effata posuerunt, ultra quae si quis egredi audeat, introspexisse in aedem deae a qua mares absterrentur existimandus sit. sed nos quos crassa Minerva dedecet non patiamur abstrusa esse adyta sacri poematis sed arcanorum sensuum investigato aditu doctorum cultu celebranda praebeamus reclusa penetralia (Sat. 1.24.12-13).*

And the abundance of Vergil’s subjects does not disagree with these words of his.<sup>106</sup> Almost all the teachers pass by this abundance with unwashed feet, as though a grammarian weren’t allowed to know anything beyond the interpretation of words. So those fine men have set certain limits to their knowledge, as if it were some civic or religious boundary. And if anyone should dare to pass beyond it, they are treated as though they looked into the sanctuary of the goddess from which men are banished. But we who disdain rude Minerva should not allow the sancta of this sacred poem to be hidden; rather let us allow the inner place to be thrown open by investigating an approach to its secret meanings, so that it may be celebrated by the veneration of learned men.

Symmachus could hardly make his point any clearer. He believes that Vergil contains profound wisdom which the group ought to search out. Attention is also drawn elsewhere in the *Saturnalia* to the hidden, deep or profound meaning of Vergil,<sup>107</sup> and this investigation of deeper meaning does seem to have been Macrobius’ preferred method of reading Vergil. He takes the side of Symmachus against Evangelus in order to uncover the further layers of Vergil’s text.

After he explains his approach to Vergil, Symmachus proposes that the group expound together the poet’s profound wisdom. Symmachus will treat rhetoric in Vergil, but he leaves oratory to Eusebius.<sup>108</sup> Praetextatus promises to show Vergil’s knowledge of religion; Flavianus volunteers to discuss augury; Eustathius will cover Greek poetry, astrology, and philosophy; the

---

<sup>105</sup> On the status of grammar in Late Antiquity, see Kaster (1988).

<sup>106</sup> i.e. the letter from which Symmachus had just quoted.

<sup>107</sup> *Sat.* 1.3.10, 1.17.2, 3.2.7, 3.2.10, 3.4.5, 3.7.1, and 3.9.16.

<sup>108</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.14.

Albini, Rufius and Caecina, take Vergil's antiquarianism; Avienus and Servius are set to cover whatever falls between the cracks.<sup>109</sup> And, though there are significant lacunae in the extant text, each character does go on to discuss their topic in the course of the work.<sup>110</sup> Vergil's manifold wisdom is on full display, and it allows each participant to expound his own wisdom through Vergil.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the idea that Vergil is experienced in every discipline is repeated elsewhere in the *Saturnalia* and also in the *In Somnium Scipionis*.<sup>112</sup> Thus, while the *Saturnalia* claims to be a description of Vergil's learning, it is actually a compendium of Roman culture. Therefore, Macrobius' authoritative reading of Vergil provided him with the structure for his work.

The result of Macrobius' elevation of Vergil's poetry can be seen in a discussion of *G.* 1.237-9 from the *In Somnium Scipionis*. In those lines, Vergil says that the zodiac passes through both temperate zones (*per ambas*). However, Macrobius has just shown that the zodiac never, in fact, passes beyond the uninhabited torrid zone bounded by the tropics. Since Macrobius says that Vergil was never involved in any error (*Vergilius, quem nullius umquam disciplinae error involvit*),<sup>113</sup> he must search for an explanation for this apparent lapse. He offers two options: Vergil exaggerated; or Vergil wrote one preposition for another, in the same way that Homer often does.<sup>114</sup> Though Macrobius is not entirely satisfied with these options, he expresses his confidence that someone else could find a suitable solution:

*nobis aliud ad defensionem ultra haec quae diximus non occurrit. verum quoniam in medio posuimus quos fines numquam via solis excedat, manifestum est autem omnibus quid Maro dixerit, quem constat erroris ignarum, erit ingenii singulorum invenire quid possit amplius pro absolvenda hac quaestione conferri (In Somn. 2.8.8).*

---

<sup>109</sup> *Sat.* 1.24.16-20.

<sup>110</sup> Kaster provides a helpful overview of the *Saturnalia*'s structure (2011, il-liii).

<sup>111</sup> In response to Praetextatus' speech on religion in Vergil, the group equates Praetextatus' learning with that of Vergil: . . . *omnes concordii testimonio doctrinam et poetae et enarrantis aequalib[us]* . . . (3.10.1).

<sup>112</sup> *Sat.* 1.16.12 (*omnium disciplinarum peritus*); *Comm.* 1.6.44 (*nullius disciplinae expertus*), and *Comm.* 1.15.12 (*disciplinarum omnium peritissimus*).

<sup>113</sup> *In Somn.* 2.8.1.

<sup>114</sup> *In Somn.* 2.8.2-7. Macrobius suggests that Vergil used *per* in place of either *sub* or *inter*.

I cannot think of anything else in his defense, beyond what I have said. But since I have shown what limits the path of the sun never crosses and since it is clear to all what Vergil said (whom we agree knew no error), it will be up to the ingenuity of each of us to find what else could be brought forward to resolve this question.

Because Vergil's texts are agreed to be inerrant, Macrobius thinks there is an explanation for the text's apparent error. In the various explanations that he offers, he borrows Greek habits of reading Homer and applies them to Vergil's text. This passage shows most clearly that the exaltation of Vergil created the need for vigorous interpretation.

As we have seen, Macrobius imagines Vergil as a source of profound learning in both the *Saturnalia* and the *In Somnium Scipionis*. Since Macrobius described Vergil as more than a poet, his own role as an interpreter came to be increasingly significant. Thus, the exaltation of Vergil authorizes the *Saturnalia*'s expansive reception of Vergil. This point is neatly confirmed by Macrobius' creative commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio.<sup>115</sup> In his *In Somnium Scipionis*, Macrobius idiosyncratically treated Cicero as an author who concealed wisdom beyond the literal meaning of his words.<sup>116</sup> It is surprising for a modern reader acquainted with Cicero's lucid prose to find Macrobius suggesting that he disguised his learning. Yet Macrobius' treatment of Cicero allowed him to write his own, extremely ambitious commentary. He ends the commentary by celebrating the perfection of the *Somnium Scipionis*. Cicero, he says, included in his narrative the three divisions of philosophy: The political aspects of Scipio's dream are ethical; details related to the cosmos describe the secrets of physical philosophy (*physicae secreta*); the discussion of the motion and immortality of the soul ascends to the heights of

---

<sup>115</sup> While Favorinus Eulogius had written a brief treatise on two aspects of Cicero's *In Somnium Scipionis* (its numerology and the harmony of the spheres), he does not devote the same level of attention to Cicero's text as Macrobius does.

<sup>116</sup> At *In Somn.* 2.12.7, Macrobius made this explicit: *et quia Tullio mos est profundam rerum scientiam sub brevitate tegere verborum, nunc quoque miro compendio tantum includit arcanum quod Plotinus, magis quam quisquam verborum parvus, libro integro disseruit.* The treatise is *Ennead* 1.1.

rational philosophy (*ad altitudinem philosophiae rationalis ascendit*).<sup>117</sup> The final sentence of Macrobius' commentary justifies his work:

*vere igitur pronuntiandum est nihil hoc opere perfectius, quo universa philosophiae continetur integritas (In Somn. 2.17.17).*

Truly, therefore, it must be said that nothing is more perfect than this work, in which is contained as a whole the entirety of philosophy.

By reading Cicero's text as containing all of philosophy, Macrobius allows himself to treat all of philosophy within the limits of his commentary.<sup>118</sup> In the same way that the *Saturnalia* treats the *Aeneid* as a compendium of Roman learning, the *In Somnium Scipionis* treats Cicero's text as a compendium of philosophy. In both works, Macrobius increases his own status as reader by treating his author as a profound source of wisdom.

To sum up, the reading of Vergil's text as containing deeper wisdom was a significant act of appropriation performed by Late Antique readers. This shift was a strong act of reading, and it authorized readers to continue to look for and find further mysteries in Vergil. Allegorical interpretation proceeded from the Late Antique reader's desire to make Vergil meaningful. Therefore, while Comparetti was right that Late Antique readers sought to discover hidden erudition in Vergil's verses, they did not really think his art a mystery. Rather, they were sure that their own goal was to expound a poetry whose aims seemed altogether familiar; for they were more interested in seeing what they could make of Vergil than they were in adhering to the letter of his text.

---

<sup>117</sup> *In Somn.* 2.17.15-16. On the parts of philosophy, see Hadot (1979).

<sup>118</sup> This desire for perfection motivates the organization of Macrobius' commentary into two books of eight and seven sections each, since this is a division that mirrors the numerological perfection of Scipio's age at the time of his death. Nino Marinone was the first modern reader to observe the numerological arrangement of Macrobius' commentary (1990, 371-5).

### III. Conclusion

Jerome and Macrobius described literature as a meditation upon pre-existent texts. In this way, they legitimized the work of strong readers upon canonical texts. That is, they offered theoretical standing for the interpretive activity of their contemporaries. In approaching a series of diverse texts from Late Antiquity, I have shown that these works were shaped by the idea of reading as a strong and influential act. While I would not want to suggest that there were no differences between the particular uses of Scriptural and poetic texts, there are a number of ways in which the Late Antique turn towards reading is manifest in contemporary approaches to both the Scriptures and to Vergil's poetry. Readers lavished time and energy on extensive commentaries. They sought to recover hidden and secondary meanings beyond the plain or literal sense of the text. They interpreted their texts as the single source of all (relevant) learning. Rather than disparage or downplay their reliance upon earlier texts, Late Antique authors gladly acknowledged their debt to the past. And rather than assert their prominence as authors, these writers pointed to the importance of reading in their own formation. They expected their readers to appreciate that their interpretations of the Classics were actually shaping the tradition. In these ways, reading came to play a constituent role in the literature of Late Antiquity, whether one was busy reading Vergil or the Christian Scriptures. Moreover, in retrieving meanings for their texts, Late Antique readers called into question any simple relation between the written text and its proper meaning; for the very richness of their texts led them to value their interpretations above the text's literal meaning. Thus, Augustine values God's direct revelation above any human author's original intention. Moreover, although they were interpreting their texts in new ways, these readers did not disregard their authors; rather, they celebrated the author's wisdom and

learning. Whenever they were not sure what the author intended, they came first to assume that the author had to have been correct and then to understand in the text the meaning that made sense of their author. To have any hope of plumbing these depths, such readers would have to actively engage their texts. Therefore, the focus in Late Antiquity upon authoritative texts conceals the reader's involvement in devising their particularly Late Antique reception.

## Chapter Two

### Prefaces and the Reader's Approach to the Text

In Late Antiquity, prefaces played a significant role in mediating the presence of their texts. Jerome provides a vivid image for how prefaces function; he does so in an explanation of the first Psalm, which was traditionally described as a preface to the book of Psalms.<sup>1</sup> He compares the work to a large house with many rooms; each individual room has a door and a key (its title); and the house as a whole has one door (the first psalm) and one key.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Jerome imagines this preface as a *limen*, the boundary which both restricts and grants the reader access to the book. In creating a space for the reader to approach the text from beyond its normal bounds, a preface can permit, engage, or even forestall possible readings. As it is the key that unlocks the meaning of the whole book, whoever understands the first psalm will be able to understand the rest. Jerome, therefore, explicitly describes the role played by prefaces in the mediation of textual meaning. While earlier authors employed prefatory material of various kinds, contemporary poets came to exploit the preface's paratextual potential. In so doing, they complicated any easy approach to the text.

Jerome's insight suggests that authors in Late Antiquity were aware of the importance of their prefaces. The extant prefaces to Late Antique poetry are paratexts, a category first defined by Gérard Genette in *Seuils* (translated in 1997 as *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*). As

---

<sup>1</sup> For the titles of individual Psalms and the part which they played in exegesis, see Schröder (1999), 196-8. For the first Psalm as a preface, see Jerome *Commentarioli in Psalmos* (CC 72), 1; Origen *Exegetica in Psalmos* (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* XII, 1080); and Hilarius *Tractatus Super Psalmos*, "Instructio Psalmorum," 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Tractatus in Psalmos* (CC 78), 1.1

Genette observes, texts are never found in the abstract; rather, they are read within an apparatus, a physical text, a series of markers such as the name of the author, a title, or illustrations.<sup>3</sup> As the name implies, a paratext is not actually part of the text. Rather, the paratext is precisely that which allows the text to be read, as it exists “pour le *présenter*, au sens habituel de ce verbe, mais aussi en son sens le plus fort : pour le *rendre présent*, pour assurer sa présence au monde, sa « réception » et sa consommation, sous la forme, aujourd’hui du moins, d’un livre.”<sup>4</sup> Insofar as a preface enables its text to be read, the preface becomes literary, despite the fact that prefaces often appear trite and hackneyed. As Genette puts it, “[L]a préface est peut-être, de toutes les pratiques littéraires, la plus typiquement littéraire, parfois au meilleur, parfois au pire sens, et le plus souvent aux deux à la fois.”<sup>5</sup> In presenting their texts, prefaces declare that those texts are not self-explanatory, that they must be read and understood within a particular framework. And because the paratext establishes a liminal zone, it speaks to the reader more directly than does the text itself. For these reasons, the paratext is a privileged site of interaction between a text and its readers. Nevertheless, Genette described the preface as aligned with the author’s subjectivity: “La plus importante, peut-être, des fonctions de la préface originale consiste en une interprétation du texte par l’auteur, ou, si l’on préfère, en une déclaration d’intention.”<sup>6</sup> Because it stands apart from its text, a preface creates space both for the reader and for the author: the author, as if he were a reader, describes in a preface the meaning of his text; the reader finds in the preface a separable lens through which to view the text. Thus, prefaces enrich the reading of a text and grant it the quality of having already been read. And, therefore, prefaces are important as such when directed towards an audience interested in the creation of poetic meaning.

---

<sup>3</sup> Genette (1987), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Genette (1987), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Genette (1987), 270.

<sup>6</sup> Genette (1987), 205.

Genette's theory has shed new light on ancient practice, though Genette himself wrongly thought that authors and scribes could not distinguish text from paratext in a manuscript and, therefore, that significant paratexts were not to be found until after the introduction of the printing press.<sup>7</sup> But, even apart from prefaces, a series of other paratextual guides were employed in both late and classical antiquity.<sup>8</sup> At times, authors even commented directly upon the apparatus of their texts; thus, Ausonius claimed that the only thing he liked about his *Cupido cruciatus* was its title (*mihi prater lemma nihil placet*<sup>9</sup>). Although text and paratext were even more unstable than they are now,<sup>10</sup> ancient authors did plan the presentation of their work; and they did append to them separate prefaces.<sup>11</sup>

In defining his topic, Genette distinguished between the paratext *per se* and introductory material directly incorporated into the body of a poem. Thus, the epic proem, in use since Homer, is both theoretically and actually distinct from the paratextual preface. Whereas the proem approaches complete assimilation to the continuous text, the preface stands apart and comments upon that text. In a preface, the author speaks *in propria persona*, rather than as “the Poet” (i.e. the *ego* of *arma virumque cano* is the poet; the *ego* of *ille ego qui* is Vergil). In Late Antiquity, preface and proem stood side by side. Thus, Claudian and Prudentius' epics begin first

---

<sup>7</sup> Genette (1987), 9; and for the absence of prefaces in particular, 152-158. Compare Rigolot (2000), who similarly links the (Renaissance's) development of the paratext to the emergence of literary subjectivity. Laurenti (1971) is a helpful bibliography of prefaces in the Classical and vernacular literatures, although the field has seen a resurgence of interest since Genette (1987).

<sup>8</sup> Fredouille et al. (1997) is a series of studies on ancient paratexts (not specifically poetic). Gutzwiller (2005) and Grafton and Williams (2006) discuss, respectively, the new Posidippus papyrus and the books of Eusebius and Jerome. Schröder (1999) is a thorough study of titles and other headings in Latin literature. Late Antique illustrations to Vergil survive in both the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Romanus*; and Helen Woodruff (1930) has argued, on stylistic grounds, that illustrations to Prudentius' *Psychomachia* descend from a fifth-century archetype.

<sup>9</sup> Auson. *Cupido. Ausonius Gregorio Filio sal. Compare Mart.* 14.2, in which the poet says he has provided *lemmata*, so that the reader may skip the verses and read only the titles.

<sup>10</sup> On “The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World,” see Starr (1987).

<sup>11</sup> On the various labels ascribed by the manuscripts to the prefaces of Claudian, see Felgentreu (1999), 59-66: *praefatio* is the most common title, followed by *prologus* and *prooemium*. Because paratexts were unstable even after the invention of the printing press, the fact that various manuscripts present different titular formulae should not call into doubt their basic authority. In any case, there can be no doubt about the first poem of Commodian's *Instructiones*; it is an acrostic that spells out the word *praefatio*.

with prefaces and then with separate proems constructed along traditional lines.<sup>12</sup> Because it is the distance of the paratext that makes it central to the Late Antique turn towards the reader, I discuss here only those prefaces that are in fact paratextual.<sup>13</sup>

Rather than circumscribe himself within a closed text, the Late Antique poet freely admits the constraints set upon his authority and willingly engages the permeable limits of his poetry. A paratextual preface both addresses the reader from beyond the text itself and also permits the poet to authorize his own reading of a poem. In Late Antiquity, Claudian and Prudentius developed earlier prefatory forms into their own distinctly paratextual prefaces. Moreover, Ausonius, in order to complicate the reading of his works, wrote a variety of prefaces in verse and in prose. Though earlier poets had also written prose prefaces, Ausonius' prefaces directly confront the author's ambiguous link to his own work. These prefaces, therefore, served to negotiate, for Late Antique poets, the active involvement of their readership.

The prefaces to Late Antique poetry were not entirely new. Although Augustan poetry is noticeably devoid of prefaces, both republican and post-Augustan poets used a variety of prefaces to introduce their work. In the following pages, I will draw a distinction between the poetry that elides its own context and the poetry that calls attention to its circumstances. In some respects, this difference maps onto the difference between Classical and post-Classical poetry. By considering the use of prefaces in earlier Latin poetry, I will both describe the various functions of these prefaces and also situate them within the tradition of Latin poetry. Without

---

<sup>12</sup> For the distinction between preface and proem, compare Felgentreu (1999), "*Praefatio* und Proöm," 13-18. Raffaele Perrelli's otherwise helpful study, *I proemî Claudianeî. Tra epica ed epidittica* (1992), is vitiated by its failure to distinguish between Claudian's prefaces and his proems (compare Felgentreu 1999, 10-12).

<sup>13</sup> Thus, I do not discuss the introductory sections of either Juvencus' *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* or the *Cento Probae*. Although some of the manuscripts label these sections as *praefationes*, they are in dactylic hexameter and more similar to proems than prefaces.

ignoring the similarities between the Late Antique prefaces and their various predecessors, I will focus upon how later prefaces anticipate the gap between a text and its consequent reading.

## I. Prefaces and Post-Classical Poetry

Classical poets do not use prefaces; post-Classical poets use prefaces to situate their work within a particular, ephemeral context. A Classical text is timeless, set apart from the realia surrounding its original composition. Thus, Horace proclaims his poetry a *monumentum aere perennius* (*Carm.* 3.30.1).<sup>14</sup> A post-Classical text admits that it is secondary, that it can only be read within and against a certain framework. Of course, the categories “Classical” and “post-Classical” must be used with caution when applied to any historical period.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the two terms describe strategies according to which authors could and did construct their work. Thus, Vergil, Horace, and Propertius begin their poems at the first line, without any authorial intrusion.<sup>16</sup> However, Catullus, Ovid (at least in the *Amores*), Persius, and Martial employ brief prefatory poems at the head of their books; to some degree, they eschew a Classical poetics. In comedy, Plautus had employed prologues more freely than Greek playwrights; and Terence further distinguished his prologues from the dramatic action of the play. And, although earlier poets did not do so, Martial and Statius use prose prefaces to introduce individual books of poetry. Thus, it is possible, in various traditions of Latin poetry, to trace a movement from texts

---

<sup>14</sup> Oliensis (1998) surveys the ways in which Horace constructed an authorial persona, at times confidently and at other times more tentatively.

<sup>15</sup> On the Classicisms of antiquity, see the essays in Porter (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Because they are, like proems, indistinct from the text itself, I exclude from consideration here the textually-incorporated dedications that are common in Classical poetry. Thus, Horace, *e.g.*, addresses Maecenas at the beginning of his *Epodes*, *Carmina*, *Sermones*, and *Epistulae*.

for which prefaces are either absent or unimportant to texts that are emphatically introduced by their prefaces. In this limited sense, post-Augustan poetry was in fact post-Classical.<sup>17</sup>

Since comedic prefaces were performed on the stage, they are not paratexts in exactly the same way as poetic prefaces. Nevertheless, their development at Rome reveals a trend towards the contextualization via preface of the literary text. And in any case, by the fourth century the prologues of Plautus and Terence were primarily read rather than performed.<sup>18</sup> Through their prologues—*prologus* is the name both for a prefatory speech and for the specific character who came to deliver such speeches—Plautus and Terence presented a distinct character who offered commentary on the play and its production.<sup>19</sup> In Greek comedy, prologues were spoken either by a god or by a character from within the play. While Plautus elsewhere uses prologues featuring gods and characters, in eight of his plays he employs a character *prologus* whose only role is to introduce the play, from the outside as it were. Terence uses only this latter form of prologue, and he turns it into a forum for the author's polemical and metapoetic commentary.<sup>20</sup> Whereas other prefaces tend to blend into the play that follows, the *prologus* is set apart from the mimesis of the play and offers insight into its production.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Plautus' prologue to the *Menaechmi* begins with a play on the poet's introduction:

*Salutem primum iam a principio propitiam  
mihi atque vobis, spectatores, nuntio.  
apporto vobis Plautum, lingua non manu,  
quaeso ut benignis accipiatis auribus* (1-4).

Now first do I announce by way of beginning, spectators,  
A kindly greeting for me and for you.

---

<sup>17</sup> It could have been otherwise. *Don Quixote*, the literary masterpiece of the Spanish *Siglo de Oro*, begins only after eleven epigrams, a preface, and a separate dedication.

<sup>18</sup> Thus, Ausonius advises his grandson to read (*perlege*) the works of Menander and Terence (*Protr.* 45-60).

<sup>19</sup> On comedic prologues, see Raffaelli (2009), 13-125. For a study of the individual prologues of Plautus, see Abel (1955)

<sup>20</sup> On the character *prologus* from Plautus to Terence, see Raffaelli (2009), 53-67.

<sup>21</sup> Compare Raffaelli (2009), 59.

I bring you Plautus, by tongue and not by hand,  
And ask you to receive him with kindly ears.

In this prologue, Plautus' ironic detachment marks his presentation of the play. It is Terence, however, who fully develops this detachment and focuses upon the circumstances of his play's performance, rather than background to the narrative.<sup>22</sup> For example, the manuscripts give two separate prologues to the *Hecyra*, which correspond to the playwright's second and third attempts to stage the play.<sup>23</sup> By distancing his prologues from the following mimetic productions, Terence created a space in which to address his rivals and defend his own work. Thus, in his prologue to the *Eunuchus*, Terence addresses a rival playwright who accused him of plagiarizing from Naevius and Plautus.<sup>24</sup> Terence denies that he even knew those earlier Latin plays, says that he borrowed instead from Menander, points out that comedy plays on stock characters, and concludes that poets always borrow from one another (*nullumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius*<sup>25</sup>). Terence, therefore, turned the prologue into a statement on the play's production and presentation.<sup>26</sup> He did so after Plautus had introduced the *prologus* as a character distinct from the action of the play, which allowed him to write self-reflexive prologues. As Roman comedy negotiated its standing in relation both to its Greek past and its Roman present, Plautus and Terence innovated with prologues that would win over their audience and define their plays.

---

<sup>22</sup> Compare Raffaelli (2009), 61: "Per riassumere con una formula, si può dire che mentre il prologo di Plauto è legato strutturalmente alla commedia, quello di Terenzio è legato non alla commedia, ma all'occasione teatrale, ad una specifica rappresentazione della commedia e soltanto a quella."

<sup>23</sup> On a comparable prologue interpolated into Plautus' *Casina* for a performance of the play a generation after its original composition, see Raffaelli (2009), 60-3.

<sup>24</sup> On this prologue and Terence's relation to earlier comedy, see Fontaine (Forthcoming).

<sup>25</sup> *Eun.* 41.

<sup>26</sup> As a neat confirmation of the paratextual character of Terence's prologues, Raffaelli describes their transmission in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. *Codex Bembinus* (2009, 110-25; and in more detail in Raffaelli 1980). In the manuscript, these prefaces are centered across two pages, with space remaining at the top and bottom of each page; the play begins on the following page, with normal spacing.

Epigrammatic prefaces were used to introduce either an individual poem or a collection of poetry.<sup>27</sup> Though not an epigram *per se*, Catullus 1 introduces the poet's *libellus* as a Hellenistic (i.e. *lepidus*) book of poetry and dedicates it to Cornelius Nepos. While Catullus' hendecasyllabic poem situates his book within a particular context and before a particular audience, the meter and the manner of this poem reduce the paratextual distance between it and the poems to follow: i.e. Catullus 1 is, like many other poems in this collection, brief, learned, directed to a specific recipient, and personal. Catullus 65, however, is remarkable for introducing a single poem rather than a book or collection of poetry. In elegiac couplets, Catullus tells Hortalus that grief over the death of his brother has taken the Muses away from him; in his grief, Catullus sends to Hortalus a translation from Callimachus; Catullus 66 is then the poet's version of Callimachus' elegy on the lock of Berenice. Catullus 65, therefore, is a distinct introduction of the poem that follows. It is worth noting that both of Catullus' prefatory poems are directly linked to Hellenistic poetry.

While Propertius and Tibullus began their elegies without introduction, Ovid included a prefatory epigram at the head of the revised edition of his *Amores*.<sup>28</sup> In two elegiac couplets, Ovid allows his work to speak for itself (*Qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli, tres sumus*). Since the poet reduced the size of his work, he says it will now be less of a bother to his readers. This witty preface creates space for the poet's ironic commentary on his *Amores*. Although it is a brief four lines, Ovid uses this preface to create his own persona and to explain why he has revised the *Amores*.

For his individual books, Martial wrote a number of prefatory epigrams. Thus, Martial's first book begins (after a prose epistle) with four separate prefatory poems. The first poem of the

---

<sup>27</sup> For a thorough survey of the various prefaces to Latin literature, see Felgentreu (1999), 39-57.

<sup>28</sup> On this epigram, the personification of books, and epigrammatic prefaces in Greek poetry, see McKeown (1987), II, 1-4.

first book addresses the reader and celebrates the poet's fame (*toto notus in orbe Martialis*).<sup>29</sup> The second poem offers directions on where to purchase Martial's works.<sup>30</sup> The third poem addresses the book and says that it would be safer for it to stay at home than to take to the open air (*aetherias volitare per auras*). The fourth poem addresses the emperor and declares that the poet's playful epigrams do not reflect the author's morality. By returning in multiple prefaces to the publication and reading of his epigrams, Martial draws attention to the particular context of his work. Even in this respect, however, Martial's prefaces are inseparable from the subsequent series of epigrams. The one blends into the other, and the distinction between text and paratext is not so strong as in Ovid's *Amores*.

If the fourteen choliambic lines of the Neronian satirist Persius are a preface,<sup>31</sup> the *Saturae* is the earliest example of a Latin book introduced in a meter set off from the rest of the work. The difference of meter is important, because it formally marks the limits of the paratext. Whereas there is no evidence that earlier satirists introduced their work in any comparable way, Persius offers a discrete commentary on his own poetry. The preface itself is programmatic, as Persius rejects the poetics of Hesiod, Callimachus, and Ennius and then praises the role of poverty in compelling poets to sing.<sup>32</sup> The metrical distance of Persius' preface allows him to construct his own satiric persona, and to give that persona authority within the text. Once again, an imperial poet uses a preface to situate himself against an earlier tradition and within a particular cultural moment.

---

<sup>29</sup> Martial's epigrams often address their reader directly (e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.113, 2.8, 5.16, 10.2, and 13.3). Fitzgerald (2007), 139-66 discusses the various audiences of Martial's poetry and argues that Martial created for Rome the idea of an anonymous reader.

<sup>30</sup> On the materiality of Martial's poetics, see Seo (2009).

<sup>31</sup> One branch of the manuscript tradition places these lines after Persius' *Saturae*. Kibel, who thinks that the choliambic lines are in fact a preface, treats the question in detail in his commentary (1990).

<sup>32</sup> See Reckford (2009), 52-5.

In addition to verse prefaces, imperial poets also wrote prefaces in prose, usually in epistolary form and directed to a specific recipient, but sometimes directed to the general reader.<sup>33</sup> The epistolary preface was introduced to Greek literature by Archimedes, and the earliest extant and explicitly epistolary prefaces in Latin are from Seneca the Elder.<sup>34</sup> Quintilian mentions prefaces written by Seneca the Younger and Pomponius Secundus and concerned with tragic diction; and, therefore, these were presumably prefaces to their tragedies and in prose.<sup>35</sup> Though Terence's prologues are unexpected, it is even more surprising that imperial drama should have been introduced in prose. Yet prose prefaces to drama were common enough that Martial presented them as natural in comparison with his own prose prefaces.<sup>36</sup> Further, Suetonius quotes a few words from a preface written by Lucan that may have been in prose, although it could also be metrical; in any case, it is unclear what work it would have introduced.<sup>37</sup> The tenth book of Columella's *De re rustica* provides a Vergilian treatment of horticulture, and is introduced by an epistolary preface in prose. And Statius mentions an epistolary preface to the *Thebaid*, although that preface is no longer extant.<sup>38</sup> The only early imperial prose prefaces to survive introduce the *Epigrams* of Martial and the *Silvae* of Statius.

Martial uses epistolary prose prefaces to introduce books 1, 2, 8, 9 and 12 of his *Epigrams*. The epistolary preface to book one is addressed to the general reader, rather than to a

---

<sup>33</sup> For an overview of prose prefaces to Latin literature, see Janson (1964). For a survey of prose prefaces up to Statius, see Johannsen (2006), 26-35. For prose prefaces to poetry, from Statius to Ennodius, see Pavlovskis (1967). For a thorough study of Martial and Statius' prose prefaces, see Johannsen (2006).

<sup>34</sup> See Janson (1964), 19-22 and 49-50, for Archimedes and Seneca, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> Quint. 8.3.31, on which see Felgentreu (1999), 15.

<sup>36</sup> In the prose preface to his second book of epigrams, Martial presents Decianus as being puzzled: "*video quare tragoedia aut comoedia epistolam accipiant, quibus pro se loqui non licet: epigrammata curione non egent.*"

<sup>37</sup> Suetonius, *Vita Lucani* (Reifferscheid, p. 50, 6-9); and, for the scholarship, Felgentreu (1999), 48-9.

<sup>38</sup> *Silvae* 4, *praefatio*: *Maximum Vibium et dignitatis et eloquentiae nomine a nobis diligi satis eram testatus epistola, quam ad illum de editione Thebaidos meae publicavi.*

specific dedicatee.<sup>39</sup> In this preface, Martial acknowledges that epigrams are scurrilous and urges his reader not to be offended.<sup>40</sup> Martial ends his preface by comparing those who disapprove of his poetry to Cato the Younger, who attended the Floralia only to express his disapproval. Then, Martial says that he will close his letter in poetry (*epistulam versibus clusero*): in four choliamb, he addresses “Cato” directly and asks why he would attend festivities that he could not enjoy, i.e. why any humorless reader would open a book of epigrams. By closing his preface in verse, Martial closes the gap between his prefatory epistle and the epigrams that are to follow. The preface to book two takes up the very impropriety of an epigrammatist writing in prose; Martial addresses his friend Decianus’ question of why he is writing a prose preface and ends with the observation that the length of this letter will do the reader a favor by boring him before he even gets to the epigrams.<sup>41</sup> The preface to book eight dedicates that book to Domitian and reveals that, on account of his dedicatee, Martial will be more circumspect in this book than an epigrammatist would normally be. At the beginning of book nine, a short and extra-sessional epigram (*epigramma quod extra ordinem paginarum est*) is introduced by a brief letter to Toranius.<sup>42</sup> The epigram and its introduction are notable both because they stand outside the normal order of the book and because the epigram was written to accompany a statue of its author and addresses the reader in the vocative. The preface to book twelve explains to Priscus why Martial has returned to Spain and not published a new volume of epigrams in three years. In his prefaces, Martial provides a context in which to read his epigrams; but he uses them in only

---

<sup>39</sup> Some of the manuscripts give as a title *Valerius Martialis lectori suo salutem*. Johannsen concludes that Martial’s other epistles are, like this one, meant for the general public, despite their epistolary form (2006, 238-9).

<sup>40</sup> For a literary reading of this letter, see Fitzgerald (2007), 71-3.

<sup>41</sup> On this preface and Martial’s ideal of *brevitas*, see Borgo (2001).

<sup>42</sup> Johannsen (2003) argues that *extra ordinem paginarum* means the letter was appended to the outside of the book scroll. Fitzgerald thinks the letter was placed inside the book but at its head (2007, 150-2).

five books; and he indicates that they are a novel device. Their role is to offer a frame and a context in which to understand the poet and his work.

Each of the five books of Statius' *Silvae* is introduced by an epistolary preface, in prose and addressed to its dedicatee.<sup>43</sup> The prefaces to books 1-4 catalogue the contents of each book,<sup>44</sup> while the epistle to Abascantus at the head of book five introduces only the first poem in that book.<sup>45</sup> Because Statius' prefaces catalogue and explain the contents of each book, they are an important guide for their reader. They set out the relations of the poems to their dedicatee and to their original context.<sup>46</sup> Further, the preface to the first book defends Statius' decision to publish the *Silvae*, on the grounds that Homer and Vergil both wrote lighter poetry (the *Batrachomyomachia* and *Culex* respectively). In this way, Statius uses his preface to present his work as in line with the lighter side of Classical poetry.

In sum, Latin poets had long employed a series of paratextual prefaces to guide the reader into their poetry. Plautus and Terence came to write self-referential prologues, and Republican and Imperial poets came to write epigrammatic prefaces. In the first century CE, epistolary prose prefaces began to be written, in some cases in addition to separate epigrammatic prefaces. Comic prologues became more distinct from their play, as the tradition of Latin comedy developed; and the epigrammatic prefaces of Catullus, Ovid, Martial and Persius describe, to varying degrees, the contingent character of their works. While there were Hellenistic precedents to these epigrammatic prefaces, the prefaces of Ovid and Persius were attached to books of elegiac love poetry and satire, genres which were developed only at Rome and which did not, in earlier cases,

---

<sup>43</sup> Newlands (2009) provides an excellent and up to date review of Statius' prefaces.

<sup>44</sup> Pagán (2010) explores the importance of the literary catalogue, for Statius and Pliny the Younger.

<sup>45</sup> For the likelihood that *Silvae* 5 was published posthumously and that Statius never wrote a proper preface to the book, see Gibson (2007), xxviii-xxx.

<sup>46</sup> Rühl (2003) explores Statius' construction, via publication, of a literary context for what was, originally, occasional poetry.

include prefaces. In their prose prefaces, Martial and Statius reject a Classical poetics in favor of a more layered sense of the text's production and reception. In each of these cases, prefaces became more pronounced as the tradition turned towards a more explicit concern for introducing and mediating the text before its audience. Therefore, these prefaces are as paratexts post-Classical, for they draw attention to the space between their own text and the tradition to which it belongs. They situate that tradition within their own poetic moment, and thus provide a subjective view of their poetry. In surveying these prefaces, I have shown that earlier Latin prefaces had always sought to complicate the presentation of the text. Next, I will show that Late Antique poets depart from earlier practice. That departure marks a particularly Late Antique aesthetic, characterized by the reader's active involvement in the text and the poet's concern for the meaning and reception of his words.

## II. The Allegorical Prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius

Twelve of Claudian's prefaces survive, all of them written in elegiac couplets. Each preface introduces an individual book of his hexameter poetry: panegyrics, invectives, epithalamia, and the epic *de raptu Proserpinae*.<sup>47</sup> In addition to a preface and epilogue to some unrecoverable edition of his works, Prudentius wrote prefaces in various meters to his hexameter *Liber Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia*, as well as one preface each for the two books of his *Contra Symmachum*. All of these prefaces are allegorical in the sense that they provide an indirect introduction to the following poem. Claudian usually describes himself and his setting in terms of Classical myth; Prudentius often fashions for his poem a Scriptural allegory. There was

---

<sup>47</sup> On Claudian's prefaces, see Zarini (2000), Felgentreu (1999), and Schmidt (1976). Parravicini (1914) surveys the prefaces of Claudian as well as of other Latin authors.

no direct precedent for writing allegorical prefaces, or even prefaces to individual poems.<sup>48</sup> Persius' choliambic preface was the only prior verse preface that was metrically distinct from its book of poetry. Other epigrammatic prefaces introduced collections of shorter poems rather than individual books of hexameter poetry. And though Greek panegyric poems were introduced in Late Antiquity by prefaces in iambic trimeters, there is no evidence of a direct correlation one way or the other between those prefaces and Latin forms of the preface.<sup>49</sup> While drawing on various models, Prudentius and Claudian innovated by writing prefaces that are distinguished by meter from the poems they introduce. In this way, they created for themselves a separable paratext. In writing such prefaces, they set out their own approach to the text. At the same time, by marking the limits and circumstances of their texts, these prefaces repeat the earlier movement of post-Classical authors towards the contextualization of their work.

Most of Claudian's hexameter poems are introduced by a short poem in elegiac couplets, usually a mythical allegory that presents the protagonists of the panegyric through their resemblance to gods or heroes.<sup>50</sup> Claudian himself is often compared to the Muses or to Apollo. Two of Claudian's prefaces, *pr. III Cons.* and *pr. VI Cons.*, are descriptions of the circumstances of their recitation, the court and the assembled nobles. Like comedic prologues, Claudian's prefaces were originally written for a specific occasion, with the exception of the preface to the first (and probably also the second) book of the *de raptu Proserpinae*.<sup>51</sup> Thus, Claudian's

---

<sup>48</sup> For a comparison of the prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius, see Herzog (1966, 119-35), along with Dorfbauer (2010). Herzog focuses upon the allegorical technique underlying each set of prefaces. Dorfbauer questions Herzog's explanation of the origin of each poet's technique; he also shows that Prudentius' prefaces are more directly related to the subject of their poems, whereas Claudian's typically discuss either the performance of his poem or his own poetic persona.

<sup>49</sup> On the Greek prefaces, see Viljama (1968) and Cameron (1970b). On a connection between the rhetorical *prolatia* and poetic prefaces, see Felgentreu (1999), 51-4 and 213.

<sup>50</sup> See Felgentreu (1999), 187-9.

<sup>51</sup> On the difference between oral and textual prefaces, see Felgentreu (1999), 212-13; and Dorfbauer (2010). On the historical audience of Claudian's panegyrics, see Cameron (1970a), 228-52.

prefaces are usually not directly related to the content of their poem. Rather, they center upon the poet and his relation to the subject.

In his *Claudians Praefationes* (1999), Fritz Felgentreu provides a detailed study of Claudian's prefaces, but he does not set them within the context of Late Antique methods of reading.<sup>52</sup> Separately, in "Claudian: The Epic Poet in the Prefaces" (2004), Catherine Ware shows that Claudian positions himself as heir of the Classical poets.<sup>53</sup> Without in any way disagreeing that Claudian appropriates the authority of his Classical predecessors, I would point out that his prefaces work to guarantee the reception of his panegyric poetry. They ask the reader to approach the text as though it were epic poetry, to accept the liberties that Claudian takes. By establishing the poet's authority in relation to the court, Claudian's prefaces guarantee that his poems will be read within their original context. In the same way as they directed the initial, oral reception of his poems, Claudian's prefaces shaped the reception of his published work. For, in writing his prefaces, Claudian added to his poetry a further layer of interpretability. By presenting an authorial persona in this way, Claudian both provided a lens by which to interpret his poetry and also revealed that the text could be read differently.

Claudian provided a simple allegorical preface to his *Epithalamium de Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*.<sup>54</sup> The first sixteen lines of the twenty-two-line preface describe the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the gathering of the gods and their feast. In their feasting, the gods turned to poetry and to Apollo:

*tum Phoebus, quo saxa domat, quo pertrahit ornos,  
pectine temptavit nobiliore lyram:  
venturumque sacris fidibus iam spondet Achillem,  
iam Phrygias caedes, iam Simoenta canit.*

---

<sup>52</sup> The same is true of Zarini's recent overview of the prefaces to Latin panegyric poetry (2000).

<sup>53</sup> See also her forthcoming work on *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition* (2012).

<sup>54</sup> For a general overview of this preface, see Felgentreu (1999), 85-93.

*frondoso strepuit felix hymenaeus Olympo,  
reginam resonant Othrys et Ossa Thetin (pr. Nupt. 17-22).*

Then Phoebus plied his lyre using the sublime plectrum  
with which he tames rocks and draws out the woods:  
now he promises with his sacred strings the coming of Achilles,  
now he sings of the Phrygian slaughters, and now of the Simois.  
His happy hymeneal sounds through leafy Olympus,  
Othrys and Ossa echo in return that Thetis is queen.

The preface, and especially these concluding lines, draw a neat comparison between Apollo and Claudian. Claudian presents himself as a divine poet in order to guarantee that his praise of Honorius will be acceptable. Because both the mythical setting and the meter of the preface are entirely distinct from the poem that follows, Claudian's preface directs the reading of his poem from beyond the strict limits of the text. Rather than being a part of the poem itself, this preface tells us about Claudian and about one possible way to approach his text. Therefore, Claudian enacts, in this preface, the proper reading of the text.

The preface to *Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti* produces a slightly more complex reading of Claudian's text. It begins with the observation that all kinds of people dream about the things they think about during the day.<sup>55</sup> After a priamel on the dreams of hunters, lawyers, charioteers, etc., the poet declares that his dream set him on Olympus singing of the gigantomachy before the feet of Jupiter. That personal revelation is explained in the final six lines of the preface, in which Claudian surprisingly concludes that his dream came true:

*additur ecce fides: nec me mea lusit imago,<sup>56</sup>  
inrita nec falsum somnia mittit ebur.  
en princeps, en orbis apex aequatus Olympo,  
en, quales memini, turba verenda, deos!  
fingere nil maius potuit sopor, altaque vati  
conventum caelo praebuit aula parem (pr. VI cons. 21-6).*

---

<sup>55</sup> For a general overview of this preface, see Felgentreu (1999), 142-156.

<sup>56</sup> Compare Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, who tells himself that he knows his love is a reflection: *iste ego sum! sensi, nec me mea fallit imago* (3.463). Claudian's self-assessment is fraught with danger.

Look, proof is given: my vision did not deceive me,  
nor did the false ivory send out an empty dream.  
There's the prince, and the world's summit, made equal to Olympus;  
there, just as I remember them, is the venerable crowd of gods!  
Sleep could not imagine anything greater, and this high court  
has given its poet an assembly equal to heaven.

The gates of sleep are usually introduced to qualify as fictional a narrative sent through the gate of ivory. Claudian, however, turns the image around by saying that his dream is *not* one of the false dreams. His audience is thereby likened to the gods on Olympus, and Claudian to a poet singing of the gigantomachy. The panegyric that follows in honor of Honorius is Claudian's creative mixture of history and mythology. By presenting his recitation as a dream come true, Claudian argues for the paradoxical veracity of his figural narrative and invites the audience to lend him their belief. The poetic preface allows Claudian to deepen the reading of the poem, as he asks the reader to navigate his treacherous mixture of historical epic and panegyric.<sup>57</sup> For, while his panegyric poetry is at times far-fetched, Claudian asks his audience to understand it as a *true* dream.<sup>58</sup> Thus, Claudian involves himself as poet in the reading of his work. While Hesiod and Ennius had also begun with their own divine visions, the separation of Claudian's preface creates a quasi-objective portrait of the author.

The prefaces of Prudentius also contain allegories that describe the author and his approach to the text, though his prefaces recall Scriptural rather than mythical narratives to describe the text in question. His prefaces are in various meters; only one of the six prefaces to his hexameter poetry (the first preface to the *Liber Apotheosis*) is in hexameters. The rest are marked by their meter as separate from the text.

Among Prudentius' prefaces, the preface to his second book of the *Contra Symmachum* most clearly reveals the poet at work. Prudentius recounts the story of Peter walking on water,

---

<sup>57</sup> On this mixture, see Perrelli (1992).

<sup>58</sup> Claudian's use of the verb *ingere* evokes the thin line that he walks.

falling under the pressure, and being supported by Christ, as an allegory for Prudentius' perilous attempt to enter upon the storms of dialectic. That is, Prudentius has left the safety of silence, attempted something of which he is incapable (i.e. arguing against Symmachus), and will fail in doubt if he does not receive divine assistance. That assistance from his divine addressee, however, will be a model for future readers. Thus, he ends the preface by saying that he will fall, unless he receives support:

. . . *ni tu, Christe potens, manum  
dextro numine porrigas,  
facundi oris ut inpetus  
non me fluctibus obruat,  
sed sensim gradiens vadis  
insistam fluitantibus* (S. 2 pr.).

. . . unless, powerful Christ, you stretch out  
your hand in the favor of your will,  
that the blast of his eloquent mouth  
should not overwhelm me with its breakers  
but that I should gradually stand on  
the flowing waters as though they were a path.

In the first place, there was a problem in composition: How could Prudentius succeed in writing his poem? As the preface unfolds, this becomes also a problem in reception: Will the poem that follows be judged a success? This preface is distinguished from its text by meter as well as subject matter; in the first three lines of this book, Prudentius even alludes to the second book of Vergil's *Georgics*, which shows that the book begins only after the preface is finished. Thus, the preface presents the poet from beyond the limits of his text.<sup>59</sup> From that space, Prudentius addresses his reader and presents a plan for the poem's success.

The preface to the *Psychomachia* is the most complex of Prudentius' prefaces. In that preface, Prudentius prepares the reader to understand his *Psychomachia* as an allegorical story of

---

<sup>59</sup> For that reason, I do not understand Anthony Dykes' attempt to analyze the text and preface of the *Amartigenia* as a single poem (2011), 196-203.

the soul's victory over vice and of the following birth of virtue through Christ. The prologue begins by describing Abraham, who is praised because he showed that virtue must win, through battle, a gift pleasing to God. Abraham gave himself as an example (*suumque suasor exemplum dedit*) that the soul must conquer its own monsters before producing the sacrifice that will please God. The preface continues with a narrative of Abraham rescuing Lot in battle from hostile kings, meeting Melchisedec (a type of Christ) during his return from battle, being visited by the trinity, and then becoming the father of the promised son, Isaac. The preface concludes with Prudentius' reading of the allegorical meaning of Abraham's life, in which Prudentius makes it clear that his preface's story contains a moral for the present day<sup>60</sup>:

*Haec ad figuram prae-notata est linea  
quam nostra recto vita resculpat pede . . . (Psych. pr. 50-1).*

This sketch was written down beforehand in view of the figure  
Which our lives would fashion in walking right.

Marc Mastrangelo has recently and admirably discussed the typological significance of this preface and of these lines.<sup>61</sup> He argues that the poet engages his faith to read the Old Testament as a model for the reader's present condition. As the following poem describes a battle between virtues and vices, the preface provides the key to who will win. Thereby, the reader is able to understand Abraham's life as having significance both for the poem and for his life. Through faith, the reader will follow the poet's example from the preface and interpret the entire poem as an allegory applicable to his own situation. Thus, the preface prepares the reader for the figural reading that will produce an ethical response to Prudentius' poem. Moreover, Jean-Louis Charlet, in his article "Signification de la préface à la *Psychomachia* de Prudence," shows that

---

<sup>60</sup> Compare *Ham.* pr. 25-6: *ergo ex futuris prisca coepit fabula / factoque primo res notata est ultima . . .*

<sup>61</sup> Mastrangelo (2008), 84-93.

specific verbal echoes tie the preface to the poem as a whole.<sup>62</sup> Rather than simply providing a self-enclosed narrative or miniature allegory, the preface to the *Psychomachia* provides a story and an interpretation that are connected to both the narrative and to the method of the poem as a whole. Because words, ideas, and structures from the preface are repeated in the poem, the preface allows the reader to approach the text with a prior understanding of its contents and method. As the first reader of the *Psychomachia*, Prudentius uses the preface to construct his own reading of the text and to invite the reader to follow him in it.<sup>63</sup>

Whereas the epigrammatic prefaces of earlier poets were programmatic and often epistolary, the prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius contain brief narratives that are allegorical of their texts. And while earlier prefaces usually introduce collections of poetry, these prefaces introduce individual poems; and they are expressly directed towards their reader's interpretation of the poem. Claudian and Prudentius either describe themselves as authors or provide finished and coherent readings of their poems, rather than explicitly addressing their readers or describing the reading of their poetry in general terms. Thus, their allegorical prefaces enact a particular reading of the text. And in this way the reader of an allegorical preface encounters a performance—the author's performance—of the reading of the text. We may infer that such performances became common at the end of the fourth century because the text was no longer expected to mean in a simple way. In writing such prefaces, these poets reveal that they did not expect their texts to be stable; rather, they knew that their readers would interpret them in various ways; and they attempted to direct those possible readings.

---

<sup>62</sup> Charlet (2003), 244-248. Macklin Smith had already made this point (1976), 206-22.

<sup>63</sup> On Prudentius' engagement with his reader's participation and what Mastrangelo calls the "pact struck between poet and reader," which ensures that "[b]oth are part of making meaning from the words on the page," see *Amartigenia* 624-5 and Mastrangelo (2008), 186, n. 29; and on the same topic, compare *ibid.* pp. 5-7 and 19-21.

### III. The Prose Prefaces of Ausonius

Ausonius wrote a series of epistolary prose prefaces to introduce his individual works. Like Martial and Statius, Ausonius presents his work through his prose prefaces. Unlike Martial and Statius, Ausonius purposefully creates distance between himself and his work and invites his reader to play an active role in his poetry. Thus, Ausonius uses his prefaces to complicate any easy approach to his work. In so doing, he expands the scope of such prose prefaces and engages the permeable limits of his text, in three important ways: (1) by describing the rules of his poetry, Ausonius opens the game to his audience; (2) by distancing himself from his poetry, Ausonius relaxes his own control over his work; (3) by asking the reader to complete his poetry, Ausonius allows the reader to take control of his work. Ausonius, therefore, employs the paratext to explore his own status as author and to engage the reader in the interpretation of his text. For this reason, his prefaces had to be fully distinct from the texts that they present. Insofar as Ausonius does not attempt to justify himself or his own approach to the text, his prefaces create space for a new kind of poetry, one that explores the potential of its own reception.<sup>64</sup>

#### a. The Rules of the Game

In separate prose prefaces, Ausonius describes the rules that motivate the *Griphus Ternarii Numeri*, the *Technopaegnon*, and the *Centio Nuptialis*. The *Griphus Ternarii Numeri* began during a banquet in Trier. Ausonius says in the preface that he had the idea to write a poem about things that come in threes, and that he finished it before dinnertime.<sup>65</sup> Then,

---

<sup>64</sup> I have already explored some of this material in Pelttari (2011).

<sup>65</sup> For a full reading of the *Griphus* (including a political solution to the riddle), see Hernández Lobato (2007).

Ausonius suggests that some readers might criticize him for not including, in his ninety hexameters, everything that has to do with the number three. Ausonius responds by pointing out that he had composed his poem as a joke and over drinks, and that he had in any case introduced a great many things that come in threes. And even if someone could come up with more, no one could list everything (*alius enim alio plura invenire potest, nemo omnia*). Since *tres* or a derivative appears six times in just the first three lines of the poem, a reader would quickly guess the subject of the poem, even without the preface. Nevertheless, the preface makes explicit the game behind the poem. In doing so, it makes the work seem artificial, or rather contingent upon a desire to follow the rules.

The *Technopaegnon* is a more complex exercise in ludic poetry. The work consists of a series of poems that end in monosyllables, normally avoided at the end of Latin hexameters. In his first preface, Ausonius describes the general terms of this technical poem and apologizes that there was no space for rhetorical embellishment. Ausonius' second preface to the *Technopaegnon* introduces just the first poem and describes its challenge.

*versiculi sunt monosyllabis coepti et monosyllabis terminati. nec hic modo stetit scrupē<sup>66</sup> difficultas, sed accessit ad miseriam concinnandi ut idem monosyllabon quod esset finis extremi versus principium fieret insequentis. dic ergo 'o mora' et 'o poena'! rem vanam quippe curavi (Technop. 2).*

These little verses begin with monosyllables and end with monosyllables. And the sharp difficulty does not end here, but my pitiable composition reached such a point that the same monosyllable that was the end of the last verse should be the beginning of the following one. So say, "what a waste" and "what a pain," for I spent time on empty material.

As in the preface to the *Griphus*, Ausonius makes the rules of the game explicit. The mock-serious reference to Cicero's *o tempora, o mores* establishes the playful tone. By describing his work in this way, Ausonius draws attention to his method of composition and away from the

---

<sup>66</sup> On the aleatory connotations of *scrupus*, see González Iglesias (2000).

subject of his lines. Thus, the poet steadfastly ignores Cato's advice: *rem tene, verba sequentur*.<sup>67</sup> Instead of trusting that his poem will be understood on its own, Ausonius offers his own way of understanding its meaning.

The *Cento Nuptialis* is the most extreme of Ausonius' ludic poems. In its preface, Ausonius answers at some length the question of what a cento is (*cento quid sit*). In chapter three, I discuss in detail the rules of the cento and the contents of this preface. In short, Ausonius (1) describes the secondary and composite nature of cento composition, (2) outlines the metrical constraints upon the cento poet, and (3) compares cento poetry to a popular game (*stomachion*), in which a player manipulates in various ways a series of geometrical shapes. In reading this preface, the reader is asked to accept the same rules that motivated its composition. Apart from those rules, the poem would not make sense. Thus, this paratext supplies the reader with information that can make the text readable.

While every paratext frames its work in some way, Ausonius uses the prefaces to his *Griphus*, *Technopaegnion*, and *Cento* to make explicit the verbal techniques that define their composition. In this way, he enables the reader to follow his lead, to participate in the same game. Unlike Classical poets, who construct their meaning as direct and unproblematic,<sup>68</sup> Ausonius wrote a series of poems that directly address the manipulation of language and its meanings. To these poems, Ausonius appends prefaces that explain his techniques. Therefore, the poetry that Ausonius wrote gave him the opportunity to write not just programmatic prefaces but also prefaces that directly guide the reader into their structured form.

---

<sup>67</sup> Quoted by Iulius Victor in his *Ars Rhetorica* (Giomini and Celentano), p. 3. The fragment is *Fil.* 15 (Jordan).

<sup>68</sup> I certainly do not mean that Classical poetry actually is direct or unproblematic; rather, it creates the impression of immediacy.

b. Distant Texts

In his prefaces to the *Cento*, the *Griphus*, the *Protrepticus ad nepotem*, and the *Bissula*, Ausonius draws attention to the distance between himself and the texts that he wrote. In the preface to the *Cento Nuptialis*, he makes a point of mentioning that he composed the poem one night at the request of the emperor Valentinian.<sup>69</sup> When Ausonius later recounts the story to his friend Axius Paulus, he describes the poem in distant terms.

*hoc tum die uno et addita lucubratione properatum modo inter liturarios meos cum repperissem, tanta mihi candoris tui et amoris fiducia est ut severitati tuae nec ridenda subtraherem (Cento. Ausonius Paulo sal.).*

It was finished quickly at that time, in one day with the night-time included. Just now, after I had found it amid my scratch paper, I had so much confidence in your candor and affection that I will not hide it, though it is ridiculous, from your judgment.

By pointing out that this poem was written some time ago and that it had languished with his papers, Ausonius allows himself to look at the work objectively, to criticize it, and thus to reduce the immediacy of his own authorship.<sup>70</sup>

The preface to the *Griphus* begins with a similar revelation. That poem had also been around for a while before Ausonius pulled it out and sent it to Symmachus.

*Latebat inter nugas meas libellus ignobilis; utinamque latuisset neque indicio suo tamquam sorex periret.<sup>71</sup> hunc ego cum velut gallinaceus Euclionis situ chartei pulveris eruissem, excussum relegi atque ut avidus faenerator improbum nummum malui occupare quam condere (Griphus. Ausonius Symmacho).*

There was hidden among my trifles an undistinguished little book; I wish it had stayed hidden and were not ruined by its own testimony, like a shrew mouse.

---

<sup>69</sup> On the original performance of Ausonius' cento, see McGill (2005), 6 and 93-4.

<sup>70</sup> On extravagant self-criticism in Latin prefaces, see Janson (1964), 124-141 and 145-9. On the author's reading of his own text, compare the insight of Jorge Luis Borges: "La prefación es aquel rato del libro en que el autor es menos autor. Es ya casi un leyente y goza de los derechos de tal: alejamiento, sorna y elogio" ("Prologo," in *Inquisiciones*, p. 5).

<sup>71</sup> A close adaptation of Parmeno's exclamation at Ter. *Eun.* 1024: *egomet meo indicio miser quasi sorex hodie perii.*

When I, as if I were Euclio's chicken, had pulled it out of the dusty, decaying paper, I shook it off and read it over. And like a greedy money-lender, I decided to loan out rather than suppress my inferior coin.<sup>72</sup>

Euclio's chicken was beaten to death in Plautus' *Aulularia*, because he started scratching too close to the old miser's buried gold. Thus, Ausonius' detachment from his work allows the poet to compare himself to a chicken who happens upon a lost treasure and to a greedy money-lender who cannot resist any opportunity. Rather than introduce a current work, Ausonius discovers a prior work, re-reads it, and then sends it to Symmachus with new commentary. Like the comedic prologues written for subsequent productions of a play, Ausonius implies that this production (i.e. reading) will not be the same as the first time around. Thus, Ausonius draws attention to the distance between the initial creation of the text and the later readings to which it is subject.

In the preface to the *Protrepticus ad nepotem*, Ausonius turns to his reader's use of the text, rather than his own re-reading. He explains to his son Hesperius that he is sending the poem ahead of his visit so that the son will have a chance to read it before they see each other.

Ausonius does so because he wants his son's judgment to be unrestrained (*esset ut tibi censura liberior*). That judgment would be limited during a recitation for two reasons:

. . . *quod aures nostras audita velocius quam lecta praetereunt et quod sinceritas iudicandi praesentia recitantis oneratur* (*Protrept. Ausonius Hesperio filio*).

. . . because what we hear passes by our ears more quickly than what we read and because the sincerity of one's judgment is weighed down by the presence of the one giving the recitation.

Instead of privileging the presence of a recitation, Ausonius prefers that his son read the poem ahead of time and that he form a judgment in private. Whereas Ausonius distances himself from the *Cento* and the *Griphus*, by pointing out that he had written them some time before their prefaces, here he distances himself from the subsequent reading of his work.

---

<sup>72</sup> The opposition between *condere* and *occupare* probably also suggests the difference between composing a text and then using it.

Ausonius describes his *Bissula* in more personal terms but complains that Paulus has forced the poems out of hiding. In this case, the reader imposes a separation on the author and his text.<sup>73</sup>

*poematia quae in alumnam meam luseram rudia et incohata ad domesticae solacium cantilenae, cum sine metu <laterent><sup>74</sup> et arcana securitate fruerentur, proferri ad lucem caligantia coegisti (Bissula. Ausonius Paulo suo s.d.).*

The little poems that I had composed for my girl were rough and begun as a comforting, indoor song. When they were <hiding> without fear and were enjoying their recondite safety, you forced them, dim as they are, to be brought out into the light.

Ausonius contrasts his own use of the poems with Paulus' appropriation of the work. Thus, the poems' distance from their author becomes a trope for the reader's control of the text.

By distancing himself from his poems, Ausonius creates space for his reader. While a prose preface is already distant from the poetic text it introduces, Ausonius draws attention to the difference between himself as reader and his persona as author.<sup>75</sup> Whereas Martial and Statius describe in their prefaces a stable text, from its composition through its prefatory introduction and down to its reception, Ausonius imagines each step as critical. Publication is not unproblematic, and may only come about because an author stumbles by chance upon an old work.<sup>76</sup> The reader of Ausonius' prefaces, therefore, will understand that an author is also a subjective reader and that, once it is read, the text can no longer enjoy its hidden security.

---

<sup>73</sup> For the stylized trope, within prefaces, of the dedicatee's insistence upon publication, see Janson (1964), 116-20.

<sup>74</sup> *Laterent* is Peiper's not unlikely conjecture.

<sup>75</sup> Ausonius takes the opposite approach in his preface to the *Cupido cruciatus*, in which he dissolves the difference between preface and text (compare Nugent 1990, 41-2). Beyond Nugent's observations, *miratus sum* and *errorem meum* of the preface align Ausonius with the first and last characters in the poem's catalogue of unfortunate lovers (I owe this observation to Joseph Pucci).

<sup>76</sup> In V, the oldest of Ausonius' manuscripts, the *De Herediolo* and the *Pater ad Filium* are prefaced by brief notes that describe those poems in the third person and in the past tense. It has been thought that they are the work of an early editor. The former preface, however, uses Ausonian language (*honoratissimus, villulam, Luciliano stilo*), and the latter preface says the work was *incohatum neque impletum, sic de liturariis scriptum*. It is just possible that Ausonius spoke of himself in the third person (though it is more likely that these comments were abridged from Ausonius' prefaces). For what may be an abridged preface, from the same manuscript but to the *Ephemeris*, see Pucci (2009), 53-4.

### c. The Reader's Control

Even more than creating space for his reader, Ausonius invites the reader to use and to activate his poetry. In prefaces to the *Bissula*, the *Technopaegnon*, the *Parentalia*, and the *Cento*, Ausonius directly addresses his reader and offers him either a share in or even control over his text. At the end of his prose preface to the *Bissula*, Ausonius tells Paulus to use the poems as his own:

*utere igitur ut tuis, pari iure, sed fiducia dispari; quippe tua possunt populum non timere, meis etiam intra me erubesco.*

So use them as your own, with equal rights but unequal confidence, since as yours they are able to meet their public without fear, as mine I blush at them even privately.

Ausonius wants Paulus to take responsibility for the *Bissula*, because at least his own reading of the poems would be different if he were not also their author. As long as the poems enjoyed an *arcana securitas*, they belonged to Ausonius; but now, they have been made public and are the responsibility of their reader. Further, Ausonius sets up a distinction between his poems and Paulus': When they belong to Paulus, they are fearless (*tua possunt populum non timere*); when they belong to Ausonius, he can read them only with self-conscious embarrassment (*meis etiam intra me erubesco*). Ausonius suggests, therefore, that Paulus may mediate this poem to a broader audience. As the dedicatee imposes a filter upon the text, so the reader will also come to determine their value.<sup>77</sup> More than simply acknowledging his own distance, Ausonius allows the reader privileged access to his poems.

---

<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting that Ausonius usually dedicated his poems to friends and peers, rather than patrons. Even the emperor Theodosius (to whom Ausonius had dedicated some collection of his poems) addresses Ausonius, in an extant letter, in friendly terms. Because Ausonius did not address himself to patrons, he may have felt more freedom to actively engage his readers.

Ausonius begins the *Parentalia* with a preface in elegiac couplets, in which he describes the reader's access to the text as participation. Although the meter of this poem makes it continuous with the series of *Parentalia*, the invitation to the reader brings it in line with the prose prefaces considered here. Thus, Ausonius thanks the reader for taking part in his mourning:

*at tu, quicumque es, lector, qui fata meorum  
dignaris maestis commemorare elegis,  
inconcussa tuae percurras tempora vitae  
et praeter iustum funera nulla fleas (praefatio B, 15-18).*

But whoever you are, reader, in deciding  
to remember the deaths of my family in sad elegy,  
may you pass through the years of your life without trouble  
and may you weep at no funerals beyond what is right.

These *maestis elegis* are the laments of both Ausonius and the commiserating reader. By remembering with Ausonius, the reader becomes a mourner with the poet and a participant in his poetry.

Beyond asking the reader to participate in what is already present, Ausonius also invites his reader to activate what is at most only latent in the text. Thus, the first preface to the *Technopaegnon* explicitly asks the dedicatee, Pacatus, to take part in enacting the work. The fate of the poem firmly rests in Pacatus' reading, for without him the poems are merely disjointed fragments:

*et simul ludicrum opusculum texui, ordiri maiuscula solitus: sed in tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria, si probantur. tu facies ut sint aliquid; nam sine te monosyllaba erunt vel si quid minus (Technop. 1).*

All the same, I wove a playful work, although I am accustomed to beginning grander webs. But if they are approved, "my labor is in a small field, but the glory is not small." You will make them into something; for without you they will be monosyllables or less, were it possible.

Because the poem would be insignificant otherwise, Ausonius asks his reader to make something of it. The verbs in the future tense (*facies* and *erunt*<sup>78</sup>) mark the text's dependence upon the moment at which it will be read.<sup>79</sup> Further, the quotation *in tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria* (*G.* 4.6) recalls Vergil's proem to Maecenas. In that proem, Vergil describes his thin material, the work of bees, in wonderful terms (*admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum*, *G.* 4.3). Ausonius, therefore, makes a comparison between Vergil's work and his own venture into the smallest corners of discourse. Although the material is slight, the reader of the *Technopaegnon* will gather its disparate fragments and make them cohere in some meaningful way.

In the third prose preface appended to his *Technopaegnon*, Ausonius makes the reader's activity even more explicit. There, the incoherence of his poem will be remedied by the reader.

*sed laboravi ut quantum fieri posset apud aures indulgentissimas absurda concinerent, insulsa resiperent, hiulca congruerent, denique haberent et amara dulcedinem et inepta venerem et aspera levitatem. quae quidem omnia, quoniam insuavis materia devenustat, lectio benigna conciliet* (*Technop.*, 4. *Praefatio*).

But I have worked, so that—as much as is possible—in your indulgent ears the dissonant should harmonize, the unsavory should be flavorful, the gaping should be connected, and finally the bitter should have sweetness, the tasteless grace, and the harsh should be smooth. And although<sup>80</sup> their rough material disfigures it all, a kindly interpretation<sup>81</sup> will bring it together.

Ausonius delights in the oxymoronic description of his poems, but he does not leave it at that.

Rather, the oppositions inherent in his poems allow the reader to actively reconcile their meaning. Ausonius, therefore, acknowledges that his text cannot determine its own meaning. In saying as much in his preface, Ausonius declines to lay out a single configuration, via interpretation, for his text.

---

<sup>78</sup> Although the future tense may be used as a simple imperative, Ausonius, by placing these verbs within a conditional statement, leaves open the question of their fulfillment.

<sup>79</sup> In her book on *The Corporeal Imagination*, Patricia Cox Miller noted the importance of this passage for an understanding of Late Antique aesthetics and for the role of the reader (2008, 52-3).

<sup>80</sup> In late Latin, *quoniam* is used like *quod* to introduce a noun clause (see Souter s.v.). It would seem that Ausonius here allowed the adversative sense of *quod* to color his use of *quoniam*.

<sup>81</sup> This meaning of *lectio* is found in Latin from the fourth century on (see *TLL*, s.v. *lectio* I.A.b.β [p. 1082-3]).

As a final step beyond participation, Ausonius says that his reader should decide whether or not his *Cento* even exists. In his preface to that poem, Ausonius tells Paulus that, although the lines and half-lines of the cento are drawn from Vergil, he has tried to make them his own in something more than a trivial way. The decision as to whether Ausonius has succeeded in composing his own cento will depend upon Paulus. For, immediately after providing a list of the paradoxical qualities that he hopes to achieve, Ausonius asks his reader to be the judge, or rather the paymaster, of his poem:

*quae si omnia ita tibi videbuntur ut praeceptum est, dices me composuisse centonem et, quia sub imperatore tum merui, procedere mihi inter frequentes stipendium iubebis; sin aliter, aere dirutum facies, ut cumulo carminis in fiscum suum redacto redeant versus unde venerunt (Ausonius Paulo sal.).*

And if all these things will seem to you to be just as prescribed, you will declare that I have composed a cento. And, because I served at that time under my commander, you will order my pay to come to me among the crowds. Otherwise, you will cause my pay to be forfeited, that—with the heap of this poem rendered to its own treasury—the verses may return from whence they came.

As in the prefaces to the *Technopaegnon*, the future tenses (*videbuntur, dices, iubebis, facies*) mark Ausonius' suspension of judgment. He is not prepared even to assert that he has written a cento (*composuisse centonem*), until the poem is read and approved. The activation of the poetry, therefore, depends upon the interpretation, via pronouncement (*dices*), of their dedicatee and reader. Should Ausonius fail, the lines will cease to be his own and return the same as they were to their Vergilian home.

The concluding words of Ausonius' preface to his *Cento* echo the end of the dedicatory epistle which Statius prefixed to the second book of his *Silvae*<sup>82</sup>:

*haec qualiacumque sunt, Melior carissime, si tibi non displicuerint, a te publicum accipiant; si minus, ad me revertantur (Silvae 2. praef.).*

---

<sup>82</sup> I owe this observation to Pavlovskis (1967), 546.

Dearest Melior, if these, of whatever quality they are, do not displease you, they should be published by you. If not, let them return to me.

Like Ausonius, Statius submitted his poems to the judgment of their reader and asked that they be published by their dedicatee or returned if found unsuitable.<sup>83</sup> But Statius had requested that the poems be literally returned. Ausonius, on the other hand, turned that trope into a metatextual play on the reader's judgment of his own intertextuality (i.e. Ausonius' clever request makes the reader think about his text *as a text* and specifically asks him to consider his words as (in)distinct from the Vergilian poem). Ausonius, therefore, uses the formal apparatus of dedicatee and dedication as a pretext for his evocation of the reader's role in making sense of the text.

I have argued that Ausonius uses his prefaces to break down the connection between author and text. He does this by setting out the rules underlying his work, by describing his work in distant terms, and by inviting his readers to intervene in the text. By showing its dependence on the reader's participation, Ausonius neatly circumscribes the text within its present station. Because the function of a paratext is precisely to circumscribe the text, every preface does this to some extent. Yet Ausonius downplays the immediacy of his poems, in order to emphasize the processes of their mediation and eventual reception. To put it simply, Ausonius wrote prefaces because he enjoyed reading.

#### d. Conclusion

The role of the preface marks the importance of reading for the poetry of Late Antiquity. While Augustan poets avoided prefaces, prefaces are found in a number of the Latin poems that draw on what I describe as a post-Classical aesthetic. Earlier poets, however, tended to treat

---

<sup>83</sup> In their prefaces, authors often said that they were submitting their work for correction. On this topos, see Janson (1964), 106-12 and 141-143. On Cicero's practice of submitting work for joint correction, see Gurd (2007).

prefaces as indistinct from the following text. As the reader's access to the text became more of a concern, Late Antique poets used their prefaces as a further level of mediation between themselves and their audience, which only served to make the text's interpretation more complex. These Late Antique prefaces should not be read as straight-forwardly self-explanatory, and their presence is not unsurprising. They are the first level of mediation between the text and its public, and they are the space in which reading is figured by the author and first enacted by the reader. Whatever clarity is provided by the prefaces of Claudian and Prudentius is fleeting, since the preface is itself a text in need of interpretation. Ausonius, moreover, explicitly addresses his reader's active involvement and marginalizes his role as author. The prefaces of Ausonius, Claudian, and Prudentius both enact a particular reading of the text and invite the reader to construct his own meanings. Because they wrote with powerful readers in mind, Late Antique poets embraced the preface and its potential to dramatize the openness of their texts. In this regard, the preface marks the Late Antique turn towards an aesthetics focused upon the reader's interpretation of the text.

## Chapter Three

### Open Texts and Layers of Meaning

In the fourth century, a series of Latin authors wrote along multiple, distinct syntactic levels. The figural poetry of Optatianus Porfyrius destabilizes the idea of a univocal text. The allegorical poetry of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* points the reader to a deeper sense behind the surface of the text. The Vergilian centos blur the line between composition and reception. Without their reader, these poems collapse into dazzling, but incoherent, fragments, technically stunning but incomplete. They are open texts, as defined by Umberto Eco in *Opera aperta*,<sup>1</sup> his study of modernist aesthetics. By tracking trends in 20<sup>th</sup> century art, literature, music, science, and theoretical scholarship, Eco noted that modern thought inclined toward open structures, as it advocated ambiguity, uncertainty, and the direct involvement of its subjective observers. An open work—for my purposes, an open text—calls for “changing perspectives and multiple interpretations.”<sup>2</sup> Eco is well aware that every text is open, in a way. The only truly closed text is one that has never been read, a literally closed book, while the only completely open work is pure potentiality, a blank sheet of paper. Further, a relatively closed text may be (mis)interpreted as though it were an open text (the centonists' use of Vergil will be discussed presently).<sup>3</sup> Insofar as they are relative terms, the distinction between open and closed texts reveals a spectrum, on one side of which the poet welcomes the direct involvement of his reader.

---

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in 1961, revised in 1967 and again in 1976, and then translated into English in 1989 in a somewhat different form as *The Open Work*. Eco writes a brief history of *Opera aperta* in the preface to his 1976 edition, “Opera aperta: il tempo, la società,” v-xxiii. David Robey's introduction to Eco (1989) includes brief comments on the selection of material in his translation (vii-viii).

<sup>2</sup> Eco (1989), 24.

<sup>3</sup> On the distinction between open and closed texts, see esp. Eco (1989), 24-43. Eco (1979), 56-9 provides a very concise statement of the problem.

The open poetry described in this chapter operates through the layering of textual elements. By creating a poem that can be read in more than one way (i.e. on various levels), a poet allows the reader to inhabit the space between those layers. Because these layers are distinct, the reader must determine when and how they fit together. By articulating a different way to create and then read a poem, these poets address the related problems of composition and interpretation.

Such experimental poems, concerned with the acts of writing and interpretation, run the risk of reducing the work of art to a statement on literary theory. Eco directly addresses the fact that open works can become little more than meta-poetic commentary. He describes the reader who learns, with enthusiasm, the new technique or method envisioned by a work, but then decides not to read it because “[h]e feels he has already gotten all there was to get from it, and fears that, if he bothered to read the work, he might be disappointed by its failure to offer him what it had promised.”<sup>4</sup> However, insofar as an open work actually succeeds in stimulating the potential readings at which it aims, it will be more than a theoretical statement of poetics.<sup>5</sup> For that reason, I show through close readings not only the purpose of these open works but also how they actually produce their ends.

I will begin with the figural poetry of Optatianus, because his poems provide the most coherent example of openness. Three layers stand in sharp relief on the page. And, in so far as they do not depend upon secondary meanings or intertextual designs, these layers are self-contained. From there, I move to the *Psychomachia*'s personification allegory, which involves a secondary meaning in dialogue with the surface narrative of the poem. I then discuss the cento, which is in a way the most complex of these forms. The Vergilian centos transfer a more local

---

<sup>4</sup> Eco (1989), 170.

<sup>5</sup> Eco (1989), 174-9.

sense of openness onto the literary past, and thereby directly engage the history of Latin literature. In a more expansive way, they reveal the openness of this distinctively Late Antique textuality.

### I. The Figural Poetry of Optatianus Porphyrius

Optatian Porphyrius composed poems whose reading is intentionally complicated along several different axes. Some are pattern poems, whose shape is outlined by the text of the poem. One is a Proteus poem, whose four lines may be rearranged at the whim of its reader. And most of his poems contain what he calls *versus intexti*, secondary lines encoded vertically or diagonally along the page. The broad term “figural poetry” covers these various texts.<sup>6</sup> In each case, Optatian encodes a text whose potential is not exhausted by a sequential reading from left to right. Because the reading of his poems does not end at the same moment as the voice or eye reaches the last word on the page, Optatian compels the reader to engage the multiple layers of his text.

The manuscripts ascribe to Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius a *Panegyricus* in honor of Constantine.<sup>7</sup> The date of his birth is reasonably assigned to between 260 and 270, on the basis of an honorific inscription found in the Piazza Colonna in Rome and dated to the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>8</sup> Along with being proconsul of Achaëa,<sup>9</sup> Optatian was twice prefect of Rome

---

<sup>6</sup> The term *technopaegnia* has also been used, but it is found in antiquity only as the title of Ausonius’ very different collection of poems.

<sup>7</sup> Polara (1973), viii-xvi. Polara follows Elsa Kluge in rejecting the title *Panegyricus* “perché il termine [*panegyricus*] indica sempre una singola composizione in versi o in prosa, e non può quindi riferirsi ad una raccolta” (Polara 1974, 283, n. 63; Polara refers to Kluge 1922, 90). But *panegyricus* could be used as an adjective in Latin, as in Greek (see *TLL*, s.v. I.B); and an ellipsis such as *liber* is easily understood. Moreover, since *panegyricus* was not a common title for a collection of poetry in any period of Latin, there is no reason to impute the catachresis to a scribe rather than to Optatian.

<sup>8</sup> For full discussion of the biography of Optatian, see Polara (1974) and Barnes (1975).

(during 329 and 333).<sup>10</sup> The only other contemporary reference comes from Jerome, who says in his *Chronica* that *Porfyrius misso ad Constantinum insigni volumine exilio liberatur* (Helm, Eusebius VII, 232).<sup>11</sup> Although the majority of his extant poems directly address Constantine and plead for his recall, the reason for Optatian's exile is unclear. Through datable internal references (above all to the *Vicenallia* celebrated by Constantine in 325 and again in 326), the sending of the *Panegyricus* and the poet's subsequent recall from exile are placed variously between 324 and 326.<sup>12</sup> Beyond that, the precise dating of Optatian's life and career is problematic.<sup>13</sup>

#### a. Pattern Poems

Three of Optatian's poems take up the Greco-Latin tradition of pattern poetry.<sup>14</sup> *Carm.* 20 forms the shape of a water organ (*hydraulus*); *Carm.* 26 forms an altar; and *Carm.* 27 outlines the shape of a panpipe. Before Optatian, Hellenistic pattern poems remain from one Simias of Rhodes, Theocritus (probably not genuine), and a certain Dosiadas; further, a separate "Altar of the Muses" is sometimes also attributed to this Dosiadas. In Latin, a short fragment survives from a *Phoenix* of Laevius (frag. 22 [Courtney]). These earlier pattern poems are polymetric. Differences in meter determine the length of each line and therefore the shape of their figure. Optatian, however, uses a different technique; he allows the number of letters to determine the

---

<sup>9</sup> We know of this proconsulship from an inscription discovered at Sparta (*SEG* XI, 810 = *AE* 1931, 6).

<sup>10</sup> Dated securely by the Chronographer of 354 (*Chronica minora* I [*MGH*, AA 9], p. 68).

<sup>11</sup> If Jerome's dating were correct, Optatian would have been recalled from exile in 329. Jerome's dating is usually rejected on the grounds that it would place Optatian's recall within the same year as his first tenure as prefect of Rome.

<sup>12</sup> See Polara (1974), 282-4; Barnes (1975), 177-86; and Bruhat (1999), 270-2.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Barnes (1975) offered a speculative reconstruction. Polara (1974) is more conservative, but certainly wrong to identify Optatian with the anonymous subject of the horoscope detailed by Firmicius Maternus, at *Mathesos* 2.29.10-20 (Kroll-Skutsch pp. 81-4). As Barnes (1975, 173-4) and Bruhat (1999, 4-7) have pointed out, this horoscope describes the life of an individual who was born on either the 13<sup>th</sup> or the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 303, which does not align with the other details of Optatian's life.

<sup>14</sup> Book-length studies of pattern poetry are Luz (2010), Pozzi (2002), Ernst (1991), and Higgins (1987). Scanzo (2006); Bruhat (1999), 45-75; and Polara (1991) are discussions either focused on or largely devoted to Optatian.

length of a line and therefore the shape of the poem. Most notably, the twenty-six pipes of his water organ (*Carm.* 20) are formed of twenty-six hexameters, whose length increase regularly from twenty-five letters in the first line to exactly fifty letters in the final line.<sup>15</sup> By making regularly spaced letters the elements of his design, Optatian was able to create figures with a significant amount of regularity. Although Optatian's new technique shifts emphasis away from the sound of the words and onto the individual letters of which they are composed, in both Optatian and earlier poets the underlying goal of the form is the same, namely to compose an image from the contour of a poem.<sup>16</sup> Pattern poetry permits the reader a secondary approach to the text, as it becomes both an image and a poem. In turning back to the tradition of pattern poetry, Optatian gave the form a new relevance at the beginning of the fourth century.

#### b. *Carm.* 25: A Proteus Poem

Optatian's poem 25 is a brief four lines, on first read. The subject of the poem is the poem itself.

*Ardua componunt felices carmina Musae  
dissona conectunt diversis vincula metris  
scrupea pangentes torquentes pectora vatis  
undique confusis constabunt singula verbis*

The blessed Muses compose difficult poems  
they connect different chains from diverse verses<sup>17</sup>  
twisting the heart of their poet as they set their challenges  
each one will stand though the words be jumbled in every way

---

<sup>15</sup> Bruhat has suggested that Optatian's method of composing *versus intexti* within a square grid derived from his experimentation with pattern poetry (1999, 172-174). Edwards (2005) separately concluded that Optatian's pattern poetry came before his *versus intexti*, although he does so on the basis of questionable judgments concerning their relative inability to "dazzle" Constantine.

<sup>16</sup> For suggestive comments on the visual and musical aspects of Optatian's pattern poems, see Bruhat (1999), 66-7.

<sup>17</sup> For *metrum* in this sense, see *TLL* s.v. B.2.

My translation makes no attempt to capture the poetry of the lines; I only translate the bare sense. The lines say that the Muses compose their poems in distinct units and that they will remain, even when the words are switched around. To take one example, the new line *ardua connectunt felices vincula Musae* retains the same metrical shape as each line of the original quatrain. As Optatian implies, his readers are able to create a new poem each time they revisit the text. Thus, Optatian wrote a Proteus poem<sup>18</sup>; and a full translation would have to retain the metrical play.

Different readers have followed different rules in composing their variants, and so have calculated different numbers of possible results. Jean Letrouit's recent (2007) article works through the various ways in which to combine these lines. First, in a number of the manuscripts, 18 variant quatrains follow immediately upon this poem. Each of these variants (1) retain *Musae*, *metris*, *vatis*, and *verbis* in the same order at the end of each line of the quatrain; (2) do not exchange words from the first and fourth feet with words from the second and third feet; and (3) do not use in any single line two dactyls that are both from the same metrical position in the original lines. On the basis of a pattern within these variants, Polara emended the manuscript's text so that there are now two more quatrains (= 80 lines) in his edition. The scholiast says that eighty-four different lines (not quatrains) may be composed from the original quatrain, if the final words remain while the internal words are changed.<sup>19</sup> It is not clear how the scholiast arrived at such a small figure.<sup>20</sup> William Levitan calculated that, if one follows the three restrictions found in the manuscripts, 1,792 different lines may be composed from the original

---

<sup>18</sup> On the name and form of Proteus poems, see Pozzi (1984), 147-151. Julius Caesar Scaliger mentions an analogous line he wrote *quem Proteum nominavimus* (*Poetices* 2.30). It is unclear whether or not the name antedates Scaliger. On the reception of Scaliger's line, see Higgins (1987), 183.

<sup>19</sup> *Hi quattuor versus omnes pari ratione conscripti sunt ita ut manente ultima parte orationis ceteras partes omnium versuum ordinibus tantum invicem mutatis vel ad directum vel ad reciprocum modum variare possis; ita dumtaxat, ut primae partes cum primis vel quartis versuum vices mutant, secundae cum secundis vel tertiis, et possis, si velis, nulla parte orationis addita ex his quattuor versibus mixtis octoginta quattuor facere ita, ut nullus sui similis sit.* On the scholia to Optatian, see Polara (1974), xxxii-xxxiii and (2004).

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the simplest explanation is that the scholiast found eighty variant lines in his source and mistakenly counted the original four (*his quattuor versibus*) along with the lines that could be formed from them.

quatrain.<sup>21</sup> Polara and Enrico Flores calculated that, following all but the third restriction (which Levitan was the first to formulate), 3,136 different hexameters may be composed.<sup>22</sup> If one excludes the restriction (imposed by the scholiast) on exchanging the final words of one line with another final word, that number increases to 12,544. But there is no reason to follow the scholiast's rules, either in excluding the final word of each line or in counting the number of possible lines rather than the number of possible quatrains. Even if one does not change in any way the metrical shape of the quatrain, it is possible to compose 39,016,857,600 different quatrains from Optatian's original. If one retains the original order of the final words of each line, the number of total quatrains is reduced to 1,625,702,400. There is no way of knowing whether Optatian himself wrote out more than one version of the poem. As far as I know, there has only been one attempt to compose all of the possible variants—by Levitan, who printed his 1,792 variants.<sup>23</sup>

I do not, however, want to give the impression that *Carm.* 25 is fundamentally a mathematical problem. In the first case, the poem (especially in those combinations in which a line ends *carmina vatis*) alludes to Ovid's *Amores* 1.8.57-8:

*Ecce, quid iste tuus praeter nova carmina vates  
donat? amatoris milia multa leges.*

Look, what can that poet of yours give you besides new  
poems? You'll read many thousands from a lover.

In Ovid's poem, an old woman counsels a girl to distrust the futile songs of poets; Optatian's text allows that distrust to color its own configuration of *carmina* and *vatis*.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the content of

---

<sup>21</sup> Levitan (1985), 251, n. 17.

<sup>22</sup> (1969), 119-20.

<sup>23</sup> He notes, "In December 1977, the entire set of permutations was programmed for computer by Glenn English of Austin, Texas, and printed for the first time in its history" (Levitan 1985, 252, n. 20).

<sup>24</sup> This allusion to Ovid was first observed by González Iglesias (2000), 356, in a stimulating reading of this poem's intertextual links.

Optatian's poem directly confronts the difficulty of his poetry, the separability of the Muses' words, and the chance of combining them in various ways.

There is only one known predecessor to Optatian. Athenaeus (454f-455b) cites a certain Hymn to Pan by one Castorion of Soli (this is all we know of Castorion and Athenaeus has no specific name for his kind of poetry). Athenaeus quotes five lines in iambic trimeter. He explains that each foot (whether composed of one, two, or three words) can be exchanged with the other feet in its line to form a series of different lines. However, because of restrictions of meter and syntax, many feet cannot be exchanged with feet from other lines; for that reason, Peter Bing (1985) has argued that the point of the poem is that Castorion has already selected the only combination of metra that is really adequate. Castorion is the first poet known to have composed a Proteus poem, but he seems not to have thematized the malleability of his words. It is possible that this passage tells us more about Athenaeus and his interest in poetic riddles (γρῖ φοι) than about Castorion himself. Whether or not he knew of Castorion's poem, Optatian seems to have been the first Latin author to compose a Proteus poem, and he put effort into writing one that would be radically open to permutation.<sup>25</sup>

While *Carm.* 25 is Optatian's only free-standing Proteus poem,<sup>26</sup> he was clearly concerned with offering his reader an open text, whose potential remained to be explored and defined. Raymond Queneau, a modern proponent of the Proteus poem, confirms the reader's involvement in such poems, in the preface to his own "Cent mille milliards de poèmes." He introduces his work as one which "permet à tout un chacun de composer à volonté cent mille

---

<sup>25</sup> On a medieval Latin imitator of Optatian, see Polara and Flores (1969), 133-6.

<sup>26</sup> The *versus intexti* of *Carm.* 6, 18, and 19 are miniature Proteus poems. On these poems along with *Carm.* 25, see Bruhat (1999), 152-170.

milliards de sonnets.”<sup>27</sup> In the same way as Queneau, Optatian, in his *Carm.* 25, allows his reader to share in the work of composition.

### c. *Versus Intexti*

Most of Optatian’s poems employ what he calls *versus intexti*,<sup>28</sup> secondary lines or poems inscribed within the fixed text of his poetry. Optatian’s typical *versus intexti* poem is composed over a grid thirty-five letters wide by thirty-five letters high. The thirty-five hexameters of this typical poem are read from left to right, as they would be in any other poem. The secondary messages of the *versus intexti* are read diagonally, vertically, or horizontally along the grid. The lines of the *versus intexti* reveal in turn a third layer to the text, for they shape a pattern or sometimes even the outline of another set of letters. The letters of the *versus intexti* were written in red pigment (*minium*) in order to distinguish them from the background of the text.<sup>29</sup>

The simplest of Optatian’s *versus intexti* employ acrostics (at the beginning of each line), mesostics (in the middle of each line), and telestics (at the end of each line).<sup>30</sup> In these poems, the secondary text is read from top to bottom rather than from left to right. Optatian’s other *versus intexti* are arranged in such a way that the selected letters are themselves figures. The figures outlined by these *versus intexti* may be divided into three groups<sup>31</sup>: geometric patterns,<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> “Mode d’emploi,” in (1961) *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (Paris). Reprinted in a volume edited by the group *Oulipo*: (1973), *La littérature potentielle: (Créations Re-créations Récréations)* (Paris), 247-9.

<sup>28</sup> *Carm.* 9 v.i. 5 and 3.17; compare *Carm.* 3.28. And see Bruhat (1999), 95.

<sup>29</sup> As Optatian writes, *prodentur minio caelestia signa legenti* (*Carm.* 19.1).

<sup>30</sup> These are *Carm.* 11, 13, 16, and 31 (the last of which probably should not be attributed to Optatian [on which, see Polara (1973), vol. I, xxviii-xxix and vol. II, 168-9]). For a discussion of earlier acrostic poetry and Optatian’s *versus intexti*, see Bruhat (1999), 85-95.

<sup>31</sup> Of course, there is no clear line between these categories. For a thorough study of Optatian’s poems along with the categories into which they may be divided, see Bruhat (1999), 134-170.

<sup>32</sup> *Carm.* 12, 18, 21, 22, and 23. Polara, however, doubts the authenticity of *Carm.* 22 (1974, xxix-xxx).

images,<sup>33</sup> and letters.<sup>34</sup> The geometric patterns can be paralleled with patterns in mosaics contemporary to Optatian.<sup>35</sup> The images range from examples of clear mimesis to abstract symbolism. Thus, the *versus intexti* of *Carm.* 9 outline a palm of victory in honor of Constantine; *Carm.* 19 contains the detailed outline of a ship; *Carm.* 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10 contain images that are symbolic and suggestive, rather than strictly mimetic<sup>36</sup>; and two poems (14 and 24) present the chi-rho symbol.<sup>37</sup> Those *versus intexti* which outline letters spell out *AUG XX CAES X* and *IESUS* (*Carm.* 5 and 8 respectively). In two of his *versus intexti* (*Carm.* 16 and 19), Optatian goes so far as to make the individual letters serve double duty, being Latin in one direction and Greek in the other.<sup>38</sup> In these ways Optatian breaks the word down, even to the shapes of individual letters, and compels the reader to reconstitute the text in its various directions.

Optatian claimed his *versus intexti* were a new kind of poetry, and he is in fact the poet who transformed acrostic and labyrinthine poetry into texts that were alternate and yet continuous.<sup>39</sup> He speaks of his poetry as *nova carmina* (*Carm.* 3.24), *nova vincula mentis* (*Carm.* 10.18), *novi elegi* (*Carm.* 8.1), and *novae curae* (21.4).<sup>40</sup> In *Carm.* 3, he describes his compositions in terms of this alternate text:

*mentis opus mirum metris intexere carmen  
ad varios cursus* (*Carm.* 3.28-9).

It is a marvelous task for the mind, to plait a poem in verse  
along different paths.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Carm.* 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 19, and 24. Polara doubts the authenticity of *Carm.* 24 (1974, xxix-xxx).

<sup>34</sup> *Carm.* 5 and 8. *Carm.* 19 also incorporates a brief abbreviation (*VOT*) into its image.

<sup>35</sup> Bruhat makes this connection for *Carm.* 7, 12, 18, 21, 22, and 23 (1999, 136-141).

<sup>36</sup> *Carm.* 3, for example, claims to describe the face (*vultus*) of Constantine (*Carm.* 3.1); because the *versus intexti* look nothing like a face, the comparison must be symbolic in some sense. Bruhat interprets the lines as two overlapping crosses and the imagery as Christian (1999, 141-46).

<sup>37</sup> The chi-rho also appears, with other figures, in *Carm.* 8 and 19.

<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Latin *p*, for example, becomes *rho* in Greek.

<sup>39</sup> On the originality of these poems, see Polara (1987), 168-71; and Bruhat (1999), 84-5.

<sup>40</sup> For a partial list of Optatian's comments on his own poetics, see Polara (1975), 104, n. 193.

The different paths of Optatian's poetry are significant in their own right, in the challenge they set their poet, and in the opportunities they offer their reader.

Levitan introduced Optatian by drawing attention to this challenge. He wrote, "Optatian is not a good poet; he is not even a bad poet. His poems are prodigies, monsters in the literal sense."<sup>41</sup> Levitan is right, but I would suggest that he downplayed the degree to which Optatian's poems invite reading as well as wonder. His poems are admirable for their shape, their form, their strange ingenuity. And while they do offer a new vision of poetry, the techniques of this poetry can easily overwhelm the actual narrative. Nevertheless, Optatian's poems invite a coherent reading, along each of their individual layers.

Although it is not the most elaborate of Optatian's poems,<sup>42</sup> *Carm.* 9 best reveals the technique of the poet and the options available to the reader. As with all of Optatian's *versus intexti* poems, *Carm.* 9 may be approached on three levels. It may be read from left to right; the reader may focus on the internal pattern of the *versus intexti*; and the reader may turn to the separate words of the *versus intexti*. Although the reader may approach these levels in any order, the readings cannot be simultaneous. I will describe these as the first, second, and third levels, though without implying that this order is preferable to any other.

On the first level, the reader approaches the text from left to right and discovers, already in the first two lines, that it is a poem in praise of Constantine.

*Castalides, domino virtutum tradite palmam.  
Constantinus habet bellorum iure tropaeum* (*Carm.* 9.1-2).

Castalians, give the palm of virtue to my lord.  
Constantine rightly possesses the trophy for his battles.

---

<sup>41</sup> Levitan (1985), 246.

<sup>42</sup> The most prodigious of Optatian's poems is surely *Carm.* 19, whose *versus intexti* outline a complex image of a ship, contain Greek, and also reveal a Proteus poem.

Optatian goes on to explain that Constantine has conquered his enemies, but with a clemency that returned the world to order (3-8). The middle of the poem (9-22) turns to the subject of poetry and specifies that Apollo and the Muses will grant Constantine a poetic reward. Thus, lines 9-10 invoke the Muses again:

*Nunc mihi iam toto dociles Helicone Camenae  
mittite conpositas in tempora mitia palmas . . . .*

Now send me, teachable muses, from all of Helicon  
palms shaped for gentle times . . . .

Next, Optatian turns to praise of Constantine's sons Crispus (23-30) and Constantinus II (31-4).

The poem ends with a brief prayer:

*Sancte pater, rector superum, vicennia laeta  
Augusto et decies crescant sollemnia natis (Carm. 9.35-6).*

Holy father, ruler of the heavens, may a blessed *vicennalia*  
spring forth for Augustus, and for his sons their *decennalia*.

This poem is thus a brief panegyric on the occasion of Constantine's *vicennalia*.

The shape of the *versus intexti* sheds light on the first line of the poem. In red lettering, they outline a palm frond, a token of victory. This is the second level of the text:

**C A S T A L I D E S** D O M I N O V I **R** T U T U M T R A **D I T E P A L M A M**  
 C O N S T A N T I N **V** S H A B E T B **E** L L O R V M I **V** R E T R O P A E **U** M  
 V I **N** D I C E S V B D **E** X T R A R E **D** D E N S F E **L** I C I T E R O R **B** E M  
 C O N **S** I L I I S I T E **R** U M S V A **D** E N S E T **C** V N C T A R E F **E** R R E  
 R O M A **T** I B I B E L L I **S** C V M S **A** E V A I **N** N E C T E R E P **O** S S I T  
 V I N C L **A** I V G I V I R T **V** S M I **T** I S N **O** N A R M A T I N **H** O S T E M  
 S E D M A G **N** O P A T I E N S **D** O C **V** I T **C** E R T A M I N E **P** A R C E N S  
 Q V I D P I E **T** A S D O N E T P **O** S **T** P I L A M I N A C I **A** C L E M E N S  
 N V N C M I H I **I** A M T O T O D O **C** I L E S H E L I C O **N** E C A M E N A E  
**M** I T T I T E C O **N** P O S I T A S I **N** T E M P O R A M **I** T I A P A L M A **S**  
**N** E C T I T E D E M **E** T R I S V I R **T** V T V M C A R **M** I N A E T O M N **E** S  
 C O **N** C I N I T E V T **F** R V C T V F **E** L I X E T P **R** I N C I P E D I **G** N A  
 D E T **S** T I R P E S G R **A** T A S T E **X** E N S Q V **A** S P A G I N A V **E** R S V  
 H I N C **V** O V E A T T I T **V** L O V O **T** O R V M **C** A R M I N E P O **L** L E N S  
 P I E R I **O** S M I H I P H O **E** B E T **V** O D E **N** V M I N E P R A **E** S T E N T  
 F O N T E S **C** A S T A L I A E **T** V A **S** I L I C E T I R E P E **R** A G R A N S  
 M E N S I V G **A** C E L S A P E T **E** T M E **C** V M S I P A N G **E** R E V E R S V  
 M V S A V E L I **T** T A N T O I A M **N** V **N** C S V B P R I N **C** I P E L A E T A  
**L** A V D I S D O N **A** F E R E N S R E **S** O N A N S I N S **I** G N I A A R M I **S**  
**V** I N C E N T V M I **V** S S O S A V D **A** X M I H I F I **D** A T R I V M P H **O** S  
 E T **M** E R I T V M I V **S** T I S T O T **R** E D D E R E **N** O B I L E P A L **M** A S  
 A O N **I** D V M Q V A S V **A** L L E F L **V** E N S A L **I** T V N D A R I G **A** T A S  
 S A N C **T** E S A L V S M V **N** D I A R **M** I S I N **S** I G N I B V S A **R** D E N S  
 C R I S P **E** A V I S M E L I **O** R T E **C** A R M I N E L A E T A S **E** C V N D O  
 C L I O M V **S** A S O N A N S T **V** A F A T V **R** P V L C H R A I **V** V E N T A E  
 N O B I L E T **V** D E C V S E S P **A** T **R** I **T** V Q V E A L M E **Q** V I R I T V M  
 E T S P E S V R **B** I S E R I S N O **S** M E N T I S C A R M I N A C A E S A R  
 T V V I N C E N S **P** A C I S G R A T I S S I M A F O E **D** E R A S E M P E R  
 I N D V L G E E T F **A** C I L I S G E **N** T E S A D I V **N** G E R O G A N T E S  
 F A C Q V E T V I I V **R** I S G A V D **E** N S V I R T **V** T I B V S A V C T I S  
 C O N S T A N T I N V S **I** T E M L A **V** S O R B I **S** G L O R I A S A E C L I  
 R O M V L E V M S I D V S **L** V X C L **E** M E N S **I** N C L I T A F R A T R V M  
 N O B I L I T A S P R O A V **I** S V E **R** V M E **T** M E M O R A B I L E F A M A  
 R E S T I T V I T V I C T O R **C** A E **S** A R **N** O M E N Q V E D E C V S Q V E  
 S A N C T E P A T E R R E C T O **R** S **V** P **E** R V M V I C E N N I A L A E T A  
 A V G V S T O E T D E C I E S C R **E** **S** **C** A N T S O L L E M N I A N A T I S

The image of the *versus intexti* is the palm which Optatian requests from the Muses. Or rather, this image is also the palm. The first reading of *Carm.* 9 (from left to right) already yielded a poem in praise of Constantine, a metaphoric trophy. The image outlined by the *versus intexti*, therefore, both represents the poem as a whole and is itself a gift, the picture of a trophy.

By tracing the *versus intexti* along their course, the reader enters the third level of the text; at that point, he discovers the following five hexameters<sup>43</sup>:

*Castalides, versu docili concludite palmam.  
Constantine, fave; te nunc in carmina Phoebum  
mens vocat, ausa novas metris indicere leges,  
limite sub parili crescentis undique ramos  
reddat ut intextus Musarum carmine versus.*

Castalians, enclose your palm in teachable verse.  
Be kind, Constantine; my mind now calls you to my poetry  
to be my Phoebus, since it dares to impose new rules on meter,  
in order that limbs growing on either side from an equidistant limit  
may be produced in the Muses' poem by my embroidered verse.

The praise of Constantine remains from the previous layers of the text, and Optatian continues to call upon the Muses to enable his poetry. Also, he offers more explicit commentary upon his poetic craft. As he will set new limits upon his poetry, he calls his verse teachable (*docilis*). As the *versus intexti* give back the parallel branches of a palm, Optatian suggests the overlay of text upon text.

*Carm.* 9 is eminently readable. Each level of the text stands on its own in praise of Constantine, and each level has some claim to prominence. Since there is no hierarchy amid the three layers of the text, readers are free to move from one to another and to devise their own connections (and connections there must be, since some letters belong to three different words). As in his other poems, Optatian here compels his reader to place his words within a coherent narrative.

In the abstract, Optatian's poems are, as Levitan suggested, prodigies that draw attention to the poetic text as a marvelous assemblage of letters. But Optatian's poems are more than

---

<sup>43</sup> Though not necessarily in this order. Optatian's *versus intexti* generally proceed from left to right and from top to bottom, but that is not possible in every case.

poetic puzzles, and they are not mindless games or angst-ridden exercises.<sup>44</sup> Rather, they engage their reader to participate in and enjoy his poetry. Indeed, it is rewarding to read Optatian's poems closely, to move from one layer to another and to work out the possibilities inherent in his text. To read them as closed texts, determined by their author, would be to miss the point of Optatian's muse.

## II. Prudentius' *Psychomachia*

Prudentius' *Psychomachia* marks the beginning of what would become the medieval tradition of allegorical poetry. This is the consensus of literary historians and specialists. The *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* calls the *Psychomachia* "the first full-scale Western personification allegory,"<sup>45</sup> which echoes Macklin Smith's view that it is the "first sustained personification allegory."<sup>46</sup> Georgia Nugent describes it as "the first example of the genre of allegory as we know it."<sup>47</sup> Michael von Albrecht says that it is "das erste vollständig allegorische Großgedicht der europäischen Literatur."<sup>48</sup> It must be said, however, that neither personification nor allegory were new ideas. Maurice Lavarenne made the point somewhat strongly when he wrote, "Prudence n'a . . . pas innové en créant toutes les allégories de la *Psychomachie*. Sa tentative n'est en somme que l'aboutissement logique d'une tendance de l'antiquité."<sup>49</sup> While Lavarenne is right that each element within the *Psychomachia* draws on earlier Latin poetry, Prudentius' poem is the first epic to employ allegory as its organizing trope.

---

<sup>44</sup> Levitan compared Optatian to one of Samuel Beckett's despairing characters (1985, 266-8).

<sup>45</sup> (1993), Alex Preminger et al. ed., s.v. "allegory."

<sup>46</sup> (1976), 3. And, in their introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, Rita Copeland and Peter Struck call the *Psychomachia* "the archetype of personification allegory" (2010, 6).

<sup>47</sup> (1985), 9.

<sup>48</sup> (1994), 1079.

<sup>49</sup> (1948), 24.

By activating a second and distinct meaning beneath the surface of the text, Prudentius necessitates an active reader and thereby participates in the trend towards the writing of open poetry. Although the importance of Prudentius' allegory has been widely acknowledged, it has not yet been understood within this contemporary context.

#### a. The Predecessors of Prudentius

Quintilian provides the fullest treatment of the trope of *allegoria* (*Inst. Orat.* 8.6.44-59).

His definition is as follows:

*Allegoria, quam inversionem interpretantur, aut aliud verbis, aliud sensu ostendit aut etiam interim contrarium.*

*Allegoria*, which is translated as inversion, either expresses one thing verbally and something else in its sense; or sometimes it even expresses something contrary [to the explicit meaning of the words].

This trope is produced when the rhetor employs a series of continuous metaphors (*continuatis tralationibus*). The variety of *allegoria* which expresses an idea contrary (*contrarium*) to its surface meaning is primarily represented by *ironia*. Quintilian's idea of allegory encompasses a broad range of rhetorical moves, and his breadth is typical of ancient uses of the term.

Despite the breadth of his definition, Quintilian's first example is a poem which commentators continue to regard as an intentional allegory, Horace *Odes* 1.14.

*Prius fit genus plerumque continuatis tralationibus, ut "O navis, referent in mare te novi / fluctus: o quid agis? Fortiter occupa / portum," totusque ille Horati locus, quo navem pro re publica, fluctus et tempestates pro bellis civilibus, portum pro pace atque concordia dicit (Inst. Or. 8.6.44).*

The former genus [of allegory] is most often formed from continued metaphors, such as "New waves are going to carry you back to sea, my ship: o what are you doing? With your bravery, get to port," and the whole passage of Horace, in

which he speaks of a ship instead of the state, of waves and storms instead of civil wars, and of port instead of peace and unity.

The two scholiasts to Horace, Pomponius Porphyrio and pseudo-Acro, as well as many modern commentators, agree with Quintilian that Horace's ode is an allegory for the ship of state.<sup>50</sup> Of course, some readers do not understand the poem as an allegory at all.<sup>51</sup> And still others read it as an allegorical description of the poet's love.<sup>52</sup>

In Quintilian's sense, any number of passages from Latin and Greek poetry are allegorical (i.e. they offer a second level of meaning beyond their surface narrative). In "Figures of Allegory from Homer to Latin Epic," Andrew Laird has studied Vergil's allegorical description of *Fama*, in order to explore Greek and Latin authors' complex understanding of discourse in general and of epic language in particular.<sup>53</sup> Further, Joseph Farrell, among others, has argued that Vergil, in his composition of the Aristaeus episode at the end of the *Georgics*, was influenced by allegorical interpretations of Homer.<sup>54</sup> Plato's allegory of the cave was also composed with a secondary meaning in mind, and Apuleius' story of Cupid and Psyche has a clear allegorical appeal. What is more, Prudentius himself composed a number of prefaces that contain narratives allegorical of the poems they introduce.<sup>55</sup> Allegory, therefore, could be found both in discrete passages and (as in the case of Horace's *Ode* 1.14) as the organizing principle of some Classical poems.

---

<sup>50</sup> See Nisbet and Hubbard (1970), 178-180.

<sup>51</sup> For a survey of earlier anti-allegorical interpretations, see Pilch (1929).

<sup>52</sup> For up to date bibliography and the argument that this poem refers to a woman rather than the state, see Knorr (2006).

<sup>53</sup> Laird (2003).

<sup>54</sup> Farrell (1991), 256-72; see also Morgan (1999), 61-96.

<sup>55</sup> See above, in chapter two.

Allegoresis<sup>56</sup> was a common form of interpretation in the Classical world. The earliest extant examples are from the sixth century BCE, as Homer was mined for insight into the physical world. The Derveni Papyrus attests to a flourishing logic of allegory in the fourth century BCE; and the Stoics and then Neo-Platonists built up theoretical models to explain Homer's knowledge as either the traces of primitive wisdom or the unconscious symbolism inherent in verbal reality. Robert Lamberton, in *Homer the Theologian* (1989), and Peter Struck, in *The Birth of the Symbol* (2004), have studied these allegorical exegetes of Homer, from the earliest exemplars to Proclus in the fifth century CE. As the title of Lamberton's book implies, these practitioners of allegoresis viewed Homer as a source of divine wisdom. Their task was to retrieve a deeper meaning from the text. It is notable that the tradition of Homeric allegoresis did not engender a separate tradition of allegorical poetry until Late Antiquity.<sup>57</sup>

Beginning with Philo, Paul, and then Origen, Jewish and Christian traditions of allegoresis grew up alongside Homeric allegoresis. Jean Pépin's *Mythe et Allégorie* traces the reaction by Philo and the Christian allegorists to allegorical interpretations of Greco-Roman mythology. Christian exegetes attempted to discredit the allegorization of mythology while simultaneously interpreting what they viewed as difficult passages in the Hebrew scriptures as allegories of moral or theological scope. As Francis Young has argued in *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (1997), Origen was the Christian author who systematized and "professionalise[d] the exegesis of scripture."<sup>58</sup> For, from Origen on, Christian exegetes borrowed the techniques of Homeric exegesis.

---

<sup>56</sup> The word *allegoresis* is a modern Grecism. In antiquity, either *allegoria* or such circumlocutions as *exegesis allegorica* were used in its sense. On the former, see Thomas (2004), 88; for the latter and other similar circumlocutions, see *TLL*, s.v. *allegoricus*.

<sup>57</sup> In his fourth chapter, entitled "The Interaction of Allegorical Interpretation and Deliberate Allegory," Lamberton discusses Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, Heliodorus' *Ethiopica*, and Musaeus' *Hero and Leander* (144-161).

<sup>58</sup> Young (1997), 292.

Christians exegetes adapted Homeric allegoresis in one important way. Beginning with Paul, they introduced the idea of types, which found their allegorical fulfillment in later historical figures. Typology, or figural allegory as it is also called, is the form of allegoresis concerned not with a secondary meaning divorced from the surface of the text but with a secondary referent that is in some sense level with the primary reference.<sup>59</sup> While Homeric allegorists did not try to retain the surface narrative of their text,<sup>60</sup> Christian exegetes often (though not always) claimed both that events recounted in, say, the Pentateuch actually happened and that they also referred to Christ or the Church or some other referent (their referentiality being determined by God as the maker of history). Of course, there is no clear line between allegory and typology; and what is now labeled typology was called *allegoria* in antiquity. In fact, the modern word typology was apparently first used in the 1840s.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the distinction does give a name to the variety of allegoresis in which the secondary meaning is viewed as parallel to the primary meaning, rather than as its replacement.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from the tradition of allegory, Prudentius' *Psychomachia* finds a precedent in the rhetorical use of personification. The English *personification* (borrowed from the French *personnification*) makes a sharper distinction than the Greek *prosopopoeia*.<sup>63</sup> In ancient rhetoric, *prosopopoeia* describes either the introduction of absent, often deceased, persons (e.g. Cicero's

---

<sup>59</sup> See Auerbach (1944), Young (1994), Dawson (2002), and Thomas (2004).

<sup>60</sup> But some Neo-Platonist allegorizers unified the surface of Homer's text and its deeper meaning in a different way; Peter Struck speaks of Neo-Platonic symbolic allegory as a sacramental act of interpretation (2004, 149, 204, and 247). While symbolism imagines an organic relation between the text and its referent, typology views the text and its referent as distinct entities within the same field of reference (e.g. as existing within the field of human history).

<sup>61</sup> This is stated by A. C. Charity, who also says that the first use of *typologia* was c. 1840 (1966, 171, n. 2). The first entry under *typology* in the *OED* is from 1845. A certain Franciscus Xaverius Patritius, in his *De interpretatione scripturarum sacrarum* of 1844, vol. I, p. 172, describes *typologia* as a *nomen a recentioribus scriptoribus inditum*.

<sup>62</sup> Dawson (2002) argues that the Christian interpretation of the Jewish scriptures was not on the whole supersessionist. I need not enter that discussion here, because I want only to say that the possibility of typological interpretation was developed by the Christian exegetes who read in a single text two meanings that were both historical and yet distinct (i.e. non-symbolic).

<sup>63</sup> For a survey of rhetorical treatments of personification, from antiquity to the present, see Paxson (1994), 8-34. Martin (2004) surveys the political uses of Rome personified, up to the end of antiquity.

performance as Appius Claudius Caecus in his *pro Caelio*) or the invention of person and voice for an abstract concept (e.g. Cicero's invocation of the *Res Publica* in the first *Catilinarian*). Only the second variety of *prosopopoeia* is relevant to the *Psychomachia*, and this is precisely the meaning of personification. For that reason, I will discuss from now on *personification* and not *prosopopoeia*.

Before Prudentius, the Latin poets employed personification in a number of ways.<sup>64</sup> Of course, in personifying abstractions, the Latin poets did not do anything that was absolutely new; Hesiod, for example, personifies a number of abstract ideas in his *Theogony*. Within the tradition of Latin epic, however, personification is developed in a coherent manner. Vergil, in book six of the *Aeneid*, peoples the entrance to the underworld with an assemblage of terrors.

*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 visu formae, Letumque Labosque;  
tum consanguineus Leti Sopor et mala mentis  
Gaudia mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum  
ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens,  
vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis (Aen. 6.273-281).*

Before the first entry and in the very jaws of Orcus  
Grief and vengeful Cares have made their home  
and there dwell the ashen Illnesses and sad Old Age  
and Fear and Hunger and ugly Poverty,  
(their shapes are terrible to look at) and Death and Labor;  
then there is Sleep, the cousin of Death, and Evil Joys  
of the Mind and War, who brings death from the opposite side,  
and the iron chambers of the Eumenides and mad Discord,  
who had fixed up her viperous hair with bloody bands.

Vergil's personified terrors surround the entrance to the underworld. They are modified by appropriate adjectives. But they do not act. As a further step in personification, Statius describes

---

<sup>64</sup> Maurice Lavarenne provides a concise survey of personification in Latin poetry (1948, 17-21).

the attendants of Mars and gives them actions to fit their personalities. The scene is the reception which Hermes received when he arrived at the palace of Mars:

*primis salit Impetus amens  
e foribus caecumque Nefas Iraeque rubentes  
exanguesque Metus, occultisque ensibus astant  
Insidiae geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum.  
innumeris strepit aula Minis, tristissima Virtus  
stat medio, laetusque Furor uultuque cruento  
Mors armata sedet (Theb. 7.47-53).*

Thoughtless Impulse jumps up from the front of the doorway, and there is blind Crime and red Passion and bloodless Fear. And with a hidden sword Treachery stands by and Discord holding its double-edged weapon. The hall resounds with countless Threats. Virtue stands sadly in the middle, and joyful Rage and armed Death with her bloody face are sitting down.

In addition to the epithets and sparse description found in Vergil, Statius grants his personifications their own meaningful verbs. And when personification employs description, it becomes a form of allegory: i.e. the description of Impulse jumping up means that it is quick to act. Claudian employs personification frequently in his poetry, especially personifications of Rome.<sup>65</sup> He also describes, at the end of *Stil. II*, the cave of Time (*aevum*) in which Nature personified dwells. In that passage, personification and allegory are drawn closer together, as *Natura* speaks in person within the allegorical frame provided by the cave of Time.

The *Psychomachia*, therefore, followed upon a long tradition of allegorization and personification.<sup>66</sup> The rhetorical tradition of allegory provided Prudentius with a master trope, by which he could describe one activity through another. The techniques of allegoresis developed by Homeric and Scriptural exegetes provided him with an audience prepared to read epic poetry

---

<sup>65</sup> For a list of personifications in Claudian, see Beatrice (1971), 33, n. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Because it is distinct from the allegorical form of his poem, I have not even mentioned Prudentius' sources for what has become known as the *bellum intestinum*, the struggle of virtue against vice. This aspect of the *Psychomachia* is discussed in detail by Beatrice (1971), although he is too quick to dismiss the Classical (as opposed to Christian) sources.

for its deeper sense. And the poetic tradition of personification gave him the characters for his drama. Therefore, even though Prudentius' *Psychomachia* was the first personification allegory, it had roots throughout the Roman literary culture.

### b. The Allegory of the *Psychomachia*

The novelty of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* consists precisely in the fact that he was the first to turn the techniques of personification and allegory into a continuous and self-coherent narrative.<sup>67</sup> The *Psychomachia*, in other words, is entirely structured around the personified virtues and vices who are its actors, as allegory has become the device that allows this poem to exist. Prudentius elevates allegorical poetry to the genre of epic, which is made clear by his focus upon a battle narrative, by intertextual links to the *Aeneid*, and by the invocation at the beginning of the poem.<sup>68</sup> Any discussion of the *Psychomachia*'s allegory, however, is complicated by the fact that Prudentius employs allegory in three distinct ways: the preface to the poem is both a typological interpretation of Abraham's life and also an allegory for the poem as a whole; the narrative of the *Psychomachia* is structured through personification allegory (and it is this structuring that is most original, from the viewpoint of earlier Latin poetry); and the poem employs typologies throughout, in such a way as to involve the reader in its narrative. Each

---

<sup>67</sup> For a contemporary prose allegory of recent politics, compare Synesius' *Aegyptii sive De Providentia*, which begins with an explicit reference to its own deeper meaning: ὁ μῦθος Αἰγύπτιος· περιττοὶ σοφίαν Αἰγύπτιοι. τάχ' ἂν οὖν ὄδε, καὶ μῦθος ὢν, μύθου τι πλέον αἰνίττοιτο, διότι ἐστὶν Αἰγύπτιος. εἰ δὲ μηδὲ μῦθος, ἀλλὰ λόγος ἐστὶν ἱερός, ἔτι ἂν ἀξιώτερος εἶη λέγεσθαί τε καὶ γράφεσθαι. Lamberton notes the relevance of this text (1986, 144, n. 1).

<sup>68</sup> On Prudentius as an epic successor to Vergil, see Mastrangelo (2008), 14-40, with further references. The title of Peuch's (1888) chapter on the *Psychomachia* was already "L'έποπέε allégorique."

aspect of the *Psychomachia*, therefore, creates a poem whose interpretation remains to be completed, as its allegory draws out the role of the reader.<sup>69</sup>

The first variety of allegory in the *Psychomachia* is found in its preface,<sup>70</sup> which announces the subject of the poem and provides a partial explanation of its narrative. The preface begins with a recounting of several scenes from the life of Abraham: the patriarch defeats the kings who had captured his nephew Lot, with the help of 318 servants; and he is then visited by three strangers who prophesy that Sarah will give birth to Isaac. The preface ends with an allegorical interpretation of the story: The Christian defeats vice, with the help of Christ<sup>71</sup>; and he then welcomes the three members of the trinity who herald a new birth of virtue in his life. This preface signals to the reader a broad outline by which to interpret the *Psychomachia*'s allegory. The allegoresis of Abraham, however, should be distinguished from the allegory of the *Psychomachia* proper. The *Psychomachia*'s allegory employs personified figures as its actors. The preface allegorizes Abraham as a model for the faithful reader, by constructing his narrative as an analogue to the narrative of the *Psychomachia*. In this way, the reader is prepared to enter the text as Abraham went out to fight the pagan kings.<sup>72</sup> The reader who understands the allegory of Prudentius' preface is prepared to engage vice and receive his reward, by applying the message of the *Psychomachia* to his life. In this respect, the preface of the *Psychomachia* is no different from Prudentius' other prefaces.

What is different about the *Psychomachia* is its second form of allegory. Rather than presenting his teaching directly, Prudentius employs personified figures to embody his point. The *Psychomachia* begins with a twenty-line proem in which the poet invokes Christ and announces

---

<sup>69</sup> Compare Quilligan (1979), 21: "The current fashion of "foregrounding" the reader in the consideration of any text should not obscure the generic centrality of the reader that has always been particular to allegory."

<sup>70</sup> On this preface as a preface, see above pp. 67-9.

<sup>71</sup> Mystically prefigured in the number 318, on which see Mastrangelo (2008), 55.

<sup>72</sup> Compare Mastrangelo (2008), 87-93, which describes Prudentius' construction of a faithful reader.

that the key to the battle against vice is an accurate knowledge of both one's opponent and one's own side. From there, lines 21-725 describe the attacks of the vices and the final victory of the virtues. Lines 726-887 describe the speeches of *Concordia* and *Fides* and the building of a temple for Wisdom. And then lines 888-915 give thanks to Christ for allowing the poet to understand the battle and for causing Wisdom to reign. Aside from the proem and the epilogue, in which the poet speaks in his own voice, the narrative is entirely given over to the actions and speeches of its personified figures.

Each of the seven pairs of virtues and vices receive individual treatment, and there is no simplistic structure which organizes their battles.<sup>73</sup> Rather, the narrative is tailored to each figure and builds up a comprehensive set of ambiguities, of both a moral life and of language, which are resolved as Christ enters the poem and the reader's soul. In the poem these ambiguities take the shape of Deception (*Fraus*) personified. Just as the ambiguities revealed by *Fraus* point out the difficulty of constructing a coherent narrative out of incoherent language, Prudentius' allegory addresses the difficulties inherent in the referentiality of language.<sup>74</sup> Prudentius' allegorical personifications point to the separate and secondary meaning to which they refer, without losing their own substance within his narrative. Thus, in saying that the reader understands Prudentius' narrative on a second level, I do not want to suggest that the surface level of his text is emptied of its power. The virtues and vices are literary figures in their own right; it is just that the reader also interprets them as allegorical personifications. Because the reader must choose, at each point, whether to pursue the text's literal or allegorical meaning, the poem is continually open to the intervention of its reader.

---

<sup>73</sup> Nugent demonstrates this in detail in the first part of her study (1985), 17-62.

<sup>74</sup> Compare Nugent (1985), 90: "Although ambiguity does inevitably present a threat in the context of a semiotic system, the work of the psychomachic struggle is not merely to displace or conceal ambiguity, but to explore its limits and possibilities. Thus the problem of ambiguity is admitted into the poem in the form of *fraus*." Nugent's penultimate chapter discusses "Poetic deception in the allegorical system."

The duel between Patience and Anger offers Prudentius ample space to employ his allegorical technique, and it clearly reveals the two levels of the text. The scene begins with a view of Patience, a modest figure:

*Ecce modesta gravi stabat Patientia vultu  
per medias inmota acies variosque tumultus  
vulneraque et rigidis vitalia pervia pilis  
spectabat defixa oculos et lenta manebat* (109-113).

And there was calm Patience, standing with a serious face unmoved in the middle of the battle and amid the shifting tumult. She watched the wounds and their vitals pierced through with stiff spears, as she held down her eyes. And she remained calm.

After these lines, Prudentius describes *Ira* as impetuous, quick to act, and prone to frustration.

After a few vain attempts on Patience, Anger becomes so frustrated that she grabs a spear from the ground and kills herself. Patience then proclaims her victory, in restrained terms:

*Quam super adsistens Patientia "Vicimus" inquit  
"exultans vitium solita virtute sine ullo  
sanguinis ac vitae discrimine. Lex habet istud  
nostra genus belli furias omnemque malorum  
militiam et rabidas tolerando extinguere vires.  
Ipsa sibi est hostis vaesania seque furendo  
interimit moriturque suis Ira ignea telis"* (155-161).

Patience stood over her and said, "I won. I defeated the vice in my normal strength and without any risk of blood or life. My rule keeps to this kind of war, in order to destroy by endurance the furies and the whole army of evils and rabid violence. Madness is her own enemy, and in her rage she kills herself, and flaming Anger dies by her own spear."

*Vicimus* is very matter of fact. And the whole speech is particularly suited to its virtue.<sup>75</sup>

Whereas in earlier poets the actions and even descriptions of personifications are restrained, Prudentius describes his figures in full and gives them actions and speeches to suit their person.

---

<sup>75</sup> For the contrast, compare Hope's response to her victory: *Extinctum vitium sancto Spes increpat ore: "Desine grande loqui, frangit deus omne superbum. Magna cadunt, inflata crepant, tumefacta premuntur"* (284-6).

Each of these elements is allegorical of the abstraction described. That is, they refer to—or rather, construct an image of—the virtue of patience. Of course, the surface of Prudentius’ allegory is descriptive and compelling in its own right; but the poem invites its reader to associate these descriptions with a secondary field of reference. Like Optatian’s figural poetry, Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* constructs a text that may be read at more than one level. Each level of meaning is self-coherent, and at each point the reader may pursue one or the other, or try to make them harmonize.

Just as the preface of the *Psychomachia* draws a typological connection between Abraham and the virtuous Christian, the speeches of the virtues and vices introduce a number of typological figures.<sup>76</sup> This is the third variety of allegory in the *Psychomachia*. The heroes from the Bible, who have already won their own battles, offer the reader a model for her own fight. And even more than that, Prudentius’ typological figures involve his reader in a narrative that begins in the Old Testament but continues into the present moment of the text; for the poem asks its reader to take sides in its battle. In that sense, the secondary level of Prudentius’ allegory becomes continuous with the reader’s identification with its typological figures. As Marc Mastrangelo says, the reader of Prudentius’ allegory becomes the epic hero: “This typological connection underscores the poem’s epic ambitions by recasting the epic hero not as a figure better than the reader but as the reader himself whose potential is actualized through the free choice of virtuous qualities.”<sup>77</sup>

The typological identification between reader and figure is realized most clearly at the end of the poem, in the temple built for Wisdom. *Fides* speaks to the troops and recommends their final labor:

---

<sup>76</sup> These are discussed in detail by Mastrangelo (2008), 99-120; and Smith (1976), 178-94.

<sup>77</sup> Mastrangelo (2008), 99. Compare also Smith (1976), 24-6; Jauss (1960); and Cotogni (1936).

*Unum opus egregio restat post bella labori,  
o proceres, regni quod tandem pacifer heres  
belligeri armatae successor inermus et aulae  
instituit Solomon, quoniam genitoris anhel  
fumarat calido regum de sanguine dextra.  
Sanguine nam terso templum fundatur et ara  
ponitur auratis Christi domus ardua tectis.*

...

*Surgat et in nostris templum venerabile castris,  
omnipotens cuius sanctorum sancta revisat!* (804-815)

O nobles, after war there is one task that remains,  
an extraordinary job, one that Solomon instituted,  
he who was at long last a peacemaker, the heir of a warrior  
kingdom, who received a fortified palace  
but went himself without weapons; for the tired hand of his father  
smoked with the hot blood of the kings.  
For when the blood has been wiped away a temple is established  
and an altar set up, the high home of Christ, with golden ceilings.

...

Let a temple rise to be honored in our camp as well,  
whose holy of holies the Omnipotent may visit again!

As Solomon once built a temple for Christ, so the virtues will once more build a home for Christ (and the following description of the jeweled temple is reminiscent of the new Jerusalem described in the book of Revelation). As the virtues build their temple, so do readers welcome Christ to reign in their souls. (This final link is made abundantly clear in the epilogue and especially at the very end of the poem, when the poet says that the human soul is at war until Christ comes and Wisdom reigns.<sup>78</sup>) The typological allegory of the *Psychomachia* constructs the reader as an active participant in its narrative, as the form of the poem compels the reader to consider the meaning beyond its surface. In this way, typology and allegorical personification merge within Prudentius' description of these virtues; for they are both informed by Biblical exempla and potentially present within the soul of the reader. This is the third way in which

---

<sup>78</sup> Ps. 908-15. Smith argues at length for identifying Wisdom with Christ (1976), 194-206.

Prudentius uses allegory in the *Psychomachia*; it is logically independent of his decision to compose the *Psychomachia* as a continuous personification allegory.

As we have seen, Prudentius' *Psychomachia* enables a secondary meaning, only suggested by its allegorical personifications and typological exempla. This allegorical epic brings together the formerly separate strands of allegory and personification and makes of them the grounds for its own existence. In so doing, Prudentius elevates his reader to a place of prominence, as he invites reflection upon the processes by which his text establishes its meaning. Whereas earlier poets had employed allegory as one trope within their text, it is present throughout this poem. The text presents two narratives that are internally coherent and yet distinct: the one on the surface of the text and the other on the level of allegory. By viewing this poem along its two layers as an open text, we see that Prudentius did not set out to create a final portrait of psychomachic struggle. Rather, he created a poem that remains to be actualized, both as the reader connects the secondary sense of the allegory and as the reader engages in his own personal psychomachia.

### III. The Latin Centos

Like the Greek κέντρον, the Latin word *cento* literally meant a patchwork rag; and, from the third century CE on, it was used figuratively to denote a poem composed of the fragments of some earlier poem.<sup>79</sup> Unlike other poetry that employs *imitatio*, a cento retains the exact words of a predecessor. Unlike oral composition, the reproductions of a cento depend upon a fixed and verifiable text.<sup>80</sup> *Epithalamia*, narrative poems (Christian and mythological), and a tragedy all

---

<sup>79</sup> On this word, see Salanitro (1997), 2319-2321.

<sup>80</sup> But compare Usher's thought-provoking comparisons of the centonists and Homeric rhapsodes (1998 and 2003).

survive from antiquity in cento form. The cento, therefore, is a distinct literary form not because of its content but because each cento shares a technique of patchwork composition, in which a previous poem is reduced to its constituent parts (e.g. the lines and half-lines of dactylic hexameter) and then recomposed to a new end. Because the cento is a distinct literary form, the only poems that qualify as centos are independent works either entirely or very nearly composed from the exact words of a previous poem. This definition excludes such highly imitative works as the *Batrachomyomachia* or the *Concubitus Martis et Veneris*.<sup>81</sup>

Although we can only date a few of the centos, the broad outline of their history is uncontroversial.<sup>82</sup> The earliest centos of which we have sure knowledge were written towards the end of the second century, and the cento flourished in the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>83</sup> Hosidius Geta's *Medea*, the earliest Latin cento, is from the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. The earliest Greek centos are from the same period.<sup>84</sup> The first Greek author to mention a centonic poem (though without using the word κέντρον) was Irenaeus. In a discussion of the misuse of scripture, he cites a short, ten-line Homeric cento on Heracles (*Adversus Haereses* 1.9.4). Tertullian is the first Latin writer to speak of a cento (*De Praescr. Haer.* 39.3-5).<sup>85</sup> He refers to (1) an undefined set of *Homerocentones*, (2) a version of the *Pinax* of Cebes composed from Vergil by Tertullian's relative (*propinquus*), and (3) the recently composed *Medea* of Hosidius Geta. Tertullian presents cento poetry as a recent phenomenon (*vides hodie ex Virgilio fabulam in totum aliam componi, De Praescr. Haer.* 39.3). After the *Medea*, the next datable centos are the *Cento Probae*, Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis*, and the Homeric centos of the empress Eudocia. With the notable exception of the *Medea*, these are

---

<sup>81</sup> On the category of "pseudocentoni," see Salanitro (1997), 2333-4 and 2356-7; as well as Bažil (2009), 46-7.

<sup>82</sup> See Bažil (2009), 18-25; McGill (2005), xv-xvii; Salanitro (1997); and Polara (1989).

<sup>83</sup> As observed by Salanitro (1997), 2335.

<sup>84</sup> On which, see Salanitro (1997), 2325-2334.

<sup>85</sup> This passage is discussed in some detail below on pp. 123-4.

also the most extended and artistic centos from antiquity. The only other datable centos are the *Versus ad Gratiam Domini* (sometime after the *Cento Probae*<sup>86</sup>) and Luxurius'<sup>87</sup> *Epithalamium Fridi* (late fifth or early sixth century). Aside from the *De Verbi Incarnatione*,<sup>88</sup> the remaining ten extant, undated Latin centos were gathered in Africa during the first half of the sixth century and then preserved in the *Codex Salmasianus*. The cento, therefore, seems to have had a limited existence in antiquity, appearing only in Late Antiquity and particularly in the fourth century or shortly thereafter.<sup>89</sup> The brief appearance of the cento is not surprising, for Martin Bažil has observed that the cento is particularly dependent upon aesthetic changes in the literary public.<sup>90</sup> As this chapter shows, the relevant aesthetic change was the turn towards open poetry.

Vergil's ubiquitous authority made possible the Late Antique cento. In particular, the role of Vergil's poetry in education produced a public that was familiar enough with his work to appreciate the centos that were produced.<sup>91</sup> This is important because it means that the audience of the centos was capable of understanding their sophisticated interaction with the text of Vergil and therefore that the centos were not simple attempts at plagiarism. A cento usually depends upon a recognized canon or a single authoritative text, and in Late Antiquity Vergil's poetry was both familiar and authoritative.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> McGill (2001), 17, n. 11.

<sup>87</sup> On Luxurius, see Rosenblum (1961) and Kaster (1988), 415-17.

<sup>88</sup> Which was transmitted in a single manuscript dated to the latter half of the ninth century, on which see Bažil (2009), 218.

<sup>89</sup> On the afterlife of the cento in the high middle ages, see Bažil (2009), 231-242.

<sup>90</sup> Bažil (2009), 73.

<sup>91</sup> On the scholastic nature of the cento, see Lamacchia (1958). And on the various uses of Vergil's poetry in imperial culture, see McGill (2005), xvii-xxv. On the grammarian Servius' use of Vergil's poetry, see Kaster (1988), 169-96.

<sup>92</sup> It is notable that the Vergilian centos use only the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* and never the pseudo-Vergilian poems, as noted by McGill (2005), 153, n. 2.

### a. The Reader and the Cento

A cento depends upon its reader's familiarity with its source text. Giovanni Polara made this point when he wrote that "[Il centone] non ha esistenza autonoma. Vive finché dura l'opera centonata: se questa si perdesse, non sarebbe piú riconoscibile come centone, e diverrebbe un testo qualunque, un banale, modesto « originale »."<sup>93</sup> An original may be read on its own, but a cento must be read through its source. Of course, every form of intertextuality depends upon the reader's double awareness of both the primary text and its intertext(s). The cento, however, turns what is usually a secondary relationship into the motivating principle of its existence. For this reason, Françoise Desbordes concluded that the cento was particularly dependent upon the active participation of its reader: "Le centon en *son* temps et devant *son* public, est une forme de l'art allusif qui compte avant tout sur la mémoire et la participation active du lecteur."<sup>94</sup> Scott McGill also noted the demands placed upon the reader of a cento: "Because the cento is the kind of *ludus* it is, the processes that lie behind its linguistic surface intrude more forcefully on the reading act than do the processes underlying the production of conventional poetry . . . ."<sup>95</sup> The cento asks its reader to constantly engage its source, in order to follow the complexity of its composition.

In order to understand its complexity, we should think of a cento as having three distinct layers: the narrative surface of the text, its allusive engagement with the specific context of its source (microtextual allusion), and the abstract hypertextuality of its repeated words (macrotextual allusion).<sup>96</sup> The "narrative surface of the text" is the new poem created from the

---

<sup>93</sup> Polara (1989), 274.

<sup>94</sup> Desbordes (1979), 99.

<sup>95</sup> McGill (2005), 9; and compare Bažil (2009), 64-5. Hardie (2007) also shows the cento's need for a reader.

<sup>96</sup> I borrow the terms "microtextual allusion" and "macrotextual allusion" from McGill (2005), 24-30.

borrowed lines and half-lines of its source.<sup>97</sup> Microtextual allusion describes the circumscribed relation between individual fragments and their original Vergilian context. Macrotextual allusion describes the relation between centonic composition and Vergilian poetry. That is, macrotextual allusion is concerned not with the use of individual words but with the poet's wholesale transposition of Vergilian poetry. Since each line of a cento performs various functions at these different levels of reading, the reader must constantly choose which level to follow. Because a cento allows its reader to choose his own path through its text, a cento is an open poem.

In *Virgil Recomposed: The Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity*, McGill has noted the importance of the two levels at which a cento alludes to Vergil, and he provides convincing readings of all the ways in which the mythological and secular centos actually operate as texts. My own approach to these centos, however, is distinct from his in three ways. First, because I approach these texts through the reader, I present the reader's options as three levels of the text that are disconnected from each other and yet self-coherent. These separate layers are the organizing principle that structures the reader's approach to the text. Second, I approach the centos as open texts. They are meant to present their reader with possibilities; and, at each moment, readers must choose how they will read the text. Third, I use these layers to show that the Latin cento marks a particular aesthetic moment in the history of Latin poetry, whereas McGill was focused upon the reading of a cento as a timeless possibility. By approaching the centos as layered texts, I show that they are in fact open texts and that Late Antique poetry is marked by its turn towards openness. This feature of Late Antique textuality helps in turn to explain the cento's appeal to a Late Antique audience.

---

<sup>97</sup> On the importance of a cento having a coherent narrative, see also McGill (2005), 18-23.

In order to show how each layer of the text actually works, I will present three readings of the proem to the anonymous *Hippodamia*.<sup>98</sup> In this proem, the poet invokes the muses and declares the theme of his poem. I use this passage because it is an elaborate invocation—namely that place in which a poet calls upon the gods to give him authority and to inspire his poem—and, therefore, particularly suited to a discussion of the poetic layers of the text. I should stress, though, that any passage of any cento can be read along these lines.

First, the narrative surface of a cento functions in the same way as in any other poem. The poet has something to say, and he says it to the best of his ability. The invocation of the *Hippodamia* is immediately recognizable as such; for it employs the devices typically found at the beginning of a Classical poem in epic meter: divinities addressed in the vocative case, imperatives enjoining the divinity to begin the poem, first-person pronouncements of poetic intent, and the subject of the poem in the accusative case:

*pandite nunc Helicon, deae, nunc pectore firmo  
este duces, o si qua via est, et pronuba Iuno;  
pallida Tisiphone, fecundum concute pectus.  
Non hic Atridae et scelus exitiale Lacaenae:  
hic crudelis amor. nunc illas promite vires,  
maius opus moveo: quaesitas sanguine dotes  
et scelerum poenas inconcessosque hymenaeos.*

Now open Helicon, you goddesses, be strong now in heart  
and be my guides, oh if there is any way, along with Juno the bridesmaid;  
you, pale Tisiphone, stir up my heart and make it fertile.  
The sons of Atreus are not here, nor the deadly crime of Sparta:  
Here is a cruel love. Bring forward now that strength,  
I start a greater work: a dowry sought by blood  
and the payment for crimes and a forbidden marriage.

The poet employs various rhetorical figures: notably, anaphora with *nunc* in the first line and a brief priamel in lines four and five.<sup>99</sup> In terms of content, the poet asks the muses of Helicon,

---

<sup>98</sup> The *Hippodamia* was recently edited by Paola Paolucci (2006) and discussed by McGill (2005), 85-8.

<sup>99</sup> On rhetorical figures in the centos, see McGill (2005), 14-16

Juno, and Tisiphone to lead him through his poem and to stir up his heart. Then, the poet declares that this poem will be about love. After another request for strength and the statement that this is a greater work (*maius opus*), the poet expands upon the theme of his poem, the deadly chariot race in which Pelops defeated Oenamaeus and won the right to marry Hippodamia. Although each of these seven lines is composed of half-lines from throughout Vergil's poetry, they form a coherent text on their own.

In addition to telling his own story, the poet declares that this will be a greater work; for he will not repeat the stale themes of the Trojan war. What does it mean for the centonist to construct a *maius opus* out of Vergil while at the same time rejecting epic poetry? McGill suggests that the *Hippodamia* is a post-Vergilian re-inscription of mythological poetry (i.e. the poet restores what had been a trite and tired theme to new prominence).<sup>100</sup> In support of this view, McGill recalls *G.* 3.7-8:

*cui non dictus Hylas puer et Latonia Delos  
Hippodameque umeroque Pelops insignis eburno,  
acer equis?*

Who hasn't talked about the boy Hylas and Latona on Delos

and Hippodamia and Pelops who's famous for his ivory shoulder,  
and keen with horses?

Since *umeroque Pelops insignis eburno* is used at *Hippodamia* 150, it is entirely certain that the centonist remembered Vergil's rejection of Pelops and his famous chariot race. However, the poet of the *Hippodamia* has a story to tell and a new poem to write, and he is quite willing to reject Vergil's authority. For that reason, the poet invokes the gods to aid him in his task (and

---

<sup>100</sup> McGill (2005), 85-6. McGill's chapter 4, "Omnia Iam Vulgata," considers the mythological centos of Vergil and borrows its title from Verg. *G.* 3.4 (2005, 71-91).

Juno and Tisiphone are quite the gods to invoke!<sup>101</sup>). On its surface, a cento is simply a poem; and the poet of a cento makes use of the figures employed in any other poem, in order to produce poetry. The reader of a cento, therefore, may always enjoy its surface and narrative, apart from its intertextual and ludic foundations.<sup>102</sup>

Second, the reader of a cento may compare each fragment to its context in the source text. In a microtextual allusion, the centonist alludes to a specific passage in his source, in the same way as any other poet would. The difference in a cento is that it is entirely possible to read every fragment as an allusion. In practice, of course, most readers will not see a microtextual allusion in every line. Nevertheless, the presence of microtextual allusions allows the reader to pursue this possibility.<sup>103</sup> And the openness of cento poetry depends upon the fact that a reader must constantly choose which path to follow. Below is the same passage from the *Hippodamia*, with the source for each hemistich cited:

*pandite nunc Helicon, deae* (A. 7.641<sup>104</sup>), *nunc pectore firmo* (A. 6.261)  
*este duces, o si qua via est* (A. 6.194), *et pronuba Iuno* (A. 4.166);  
*pallida Tisiphone* (G. 3.552<sup>105</sup>), *fecundum concute pectus* (A. 7.338)!  
*Non hic Atridae* (A. 9.602) *et scelus exitiale Lacaenae* (A. 6.511):  
*hic crudelis amor* (A.6.24). *nunc illas promite vires* (A. 5.191),  
*maius opus moveo* (A. 7.45): *quaesitas sanguine dotes* (A. 7.423)  
*et scelerum poenas* (A. 8.668) *inconcessosque hymenaeos* (A. 1.651).

When the first line of the poem is read microtextually, the reader recalls that *pandite nunc Helicon, deae* was spoken at two points in the *Aeneid*. At 7.641, the poet invokes the muses at

<sup>101</sup> On the role of the underworld in initiating the action of the *Aeneid* as well as subsequent, post-Vergilian epic, see Hardie (1991), ch. 3, “Heaven and Hell,” 57-87.

<sup>102</sup> That Late Antique readers did in fact view the centos as discrete texts is neatly confirmed by the fact that two centos (Luxurius’ *Epithalamium Fridi* and Pomponius’ *Versus ad Gratiam Domini*) imitate earlier centos (Ausonius’ *Cento Nuptialis* and Proba’s *Cento* respectively). In reusing a previous cento, these centonists reveal that their poetry could and did function as literature in the same way as any other poem. On the intertextual link between Luxurius and Ausonius, see McGill (2005), 104-5. On Pomponius and Proba, see McGill (2001) and Bažil (2009), 209-18.

<sup>103</sup> McGill (2005) pursues a microtextual reading of sections of each secular cento.

<sup>104</sup> = A. 10.163.

<sup>105</sup> = A. 10.761.

the beginning of his catalogue of the Italian forces; at 10.163, the poet invokes the muses at the beginning of the catalogue of Etruscan ships. The original contexts correspond closely to the centonist's own invocation, and so the fragment seems to fit naturally within its new context. At *Aeneid* 6.261 (*nunc animis opus, Aenea, nunc pectore firmo*), the Sibyl calls Aeneas to prepare himself for their descent to the underworld. On the microtextual level, *nunc pectore firmo* alludes to Aeneas' mysterious and poetic descent. Perhaps, one may think, the *Hippodamia* will also engage the limits of poetry. *Nunc illas promite vires* works somewhat differently. In the *Aeneid*, it comes from the ship race during the funeral games of book five. Mnestheus urges his men to recall the strength they showed at the most difficult points in their journey from Troy. The *Hippodamia* poet, however, calls on his muses to bring forth their ability to inspire cruel love. This is a case of antanaclasis, the figure of speech in which a word or phrase is repeated in a different sense.<sup>106</sup> On the microtextual level, the reader explores the poet's use, re-use, and misuse of Vergilian fragments.

Third, the centonist alludes, on the macrotextual level, to the differences between his own aims and Vergil's poetry. Because a cento constantly repeats the exact words of its source, it always allows its reader to consider its poem as a ludic exercise in poetic memory: The poet approaches Vergil as an open text, and the reader enjoys the extreme manipulation of his source.<sup>107</sup> The difference between Vergil's text and its reshaping within a cento stands out most clearly at those points at which the centonist departs most drastically from Vergil's poetry. Therefore, the parodic<sup>108</sup> and transformational<sup>109</sup> centos most clearly reveal the dynamics of

---

<sup>106</sup> Polara used antanaclasis to characterize the allusivity of the cento (1981) and (1989), 266-9.

<sup>107</sup> McGill notes that the cento approaches Vergil as an open text, that the cento is an extreme form of intertextuality, and that it is ludic in nature (2005, xvii-xviii, 23, and 7-10).

<sup>108</sup> The parodic centos are the *De panificio* and the *De alea*, which are discussed by McGill (2005), 55-64 and 64-70. Also parodic are the portions of Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis* and Luxurius' *Epithalamium Fridi* that describe the sex of their newlyweds (McGill 2005, 103-8).

macrotextual allusion. But because a centonist revises the meaning of each fragment which he incorporates into his work, the reader of a cento will consistently think of the cento as a specifically hermeneutic game. In that way, a cento constantly alludes to its source macrotextually, and a reader may always pursue its meaning on the macrotextual level.

On the macrotextual level, the first line of the *Hippodamia* (*pandite nunc Helicon, deae, nunc pectore firmo*) leads the reader to reflect that the meaning of *nunc* is entirely dependent on its context. Further, the centonist's invocation of the muses is also in a way an invocation of Vergil; for the centonist's material comes from Vergil, and not any divine muse. Moreover, the phrase *maius opus moveo* takes on new meaning when the cento is read as a cento. Whereas a surface reading of the text took *maius opus moveo* to be a claim to poetic primacy and a microtextual reading of the same line noted that the phrase came from Vergil's invocation at the beginning of the second half of the *Aeneid*, a macrotextual reading of the phrase considers the irony of the centonist's claim to be writing a greater poem while at the same time using the very fragments of Vergil to do so. Thus, the macrotextual level is distinct from the microtextual level, insofar as a macrotextual reading stands back from the text and negotiates the cento's relation to its Vergilian source. And even when a particular fragment bears no relation to its context in Vergil, it may allude to the fact that a cento is always a secondary text.

In short, the reader of a cento must constantly navigate the three layers of its text: its surface and its microtextual and macrotextual allusions. Although my analysis treated each aspect separately, the actual reading of a cento will constantly switch between them. While microtextual allusion revolves around the pastness of the Vergilian words, macrotextual allusion

---

<sup>109</sup> The Christian centos transform Vergil in terms of content (Bažil 2009); Hosidius Geta's *Medea*, Ausonius' *Centio Nuptialis*, and Luxurius' *Epithalamium Fridi* transform Vergil in terms of genre (McGill 2005, 31-52 and 92-103).

concerns their present instantiation. Cento poetry forces the reader to play a strong and active role in the poem, because it presents a text that is always open to a multiplicity of readings.

#### b. The Cento in Late Antiquity

In the previous section, I described the reading of a cento in modern terms. In this section, I analyze the presentation and reception of centos within Late Antiquity. The most extended discussion of cento poetry comes from the prefatory letter that Ausonius wrote for his *Centio Nuptialis*. Ausonius gave special attention to the cento's ludic and paradoxical qualities. The cento was also discussed in relation to Christian exegesis: Tertullian and Jerome condemned the cento, which they compared to heretical interpretations of the scripture, while Proba and an anonymous scribe presented her cento as a positive improvement upon the text of Vergil. Thus, both contemporary critics and proponents of the cento recognized that it was an extreme form of appropriation. The macrotextual level of the cento, its ability to play with the hermeneutic possibilities of a poetic text, is a common thread throughout their responses. As a group, they are most concerned with that aspect of the cento which both treats Vergil as an open text and also elicits a parallel response from its own readers.

Ausonius' prefatory epistle<sup>110</sup> to Axius Paulus (1) describes his cento as an affront to Vergil's dignity, (2) considers the cento's ability to reshape Vergil's text, (3) compares the cento to a game called *stomachion*, and (4) recounts the contradictions inherent in the text of a cento. These four aspects of Ausonius' letter will be considered in turn.

---

<sup>110</sup> This letter was discussed by McGill (2005), 1-11 and 18-21; as well as Pollman (2004).

Ausonius tells Paulus that his cento imposes a shameful meaning upon Vergil. In an apology at the beginning of his letter,<sup>111</sup> Ausonius recounts his displeasure:

*piget equidem Vergiliani carminis dignitatem tam ioculari dehonestasse materia  
(Cento, Ausonius Paulo sal.).*

For my part, I am annoyed at having dishonored the grandeur of the Vergilian poem with so playful a subject.

In the prose *parecbasis* that introduces the final section of the cento (on Gratian's sexual relations with Constantia), Ausonius repeats the same regret:

*. . . cetera quoque cubiculi et lectuli operta prodentur, ab eodem auctore collecta,  
ut bis erubescamus qui et Vergilium faciamus impudentem (Cento, Parecbasis).*

. . . the remaining secrets of the bedroom (and the bed) will be revealed, [in pieces] gathered from the same author. I must blush twice, since I am also making Vergil immodest.

In both passages, Ausonius expresses his regard for the chaste poet's honor.<sup>112</sup> His regret, however, is muted both by the fact that he did send his poem to Paulus and by his subsequent observation that its contents were taken directly from Vergil (and therefore that he should not be held responsible for any obscenity).<sup>113</sup> But what concerns us here is that Ausonius attributes to his work the ability to alter Vergil. Ausonius' cento produces a reading of Vergil's work that changes the grandeur of that previous poem (*Vergiliani carminis dignitatem dehonestasse*) and makes Vergil immodest (*Vergilium faciamus impudentem*). Ausonius tells Paulus that his cento will change the way that other readers look at the *Aeneid*. By borrowing the exact words of a previous source, the cento treats its source as liable to external influence.

If Ausonius' cento lowers the register of Vergil's poetry, it also reshapes its source into something new. That is, his cento works both backwards to affect its source and forwards to

---

<sup>111</sup> On the penchant of authors to include apologies and *recusationes* in their prefaces, see above, p. 73, n. 70.

<sup>112</sup> On Ausonius' use of Vergil *Parthenias*, see McGill (2005), 108-14.

<sup>113</sup> *Et si quid in nostro ioco aliquorum hominum severitas vestita condemnat, de Vergilio arcessitum sciat (Cento, p. 154, Green 1999).*

create a new poem. Ausonius makes this point by contrasting the text as it was in its source and as it now is in his cento (the oxymoronic quality of Ausonius' description will be considered below):

*accipe igitur opusculum de inconexis continuum, de diversis unum, de seriis ludicrum, de alieno nostrum, ne in sacris et fabulis aut Thyonianum mireris aut Virbium, illum de Dionyso, hunc de Hippolyto reformatum (Cento, Ausonius Paulo sal.).*

So take my little poem. It's continuous, from unconnected pieces; it's one, from separate pieces; it's playful, from serious pieces; it's mine, from someone else. You'll no longer be amazed, in the mysteries and myths, by either Thyonianus<sup>114</sup> or Virbius<sup>115</sup> (the former was reshaped from Dionysus, the latter from Hippolytus).

*Continuum, unum,* and *nostrum* make the cento sound like a rather stable and ordered text.

Thyonianus and Virbius very neatly illustrate Ausonius' point, as the preposition *de* emphasizes that these are not the same characters but new characters drawn out of the old figures.<sup>116</sup> Put differently, it is their identities and not merely their names that have been changed. Like Thyonianus and Virbius, the cento has its own unity. As McGill has pointed out in reference to this passage, "the patchwork text is not another of the same thing, but a different entity made out of the same material."<sup>117</sup> Despite the obvious secondariness of his cento, Ausonius is also aware that it is a new poem, in its own way self-coherent.

As Ausonius continues to explain the cento, he compares it to a game known to him as *stomachion*<sup>118</sup> and elsewhere as *loculus Archimedi*.<sup>119</sup> The game is played with fourteen pieces

---

<sup>114</sup> On the uncertain source of this epithet, see Green (1991), *ad loc.*

<sup>115</sup> On Virbius, see *Aen.* 7.765-9.

<sup>116</sup> This point was made by McGill (2005), 19. Virbius was also used as a metaphor for textual re-assembly by Marcellus Empiricus, as noted by Formisano (2007), 284.

<sup>117</sup> (2005), 19.

<sup>118</sup> This name for the game is attested in Ausonius' letter, the title of Ennodius' *Carm.* 2.133 (Hartel), and in a short treatise by Archimedes on the various combinations of its figures. For Archimedes, see J. L. Heiberg ed. (1913), *Archimedis opera omnia cum commentariis Eutocii*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. II (Leipzig), pp. 416-24. Green (1991, *ad loc.*) correctly prefers *stomachion* to the *ostomachion* presented in one of the manuscripts, but he also printed the word in Greek characters.

of various geometric shapes; the point of the game is to arrange the pieces so as to form different figures (Ausonius lists as examples a war elephant, a wild boar, a flying goose, a gladiator in arms, a sitting hunter, a barking dog, a tower, and a drinking cup). The pieces of this game are like the fragments of Vergil's text<sup>120</sup>; their rearrangement produces new figures; and the skill of the player or poet consists in his ability to combine his given material. Thus, Ausonius compares the cento to a game that creates almost limitless possibilities within a constrained system.<sup>121</sup> In the same way, a cento plays with the possibility of re-configuring Vergil's poetry; and the composition of an experienced player, he says, is a marvelous thing.<sup>122</sup>

Ausonius describes the final goal of his game in contradictory terms<sup>123</sup>:

*hoc ergo centonis opusculum ut ille ludus tractatur, pari modo sensus diversi ut congruant, adoptiva quae sunt ut cognata videantur, aliena ne interluceant, arcessita ne vim redarguant, densa ne supra modum protuberent, hiulca ne pateant (Cento, Ausonius Paulo sal.).*

Therefore, this little centonic work is handled like that game, so that in the same way divergent meanings should come together, so that what is adopted should seem to be genuine, so that what is foreign should not show, so that what is forced should not prove my violence, so that what is thick should not stand out too much, so that what is gaping apart should not be exposed.

It is possible to read this oxymoronic language as mere rhetorical embellishment and to conclude that Ausonius only meant to say that the cento should present a coherent text whose clean surface belies its underlying fragmentation. Since, however, Ausonius allows the contrary terms of the hypotext to intrude upon his description, they should not be dismissed. The contradictions within the cento appeal to Ausonius. He goes out of his way to say that even the most well-constructed

---

<sup>119</sup> This name is used by Marius Victorinus in his *Ars Grammatica* (Keil vol. 6, p. 100-101) and in a *De Metris* falsely ascribed by the manuscripts to Atilius Fortunatianus (Keil vol. 6, p. 271-2; on the text, see Herzog and Schmidt 1989, § 525.3).

<sup>120</sup> On this game and the ludism of the cento, compare the discussion in McGill (2005), 8-9 and 20-1.

<sup>121</sup> As Reviel Netz and William Noel note in their book on the Archimedes Codex, there are 17,152 different ways just to form a square out of the fourteen *stomachion* pieces (2007, 255).

<sup>122</sup> *Peritorum concinnatio miraculum est*. On the importance of *concinnatio* for Ausonius' poetics, see Sánchez Salor (1976), 175-82.

<sup>123</sup> For Ausonius' delight in the oxymoronic qualities of his own poetry, see also *Technopaegnon* 2 and 4. *Praefatio*.

cento is made of diverse pieces that did not belong together. Since a cento both appears genuine and is adopted, it allows its reader to pursue both aspects of its text. Ausonius concludes his preface by saying that if he succeeds in achieving these goals, Paulus will declare him to have composed a *cento*. If Paulus judges them a failure, the verses will return from whence they came, i.e. back to the Vergilian text.<sup>124</sup> In Ausonius' view, a cento is a ludic exercise that both presents a new poem and creates a sense of wonder at the centonist's ability to reshape the original work.

Other Late Antique authors who wrote about the cento also focused upon the form's ability to transform its source. Unlike Ausonius, they presented cento poetry as a serious form of interpretation and not as a playful game (though of course Ausonius' game is also serious, in a sense). I will first discuss the negative responses of Tertullian and Jerome and then the more constructive comments of Proba and her scribe.

Tertullian compares the technique of the centonist both to Marcion's choice to excise portions of the scripture and to Valentinus' reinterpretation of scripture.<sup>125</sup> He says that these interpreters of the Bible use their text like some other proponents of secular literature (*saeculares scripturae*) use Vergil and Homer:

*Vides hodie ex Virgilio fabulam in totum aliam componi, materia secundum versus et versibus secundum materiam concinnatis. Denique Hosidius Geta<sup>126</sup> Medeam tragoediam ex Virgilio plenissime exsuxit. Meus quidem propinquus ex eodem poeta inter cetera stili sui otia Pinacem Cebetis explicuit. Homero-centones etiam vocari solent qui de carminibus Homeri propria opera more centonario ex multis hinc inde compositis in unum sarciunt corpus (praescr. 39.3-5).*

Today you see completely different stories being composed out of Virgil, as they construct their material according to his verses and his verses according to their material. Indeed, Hosidius Geta sucked the entirety of his tragedy, the *Medea*, out of Virgil. Even my relative set out, among the other compositions of his leisure, the Pinax of Cebes, out of the same poet. There are also the ones we call *Homero-centones*, which fix up into a single unit, from Homer's poems, their own

<sup>124</sup> This passage was discussed above p. 79.

<sup>125</sup> *praescr.* 38.7-10.

<sup>126</sup> The name *Hosidius Geta* is corrupt in the manuscripts. On its reconstruction, see Lamacchia (1981).

work in a patchwork manner, out of the many pieces drawn together from here and there.

Whatever Tertullian thinks of the cento as a literary pursuit,<sup>127</sup> he definitely thinks of it as a secondary text, which must be read in light of its peculiar form of composition. Although the cento is a completely different story (*fabula in totum alia*), it retains the traces of its former existence. For Tertullian, a cento is a new, though perhaps not wholly legitimate, text.

Jerome was more aggressively opposed to cento poetry, partly because by his time centos had been written on Christian as well as secular themes.<sup>128</sup> His main argument against centonic poetry is that it misrepresents the (Vergilian) text. In his *Ep.* 53, Jerome discusses the proper interpretation of the scripture and condemns those who, out of a lack of understanding, force a text to say what it did not originally mean:

*Sola scripturarum ars est, quam sibi omnes passim vindicent: 'scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim.' hanc garrula anus, hanc delirus senex, hanc soloecista verbosus, hanc universi praesumunt, lacerant, docent, antequam discant. . . . taceo de meis similibus, qui si forte ad scripturas sanctas post saeculares litteras venerint et sermone conposito aurem populi mulserint, quicquid dixerint, hoc legem dei putant nec scire dignantur, quid prophetae, quid apostoli senserint, sed ad sensum suum incongrua aptant testimonia, quasi grande sit et non vitiosissimum dicendi genus depravare sententias et ad voluntatem suam scripturam trahere repugnantem, quasi non legerimus Homerocentonas et Vergiliocentonas ac non sic etiam Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum, quia scripserit: 'iam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna, iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto'; et patrem loquentem ad filium, 'nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia solus'; et post verba salvatoris in cruce, 'taliam perstabat memorans fixusque manebat.' puerilia sunt haec et circulatorum ludo similia, docere, quod ignores . . . (Ep. 53.7).*

The art of the scriptures is the only one which all people claim as their own: 'We write poems without discrimination, the learned and unlearned.'<sup>129</sup> A garrulous old woman, a crazy old man, a wordy bumbler, everyone presumes to this art; they mangle it; they teach before they have learned. . . . I'm not talking about my peers who, if they should come to the holy scriptures after secular literature and

---

<sup>127</sup> McGill suggests that Tertullian and Jerome react only to the misreading of the Bible and not to the cento itself (2005, xvi-xvii).

<sup>128</sup> On Jerome and cento poetry, see McGill (2007).

<sup>129</sup> Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.117.

should tickle the people's ears with a nifty sermon, think that whatever they say is the law of God. And they don't even bother to learn what the prophets and apostles intended. Instead they adapt incongruous testimonies to their own interpretation, as if distorting one's meaning and forcing scripture, against its will, to their own desires is something grand and not a most vicious form of speaking, as if we have not read the Homeric and Vergilian centos, and as if<sup>130</sup> we couldn't say in this way that even Vergil was a Christian, on account of his having written: 'Now the girl also returns, the kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from on high'<sup>131</sup>; and the father speaking to his son: 'you alone, son, are my strength, my great force'<sup>132</sup>; and then the words of the savior on the cross: 'He endured such things in thought and remained fixed.'<sup>133</sup> These things are childish and like carnival games, teaching what you don't know.

The *garrula anus* whom Jerome attacks is probably none other than Proba herself, for she used in her cento two of the Vergilian lines whose Christian interpretation Jerome condemns.<sup>134</sup> The forcefulness of Jerome's response reveals a real difference of opinion between himself and those whom he would represent as the unlearned majority. Those who write "Christian centos," those who want to read Vergil as a Christian, and those who force scripture to their own interpretation (*ad sensum suum*) are all strong readers who look beyond the original meaning of a text. The extreme case of the cento, with its constant invitation to the reader to acknowledge its Vergilian subtext, met with strong resistance from Jerome. But Jerome's resistance is unsurprising since he is a model proponent of authorship in the strongest of terms.<sup>135</sup> Jerome's strong dismissal of the cento only proves that the full ability of a cento to reshape its source was already recognized in Late Antiquity.

---

<sup>130</sup> I take *ac* as introducing a second subordinate clause dependent on *quasi* (*pace* McGill 2007). Herzog and Schmidt print *ac si non sic* (as an emendation?) when they cite this passage (1989, vol. 5, p. 340). *Ac si* may be correct, but it would create an even longer (and abnormal) string of conjunctions and adverbs.

<sup>131</sup> Verg. *Ecl.* 4.6-7.

<sup>132</sup> *Aen.* 1.664.

<sup>133</sup> *Aen.* 2.650.

<sup>134</sup> *Aen.* 1.664 at *Cento Probae* 403 and *Aen.* 2.650 at 624. She is the only extant centonist who used *Aen.* 2.650 of Christ on the cross (Clark and Hatch 1981, 104-5). Additionally, Vessey is confident that Ambrose was one of the rhetors condemned by Jerome (2007, 43, n. 44).

<sup>135</sup> See Vessey (1994) and Foucault (1979), both cited at Conybeare (2000), 44.

In the proem to her *Cento*, Proba declares the technique of her poem (note that this line is *not* drawn from Vergil; Proba begins the cento proper only at line twenty-four)<sup>136</sup>:

*Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi* (23).

I will say that Vergil sang the good service of Christ.

Proba transforms Vergil by declaring that he was actually a Christian. *Loquar* makes her statement subjective and indistinguishable from the poetic moment of the text. For that reason, I do not think that Proba makes any sort of argument about the actual content of Vergil's poetry. In this respect, I differ from McGill who concludes (largely due to the tense of *ceciniſſe*) that Proba employs "an idiosyncratic allegorical approach" to "bring out the Christian in Virgil, rather than impose Christian material on him."<sup>137</sup> Proba, however, performs her own reading of Vergil; and she does not much care about Vergil's original meaning (*sensus suus* as Jerome would say). Rather, she explains that her cento will turn Vergil into a poet who already did sing of Christ. And the form of the cento allows her to do this in literally every line. If Jerome thought that Proba was much concerned with the actual question of whether Vergil wrote of Christ or not, he seems to have been mistaken.<sup>138</sup> Proba writes for and within a community of readers who value their own role in shaping the texts they encounter.

Between 395 and 397,<sup>139</sup> an anonymous scribe appended a fifteen line dedication to Proba's Vergilian cento.<sup>140</sup> After addressing the emperor and before describing the contents of the cento, this dedication asks that the poem be read intertextually:

---

<sup>136</sup> For full discussion of the proem to Proba's *Cento*, see Green (1997); and Bažil (2009), 116-24. Sineri (2011) is a good, up to date commentary on the entire poem.

<sup>137</sup> (2007), 176.

<sup>138</sup> To be more precise, Proba *qua* centonist is not concerned with that question; *qua* poet, she emulatively rejects Vergil's poetics, on which see Bažil (2009), 116-21.

<sup>139</sup> For the date of this preface, see Mastandrea (2001), 566-9.

<sup>140</sup> This poem is found with Schenkl's edition of Proba's *Cento* and as number 735 in Riese's *Anthologia Latina*. The argument in Mastandrea (2001) in favor of identifying this scribe with Flavius Anicius Petronius Probus is intriguing but by no means certain.

*dignare Maronem  
mutatum in melius divino agnoscere sensu,  
scribendum famulo quem iusseras* (Proba, *cento Vergilianus, praef.* 3-5).

Please recognize Vergil  
turned to the better by a divine meaning,  
whom you had ordered your servant to write.

The preface requests (*dignare*) that Vergil's presence be recognized within the words of Proba's poem. A proper reading of the cento, from this point of view, depends upon the reader's participation in the poet's intertextuality. Moreover, the reader is asked to recognize a Vergil who has been changed for the better. The cento, therefore, depends upon the reader's acknowledgment of the original text that lies beneath the cento. The instrument that produces the new Vergil is a *divino sensu*, a secondary (non-authorial) meaning imposed upon the text.<sup>141</sup> Cento poetry most clearly reveals the instability of the poetic text in the face of future readings. And the concluding lines of this preface are precisely concerned with the reading and transmission of Proba's cento.

*haec relegas servesque diu tradasque minori  
Arcadio, haec ille suo semini,<sup>142</sup> haec tua semper  
accipiat doceatque suos augusta propago*  
(Proba, *cento Vergilianus, praef.* 13-15).

Read these over, keep them a while, and hand them on to the younger Arcadius.<sup>143</sup> And may he pass them on to his children; and may your solemn descendants always receive and teach them to their family.

These closing lines of the preface re-emphasize the need for careful study, re-reading, preservation, and interpretation of the poetic text. Like any other text, a cento depends upon its reception; and this scribe hopes that his audience will be watchful. By describing Vergil as

---

<sup>141</sup> *Sensu* is ambiguous between the faculty of perception and its content. I take that ambiguity to be indicative of the scribe's equation of meaning with the point of reception. On the possible meanings of *sensu* here, see also McGill (2007), 175; and Mastandrea (2001), 566.

<sup>142</sup> With some hesitation, Riese prints *generi* in favor of the manuscripts' unmetrical *semini*.

<sup>143</sup> It is most likely that *Arcadio minori* refers to the as-yet-unborn first child of Arcadius and Eudoxia, who as it turned out was a girl and named Flacilla (see Green 1995, 561-2; and Mastandrea 2001, 567-9).

*mutatum in melius*, the scribe acknowledges even more clearly than Proba that her work aims to transform Vergil. He also recognizes that the success of that transformation is dependent upon its reception.

Ausonius, Tertullian, Jerome, Proba, and her anonymous scribe agree that a cento permits new and powerful readings of its source. Proba and her scribe also welcome the transformations imposed upon that source. Ausonius plays most fully with the ambiguity of his cento, which both is and is not Vergilian. These contemporary readers confirm that the cento is a form of poetry dependent in Late Antiquity upon powerful readings imposed on the text.

Cento poetry, therefore, creates a fragmented text that remains for the reader to interpret. The form was popular in Late Antiquity, and it depends upon treating Vergil's poems as an open text and upon the reader's willingness to explore the poem and create connections between its various layers. In this way, the cento, like the figural poetry of Optatian and the allegory of Prudentius, shows the openness of Late Antique texts. If one were to read the centos as if they were a fixed and closed text, the potential and the vitality of the form would be lost. To put it differently, the centonists expect to be read in the same way that they have read Vergil.

#### IV. Conclusion

Optatian, Prudentius, and the centonists compel their readers to trace the various strands latent in their poetry and then to make something of those strands, to join them together in a way that the text can, at most, only suggest. The verbal surface of their poetry conceals a variety of meanings that must be encountered, accepted or rejected. Because the textual layers compel the reader to look for connections and significance beneath the surface (*aliud verbis aliud sensu*),

they draw the reader into the text, so that he may participate in making the poem's words and lines mean in some way.

The poems I have discussed in this chapter are fragmented by their different layers. The poems of Optatian are a literal grid. Prudentius' allegory creates a meaning distinct and even separable from its narrative. The centos are entirely composed of fragments. On its surface, this is not surprising; for Michael Roberts described the poetry of Late Antiquity as characterized by a jeweled style, by fragmentary narrative and tessellated description. In his seminal work from 1989, however, Roberts did not inquire into the openness of these texts or the potential meanings to be drawn from any readerly text. The form of the poem and the talent of the author motivated his view of Late Antiquity. Below is his analysis of the cento, of the miniaturization of Late Antique poetry, and of the rhetorical delight in hard words:

Words are viewed as possessing a physical presence of their own, distinct from any considerations of sense or syntax. They may be moved like building blocks or pieces in a puzzle to create ever new formal constructs. It is this sense of the physical existence of words and of meter as their structural matrix that underlies the ingenious verbal patterns of Optatianus Porfyrius and the *Technopaegnon* of Ausonius.<sup>144</sup>

By treating these work as open poetry, I have shown that “considerations of sense” are essential. More than creating ingenious patterns, the Late Antique poet creates a series of meanings that are purposefully and intentionally fluid. By being open to the reader, Late Antique poetry defers a sense of textual coherence, which is to be found only in an individual's momentary interpretation.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Roberts (1989), 58. Compare *ibid.* 64-5: “The placing and ordering of words within the text fragmented by *leptologia* was a matter of *variatio*. And the individual elements to be varied were increasingly viewed as brilliant, multicolored flowers or jewels. The act of the poet lay in setting the variegated pieces off against each other to best effect.”

<sup>145</sup> Compare Roberts' explanation of architectural spoliation, which he connects to the poetry of Late Antiquity: “It is the Late Antique aesthetic of discontinuity—the emphasis on the part, as object of ornamentation, rather than on the whole—that permits such unclassical use of the classical inheritance” (1989, 97).

The figural poetry of Optatian, the *Psychomachia*, and the centos are extreme texts. Nevertheless, they reveal something central to Late Antique poetry as a whole. In the same way that their fragmentation leaves the work of interpretation up to the reader, Late Antique poetry in general demands to be read not as a closed and permanent artifact but as a potential script. The gaps and fragmentation in the text are opportunities for the reader. To be understood, in their own context or at all, these Late Antique poems must be approached as open texts.

## Chapter Four

### The Presence of the Reader: Allusion in Late Antiquity

In previous chapters, I discussed Late Antique texts and paratexts. In this chapter, I consider the hypertextuality of Late Antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Late Antique poets allude to Classical texts in such a way as to create space for reading. Thus, the particular dynamics of allusion in Late Antiquity mark the distance between Classical and Late Antique poetry; for they necessitate an appreciative engagement in the processes of interpretation. Late Antique allusions lie on the surface of the text, and so they create a sense of the reader's presence. I will begin by discussing, as a baseline, the ways in which allusion was employed by Classical poets; from there, I will treat allusions from Late Antiquity that are progressively more exposed to the presence of their reader. Because Late Antique allusions do not need to be read as referential, the referentiality (or not) of allusion will serve as a pivot between Classical and Late Antique poetics. Instead of asserting their control over the tradition, Late Antique poets present their work as a fragmented and open text: They juxtapose independent fragments of Classical poetry; they set these units in apposition to their own words; and they avoid emulation. In so doing, they reveal themselves as readers, and they allow their audience to engage in the continuing play of interpretation.

---

<sup>1</sup> For this term, I am indebted to Gérard Genette's *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré* (1982).

## I. The Referentiality of Classical Allusion

The allusions of Classical Latin poetry recall an earlier text and construct their meaning through this hypotext. Scholars agree that Classical poets directly engage, through allusion, the context of their hypotext. And although various theories and approaches have been applied to allusion, they agree that its basic function is to refer to or interact with another text. But—as I will go on to show—Late Antique allusions do not necessarily fit this mold.

The study of allusion within Classical Studies can be traced back to Giorgio Pasquali's 1942 article "Arte Allusiva." Pasquali began his groundbreaking piece by invoking the voice of his detractors. They thought that Pasquali was engaged in source criticism: "Dicono: « Tu, quando spieghi i classici antichi . . . li soffochi con i confronti, dimentico che la fonte della poesia è sempre nell'anima del poeta e mai in libri che possa aver letto. La tua è fatica vana »."<sup>2</sup> Pasquali responds by demonstrating that allusions are integral to a proper understanding of poetry, since a knowledge of the source of an allusion clarifies the meaning of the poem. He explains the difference between an inert source and an allusion: "Le reminiscenze possono essere inconsapevoli; le imitazioni, il poeta può desiderare che sfuggano al pubblico; le allusioni non producono l'effetto voluto se non su un lettore che si ricordi chiaramente del testo cui si riferiscono."<sup>3</sup> By distinguishing sharply between sources and allusions, Pasquali is able to distance allusion from simple repetition.

Although he recognizes the importance for allusion of a knowledgeable reader, Pasquali retains a focus upon the author's desire and the text's referentiality, and consequently upon

---

<sup>2</sup> Pasquali (1942), 185.

<sup>3</sup> Pasquali (1942), 185.

*aemulatio*, a particularly authorial form of allusion.<sup>4</sup> Although he does privilege the poet's agency, Pasquali presents three striking cases of the poet's exact and extended repetition of his hypotext. He cites one line of the *Eclogues* drawn entirely from the *de Morte* of Vergil's friend Varius Rufus,<sup>5</sup> a line from the astrological section of the *Georgics* drawn from Terentius Varro Atacinus' *Ephemeris*,<sup>6</sup> and a near-complete line of the *Aeneid* also drawn from the *de Morte* of Varius Rufus and allusively comparing Marc Antony to the treacherous sinners of hell. This last allusion most eloquently confirms Pasquali's observation that Vergil's poetry depends upon a clear remembrance of the text to which the poet refers. In his description of the worst of Hades' dead, Vergil reuses nearly an entire line from his friend's poem<sup>7</sup>:

*vendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem  
imposuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit* (6.621).

He sold his country for gold and laid on it  
a controlling master; he fixed laws for a price and even unfixed them.

Varius wrote:

*vendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum  
eripuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit.*

He sold citizenship to the peoples, and the land of the citizens  
he stole; he fixed laws for a price and even unfixed them.

---

<sup>4</sup> Conte criticizes Pasquali for emphasizing *aemulatio*, which privileges strong poets, rather than the system itself (1986, 26, 28, 36, and 51). As Pucci points out, Pasquali had also placed the author within the context of his literary past and of his reading public (thereby de-emphasizing the role of the author); but that strand of Pasquali's thought was not significantly advanced until Conte himself appropriated Pasquali's approach (Pucci 1998, 13-14).

<sup>5</sup> *Ecl.* 8.88. Pasquali analyzes this as a case of *variatio*, on account of the change in context (1942, 186). We know of this allusion because it was cited by Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.2.20).

<sup>6</sup> *G.* 1.377. Pasquali demonstrates that in the surrounding lines Vergil improves upon Varro's translation in these lines of Aratus (1942, 187). On *Ephemeris* as the title of this work by Varro, see Courtney (1993), 246. The line in question and its context were quoted by Servius (*ad Georg.* 1.377). In his commentary on the *Georgics*, Richard Thomas (*ad loc.*) says that this kind of repetition is "as far as can be known an extreme rarity for Vergil," although Thomas also refers to *G.* 2.404, on which Servius comments *Varronis hic versus est*. But note H. D. Jocelyn's reservations concerning the literal accuracy of such statements in the (Late Antique) grammarians and in the case of this statement in particular (1965, 141-2).

<sup>7</sup> Discussed by Pasquali at (1942), 186. Macrobius cites Varius' lines as being from his *de Morte* (*Sat.* 6.1.39).

While Vergil's lines refer to an anonymous sinner, Varius' lines referred to Antony. Although Vergil does not name Antony, his reference to Varius' text allows him to portray Antony in the company of the unjust dead.<sup>8</sup> The political allusion is activated only when the reader compares Vergil's words to their context in Varius' lines.

Pasquali's discussion emphasizes the poet's references back to a particular source, rather than the fact that these prior words are present within the hypertext. And I do not dispute his interpretation, since the Vergilian allusions considered by Pasquali *do*—as far as we can tell with hypotexts that survive only in fragments—interact directly with their sources. But, by focusing upon the poet's relation to his predecessor, Pasquali obviates the need to consider such basic figures of repetition as the centonic quotation, which he dismisses, presumably because of its lack of referentiality: "Dei centoni omerici e virgiliani, della tarda antichità, esercizi scolastici inferiori, qui vogliamo tacere."<sup>9</sup> In opposition to the cento, Pasquali considers as true allusions those reminiscences that display the skill of the author through his direct interaction with another poet. The referentiality of the allusion allows the poet to create meaning and the critic to engage in something higher than source criticism.

Gian Biagio Conte's *Rhetoric of Imitation* applies the insights of structuralism to the poetics of Latin intertextuality.<sup>10</sup> While Conte draws inspiration from Pasquali, his structuralism keeps him from viewing imitation as a contest between strong authors. Rather, he focuses upon the textual system of Latin poetry and distinguishes two types of allusion, "reflective" and "integrative." The reflective allusion plays "with the relationship between poetry as an

---

<sup>8</sup> This is the interpretation proposed by Servius (*ad loc.*) and supported by Pasquali. Alternatively, Vergil's lines can be read as referring to the Caesarean Curio, in which case the political point of the allusion would be anti-Augustan (see Thomas 2001, 89-92). For my purposes, Vergil's politics do not matter; in either case, the allusion works in the same way.

<sup>9</sup> Pasquali (1942), 185.

<sup>10</sup> This publication is the adaptation and translation of two essays originally published in Italian: Conte (1974) and (1984). For an insightful discussion of Conte's approach, see Charles Segal's "Foreword" to Conte (1986).

autonomous reality and the literary process which constructs that reality—in other words, with the relationship between poetry’s inner space and its utilization of the space outside itself.”<sup>11</sup>

While the reflective allusion plays with the pastness of poetry, the integrative allusion shapes the hypertext through its relation to a hypotext. Conte compares the integrative allusion to metaphor, a trope which works by displacing the customary meaning of a word or phrase with a new, poetic meaning; he compares the reflective allusion to the simile, which he emphatically says is *not* a trope.<sup>12</sup> He then ranks these two kinds of allusion in terms of their ability to disrupt the settled sense of poetic memory:

[A] range of disturbances of transparency will be created in allusion . . . stretching between the high values characteristic of integrative allusion, when poetic memory contains an intrinsic surplus of sense, and the low values characteristic of reflective allusion, when poetic memory increases its meaning by attaching itself to an external source of sense.<sup>13</sup>

The higher kind of poetry is thus the one characterized by the integrative allusion which operates by creating, in cooperation with the old text, a new meaning. By engaging in this way with the systematic structure of poetry, the Classical poet makes himself a part of his tradition; for, as Conte says, “The classical conception of art . . . encourages an awareness of the literary tradition as a whole rather than an awareness of the individual text.”<sup>14</sup> Conte thereby relates the integrative allusion to the poetics of Classicism. Because the post-Classical poets (and Ovid in the first place)<sup>15</sup> view themselves as outside the tradition, it is not surprising that they should tend towards what Conte calls the reflective allusion.

---

<sup>11</sup> Conte (1986), 63.

<sup>12</sup> For allusion as the trope of metaphor, see Conte (1986), 38-9 and 50-57; for the dissociation of trope and simile, see 67-8. Since Conte makes it clear that allusion itself may be likened to a metaphor (at 52-3), he seems paradoxically to place “reflective allusion” beyond the bounds of allusion proper.

<sup>13</sup> Conte (1986), 69.

<sup>14</sup> Conte (1986), 69.

<sup>15</sup> In the foreword to his translation of Conte’s work, Charles Segal explained Conte’s Vergil and Ovid as embodying “two complementary modes of literary allusiveness. The Virgilian ‘integration’ . . . blends the allusion

While the integrative allusion may display the poet's artistry directly (by emphasizing the poet's ability to improve his material), the reflective allusion more often repeats the words of a predecessor. Because it tends towards repetition, the reflective allusion is a better test case for the referentiality of Classical allusion. Conte's primary example of reflective allusion is a reminder made by Mars to Jupiter, in both Ovid's *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*.<sup>16</sup> In the *Metamorphoses*, Mars reminds Jupiter that he had agreed to make Romulus a god:

*tu mihi concilio quondam praesente deorum  
 (nam memoro memorique animo pia verba notavi)  
 'unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli'  
 dixisti: rata sit verborum summa tuorum!* (*Met.* 14.812-15).

You once said, and the council of the gods was there,  
 (for I remember, I made note of your words, and my mind remembers)  
 "There will be one, whom you will raise to the heights of heaven."  
 May the whole of your words stand firm!

In a similar passage from the *Fasti*, Mars again reminds Jupiter of the same statement:

*Redde patri natum: quamvis intercidit alter,  
 pro se proque Remo, qui mihi restat, erit.  
 'Unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli'  
 tu mihi dixisti: sint rata dicta Iovis* (*Fast.* 2.485-8).

Return the son to his father: Although my other son died,  
 he who remains will be good for himself and for Remus.  
 "There will be one, whom you will raise to the heights of heaven,"  
 you said that to me. May the words of Jove stand firm.

Both of these passages refer to Ennius *Annales* 54-5 (Skutsch), which is preserved in Varro (*De Lingua Latina* 7.5):

*Unus erit quem tu tolles in caerula caeli  
 Templa.*

There will be one whom you will raise to the dark heights  
 of heaven.

---

into a new synthesis that minimizes the juncture; the Ovidian mode is to call attention to the artifice involved in the allusion, to break the frame and make the enframing structure visible" (Conte 1986, 12).

<sup>16</sup> Conte (1986), 57-9.

In both of Ovid's poems, Mars quotes back to Jupiter his promise from the *Annales* of Ennius. And in both poems, the word *dixisti* marks the reference and sets the words within reported speech. The context of Mars' address in the *Annales* authorizes its use in Ovid's poems. For Ovid's allusion gains force from the fact that Jupiter had actually made this promise before in the course of Latin poetry. This reflective allusion is effective because it repeats Mars' words in a similar context. In both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*, Ovid playfully compels the reader to imagine Latin poetry as a closed and comprehensible system, in which a god may remember in one poem his words from another. His allusion is reflective because it juxtaposes an old and a new text without allowing the old text to alter the internal coherence of the new text. Rather than alter the meaning of the hypertext, Ovid's citation plays with the literary tradition and exposes the fact that his own poem responds directly to Ennius.

By focusing upon the structure of poetic memory, Conte showed that allusion functions beyond the emulative ambitions of intentional poets. However, his emphasis upon the allusion's ability to create new meaning still privileged the hypertext's ability to integrate and thereby replace its hypotext. While it is clear that Conte's integrative allusion is central to Classical poetics (with its erasure of temporal distance), the reflective allusion is central to any system that would create closure or separation between traditions. For, in the hands of a post-Classical poet, allusion creates distance between the post-Classical and the Classical text. In any case, both the integrative and reflective allusions depend for their meaning upon the context of their hypotext. And although Conte excludes the author from his analysis of allusion and describes instead the workings of poetic memory, he nevertheless focuses upon the direct interaction of a text and its context. While he inscribes the referentiality of allusion within the textual system rather than

within the mind of the author, Conte does view intertextuality as an essentially referential system.

Richard Thomas also drew upon Pasquali's work on allusion in Latin poetry. In "Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference," Thomas considers the reader's precise memory of the evoked text to be an essential component of allusion. In order to make this emphatic, Thomas used the term "reference" in place of "allusion," in order to draw out its recursive nature.<sup>17</sup> Thomas studied the *Georgics* in that article, because he found them to be representative of (Classical) Latin poetry as a whole.<sup>18</sup> And Thomas ranked allusions in terms of their artfulness, with "casual references" on one end of the spectrum and "conflation" or "multiple references" on the other. Throughout his article, Thomas focuses upon the author's ability to control his allusion and thereby shape the literary tradition.

Before considering references themselves, Thomas dispenses with what he calls parallels, an "accidental (and inevitable) linguistic confluence."<sup>19</sup> He ascribes to this category the rare collocation *immensi maris* (from *G.* 1.29), which finds an exact parallel in Pindar's ἀμετρήτως ἄλός (*Isthm.* 1.53). Since there is no demonstrable reason for a reference to Pindar's ode at this point in the *Georgics*, Thomas concludes that this collocation is unintentional and unimportant. The accidental confluence is excluded from the category of allusion because it is not "susceptible of interpretation."<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Thomas explains his choice as follows: "Virgil is not so much 'playing' with his models but constantly intends that his reader be 'sent back' to them, consulting them through memory or physically, and that he then return and apply his observation to the Virgilian text; the word *allusion* has implications far too frivolous to suit this process" (1986, 172, n. 8). In more recent work Thomas has not insisted on the word "reference" and uses "intertextuality" both in deference to modern usage and because it more fully captures the range of Latin allusivity (Thomas 1999, 1-2).

<sup>18</sup> (1986), 173 and 198; and (1999), 6.

<sup>19</sup> (1986), 174.

<sup>20</sup> (1986), 174.

Thomas also considers “casual references” which may refer not to a specific hypotext but to the general tone of an antecedent. The phrase *nonne vides* is used by Lucretius fifteen times to introduce an example that will support his teaching; Vergil used the phrase three times in the *Georgics* in order to recall Lucretius’ didacticism.<sup>21</sup> These references are casual because they do not necessitate an exact comparison of any source and because they do not inform Vergil’s art. Thomas notes how rare it is for Vergil, or any other Alexandrian poet, to echo or refer casually to an antecedent.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas goes on to consider in turn the “single reference,” “self-reference,” and “correction.”<sup>23</sup> In a single reference an author refers the reader back to a single, previous text. In a self-reference, the poet refers to one of his own earlier poems; thus, Vergil at times repeats even an entire line from one of his earlier poems or within a single work.<sup>24</sup> As the name implies, however, the self-reference is confined to the poet’s own corpus. For that reason, it does not allow the poet to alter the literary system or even present himself differently within it. The “correction,” however, is the next type of reference presented by Thomas. The correction is “the quintessentially Alexandrian type of reference” and “reveals the polemical attitudes that lie close beneath the surface of much of the best poetry of Rome.”<sup>25</sup> For example, in book two of the *Georgics*, Vergil describes the attack by Otus and Ephialtes on Jupiter<sup>26</sup>:

*ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
scilicet atque Ossae frondosum involvere Olympum (G. 1.281-2).*

Three times they tried to set Ossa on Pelion,  
yes and to roll leafy Olympus on to Ossa

---

<sup>21</sup> (1986), 175.

<sup>22</sup> (1986), 177, n. 20.

<sup>23</sup> (1986), 177-89.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas discusses the well known example of *Aen.* 2.473-5 and *G.* 3.437-9. An “internal” self-reference operates within a single work (Thomas 1986, 184-5).

<sup>25</sup> (1986), 185.

<sup>26</sup> Discussed by Thomas (1986, 186).

Vergil's lines correspond directly to *Od.* 11.315-16:

Ἵσσαν ἐπ' Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' Ἵσση  
Πήλιον εἰνοσίφυλλον.

They tried to put Ossa on Olympus, and on Ossa  
leafy Pelion.

Vergil “corrected” the order of the mountains, so that the giants would no longer be stacking Ossa and Pelion on Olympus (since Olympus was presumably the goal of their project, it could not have been the lowest of the mountains). His allusion makes sense when the reader recognizes that the Roman poet wanted to give an account of the giants’ activity that would be more plausible than Homer’s. As in previous cases, the point of Vergil’s lines is understood only when they are compared to the hypotext in the *Odyssey*. After the reader makes that comparison, Vergil’s point and rhetorical superiority are evident.

After considering “apparent references,” in which the poet seems to allude to one text but actually refers to another, Thomas considers Vergilian “conflation” or “multiple reference.”<sup>27</sup> He calls this “the most complex type of reference in Virgil” and suggests that “its function is to revise the tradition.”<sup>28</sup> *Georgics* 1.138 describes three of the constellations, in language borrowed from Homer and Callimachus: *Pleiades, Hyadas, claramque Lycaonis Arcton*. In his description of Achilles’ shield, Homer wrote Πληιάδας θ' Ἰάδας τε (*Il.* 18.486); and line forty-one of Callimachus’s Hymn to Zeus ends Λυκαονίης ἄρκτοιο. Vergil, therefore, alludes to both archaic and Hellenistic poetry and thereby subsumes both of them within his own project. By alluding to both authors, Vergil appropriates their poetry and creates a work that is more complete or, as Thomas says, that is “master of its tradition.”<sup>29</sup> In cases such as this, the conflation refers to an author or his corpus rather than to a specific context. However, more

---

<sup>27</sup> (1986), 190-93 and 193-8 respectively.

<sup>28</sup> (1986), 193.

<sup>29</sup> (1986), 198.

developed confluences do refer to a specific context, and all such confluences present the author as in control of his new text. In that sense, Vergil's confluences are systematic and integrative. The difference of language between Vergil and his Greek sources is also important. It moves these allusions away from repetition and towards transposition,<sup>30</sup> and also involves them in the Roman discourse of Hellenism. The multiple reference, therefore, integrates its sources into its new context. And like his other varieties of reference, Thomas' most complex form of allusion compels the reader to recognize the author's skill in manipulating his source. Each of Thomas' forms of reference, therefore, constructs a more or less direct link between the allusive text and its referent.

Stephen Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext* drew upon Conte's work in order to develop for Latin philology a "spacious" and "pluralist" account of intertextual theory.<sup>31</sup> In particular, Hinds explored the strengths and weaknesses of a discourse focused upon the intention of an alluding author.<sup>32</sup> He rejects Thomas' term "reference," because it detracts from the undecidability of allusion and because there is often no way to verify that an allusion actually refers to any given hypotext.<sup>33</sup> For example, the phrase *me miserum* appears in Ovid's *Amores* 1.1.25-6<sup>34</sup>:

*me miserum!* certus habuit puer ille sagittas.  
uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor.

I'm miserable! That boy sure knew how to use his arrows.  
I'm on fire, and Love reigns in my empty heart.

---

<sup>30</sup> The exception to this rule is *Aen.* 9.767 (*Alcandrumque Haliumque Noemonaque Prytanimque*) which exactly transliterates *Il.* 5.678 (Ἀλκανδρόν θ' Ἄλιόν τε Νοήμονά τε Πρύτανιν τε). On this transliteration (which is the only case in which Vergil exactly repeats a line from Homer), see Hardie's commentary (*ad loc.*) and Farrell (2005), 100. Ovid noticed and repeated Vergil's transliteration at *Met.* 13.258. For Ovid's line and a convincing argument that each poet refers to Odysseus, see Smith (1997), 47-8.

<sup>31</sup> (1998), xi-xii.

<sup>32</sup> (1998), 47-9 and 144.

<sup>33</sup> Hinds (1998), 17-25.

<sup>34</sup> Hinds discusses this allusion (1998), 29-34.

As Hinds explains, *me miserum* is a lament commonly found in comedy, rhetoric, colloquial discourse, and also elegy. The multiplicity of subtexts complicates any interpretation of Ovid's words. But despite the fact that *me miserum* is a common phrase, there are strong reasons to read Ovid as alluding to Propertius 1.1.1-2:

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,  
contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.*

Cynthia was the first to capture miserable me with her eyes,  
though I had never before been touched with desire.

The strongest reason for reading an allusion here is that Ovid, in the first of his elegies, could be expected to refer to the famous opening of Propertius' first book of elegies. And by reading this line as an allusion we can see Ovid figuring himself as the typical lover of elegy, even though the very words in which he portrays himself as a particularly elegiac lover are also used in non-elegiac contexts. In this case, the multiple contexts of Ovid's phrase produce, within his singular text, a multiplicity of readings and voices; and the reader may refer his words to different contexts. Thus, Ovid's allusion complicates the idea that allusions are references back to a single hypotext. However, Hinds does not contest that the reader will refer Ovid's words to another context; he merely points out that readers could very well interpret Ovid's allusion in any number of ways, depending upon which context they have in mind. The outcome of this intertextual approach is that interpretation is always possible (or put differently, that referentiality is always active). Hinds concludes: "The fact that language renders us always acculturated guarantees that there is no such thing as a wholly non-negotiable confluence, no such thing as zero-interpretability."<sup>35</sup> Hinds, therefore, removes the necessity for an alluding

---

<sup>35</sup> (1998), 34. Thomas has pointed out that Hinds did not discuss his own analysis of Vergil's *immensi maris* (Thomas 1999, 7, n. 10).

author but still asserts that any allusion works through the comparison of two contexts, as one text impacts our interpretation of another.

In the same year as Hinds' work appeared, Joseph Pucci published *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition*, in which he presented the reader as the essential receiver of allusion, thereby reorienting the referentiality of allusion. He explains the three premises of his study as follows:

[F]irst, that allusion is an essential literary figure, retrievable in roughly the same form and performing roughly the same functions in Homer as in hip-hop; second, that the most important feature of this essentialism is a powerful reader, possessed of discrete and unique competencies; and third, that a sensitivity to this reader and her competencies is fundamental to an understanding of allusion historically in the Western literary tradition.<sup>36</sup>

Pucci traces the role of allusion from Catullus to Ezra Pound and shows that it has played a vital role throughout Western literature. Further, he argues that the reader, rather than the text or the author, controls the allusion. The full-knowing reader of Pucci's title describes the reader who activates the allusive function of the author's words. In this way, he moves away from focusing exclusively on either the figure of the author or the text itself. Further, Pucci distinguishes the referentiality of the allusion from either the intention of the author or the textual system.<sup>37</sup>

Instead, he "argues for a less ideal situation, in which a meaning is constituted for the allusion in the mind of the reader—and quite apart from the systems of referentiality that give rise to it."<sup>38</sup>

The play of allusion, therefore, consists in the reader's use of two similar texts. Thus, Pucci concurs that allusions are referential, but he shows the full importance of the reader in identifying and interpreting its referentiality. He also traces the history of allusion within ancient literary theory and comes to the conclusion that allusion was only normalized within literary

---

<sup>36</sup> (1998), xv.

<sup>37</sup> Pucci (1998), 32-8.

<sup>38</sup> Pucci (1998), 38.

criticism after Late Antiquity's legitimation of the reader's active and powerful intervention in the text.<sup>39</sup> Classical authors were more circumspect when they discussed the reader's role in controlling the referentiality of allusion.

Though an allusion always depends for its activation upon a strong reader, the Classical forms of allusion occlude the role of the reader and ostensibly set either the author or the textual system itself in a position to declare the meaning of the allusion; for the Classical allusion is on the whole integrative, systematic, and penetrating. And though there are times at which a Classical poet exactly repeats the words of a predecessor, those words are made to fit seamlessly within their new context. In a field as complex and divided as Latin intertextuality, it is remarkable that there is widespread agreement that an allusion essentially brings an old and a new context into creative conflict. This agreement on the referentiality of allusion, however, has been obscured by concerns about attributing or denying intentionality to the author of a text. In allusion as practiced in Classical Latin poetry, it is either the specific context of the antecedent that gives new meaning to the allusion, or (as in the case of casual references) the general tone of a predecessor's work which the new poet borrows. And, as Pasquali noted, a precise knowledge of the source text is necessary in order to read the allusion. Thus, this intertextuality depends not just on the specific words that are repeated but also on their previous, textually encoded meaning. Pucci's work on allusion, however, shifts the burden of referentiality away from the text and onto the shoulders of the reader. I will show in section three that a particularly Late Antique form of allusion reveals the necessity of that shift, as a number of Late Antique allusions do not interact with their hypotext. But first I will explain how this Late Antique move away from referentiality has been obscured by a scholarly focus upon strong authors and *aemulatio*.

---

<sup>39</sup> Pucci (1998), 63-82.

## II. Current Approaches to Allusion in Late Antique Poetry

The study of allusion in Late Antique poetry has been driven by the research on allusion in Classical poetry.<sup>40</sup> In particular, Pasquali's "Arte Allusiva" has directly affected the study of Ausonius' use of allusion. Thus, Maria Posani, in a thorough study published in 1962, applied Pasquali's understanding of allusion to the *Mosella* of Ausonius.<sup>41</sup> Before she could discuss Ausonius' allusions, Posani had to deal with Ausonius' reminiscences. Posani reluctantly acknowledges that Ausonius was a centonist and says that in the *Mosella* (as in his *Cento Nuptialis*) Ausonius sometimes incorporated fragments of earlier poetry into his own work, without always ensuring that their contexts were similar.<sup>42</sup> Then Posani distinguishes sharply between reminiscences that do not depend upon a direct engagement with their source and reminiscences that evoke their source; only those which directly engage their source qualify as allusions.<sup>43</sup> She dispenses quickly with the allusions that are not integrative.<sup>44</sup> Allusion itself, though, is divided into allusion *per se* and *aemulatio*. While the purpose of an allusion proper is to evoke "un'immagine, un'atmosfera, una tonalità diversa e lontana e creare così una particolare tensione,"<sup>45</sup> *aemulatio* produces "in simile atmosfera, in simile tonalità, qualche cosa di nuovo, qualche cosa di bello."<sup>46</sup> Posani shows that Ausonius skillfully employs every kind of allusion in the *Mosella*, although she makes it very clear that centonic reminiscences stand, in her estimation, at the lowest level of artistic merit and that *aemulatio* displays the activity and

---

<sup>40</sup> The exception to this rule involves Christian and specifically Biblical poetry. Reinhart Herzog's substantial contributions will be considered below.

<sup>41</sup> The article is entitled "Remiscenze di poeti latini nella «Mosella» di Ausonio." Pasquali's "Arte Allusiva" is prominently cited on p. 35.

<sup>42</sup> On Ausonius the centonist, see Posani 33, 36, 38, 64-6.

<sup>43</sup> Posani (1962), 35-8.

<sup>44</sup> Posani lists examples of centonic reminiscences on pp. 38-40.

<sup>45</sup> Posani (1962), 51.

<sup>46</sup> Posani (1962), 51.

originality of the poet.<sup>47</sup> In order to explain Ausonius' penchant for centonic poetry, Posani envisions her poet as desperately protecting his Roman heritage: "Si direbbe che Ausonio, il quale, come Rutilio Namaziano, guarda a Roma con l'amore di un figlio che vede un genitore in pericolo, ma anche con la reverenza e la gratitudine di un barbaro adottato che si sente onorato per questa adozione, veda in queste citazioni un mezzo di nobilitare la sua poesia."<sup>48</sup> Given Posani's own demonstration of Ausonius' ability to emulate his predecessors successfully, one wonders why Ausonius should have used citations to "ennoble" his poetry. Because she views tradition as a given inheritance rather than as the active discovery of each period, Posani finds Ausonius' repetition slavish. And by emphasizing both the function of originality in allusion and Ausonius' "passive" reception of Classical poetry, she distracts from an explanation of what his centonic reminiscences actually achieve.

Two more articles on the *Mosella* have demonstrated, in greater depth than Posani, that Ausonius engaged his predecessors in ways that are both complex and emulative. First, Woldemar Görler's "Vergilizitate in Ausonius' *Mosella*" (1969) argued that the *Mosella* alludes systematically to book six of the *Aeneid* and to the *laudes Italiae* of book two of the *Georgics*. By showing that a series of allusions from different places in the *Mosella* refer to these Vergilian passages (and that Ausonius therefore meant for his poem to be read as a renewal and improvement upon that Vergilian material), Görler draws upon Ausonius' systematic use of Vergil. In his conclusion, Görler summarizes his approach to allusion:

In jedem einzelnen Fall ist zu fragen, welche Funktion ein Zitat in seinem Zusammenhang ausübt. Es mag Anklänge geben, hinter denen sich nichts verbirgt; es steht fest, daß es daneben – man mag es Rätselsucht nennen oder

---

<sup>47</sup> Posani (1962), 64: "Sia che si tratti del più meccanico inserimento nel poemetto di espressioni o frasi prese da altri poeti, sia che si tratti della più alta e legittima forma di imitazione, l'*aemulatio*, Ausonio in questo ricordare dimostra sempre una grandissima abilità, una prestigiosa sicurezza."

<sup>48</sup> Posani (1962), 65.

Raffinesse – ganze Gruppen von Anspielungen und Zitaten gibt, mit deren richtiger Interpretation das Verständnis des Gedichts steht und fällt.<sup>49</sup>

Görler focuses upon the complex allusions which are not apparent at first glance and which conceal the proper meaning of the poem; he does not bother with Ausonius' direct quotations of Vergil.

The second and more recent study of Ausonius' allusive strategy in the *Mosella* is Carole Newlands' 1988 study of Ausonius, entitled "*Naturae mirabor opus: Ausonius' Challenge to Statius in the Mosella.*" Although she does not use the word *aemulatio*, she focuses upon passages in which Ausonius challenges Statius. Whereas Statius had described man's development of nature as positive and beneficial, Ausonius describes nature as ideal on its own, apart from the intrusion of humanity. Newlands shows that Ausonius—by means of direct, allusive engagement with Statius' descriptions from the *Silvae* of scenes from a river, of villas, and of Baiae—intends to improve upon Statius' presentation of nature.<sup>50</sup> It is this sense of improvement that makes me say that Newlands focuses upon *aemulatio*. In explaining Ausonius' practice of allusion, Newlands herself says that Ausonius' allusions are "heuristic" and that "Ausonius uses imitation in order to revise classical values, not to perpetuate them."<sup>51</sup> Although the term *heuristic* would appear to be congenial to the role of the reader in allusion, Newlands' sharp distinction between *revision* and *perpetuation* drives a wedge between the dynamic interplay that allows Ausonius to simultaneously revise and perpetuate his models.

---

<sup>49</sup> Görler (1969), 114.

<sup>50</sup> Posani had noted that Ausonius' instances of *aemulatio* most often engage Statius, whereas (in Posani's words) "per brevissimi tratti Ausonio osa *certare* con il sommo e amatissimo Virgilio" (1962, 66). If *aemulatio* characterizes the relation of poets writing within the same literary system, it is not surprising that a post-Classical poet should emulate Statius more directly than Vergil.

<sup>51</sup> Newlands (1988), 404. The term "heuristic allusion" derives from T. M. Greene's *The Light in Troy*. Greene explains what he means by the term as follows: "Heuristic imitations come to us advertising their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to distance themselves from the subtext and force us to recognize the poetic distance traversed" (1982, 40). Although the Renaissance poets who are the focus of Greene's study had a different approach to the Classics than their Late Antique predecessors, his insights are stimulating reading for any student of allusion.

R. P. H. Green probably had the studies of Görler and Newlands in mind when he wrote that “Much is lost if one adopts the approach of Hosius, for whom the *Moselle* was a patchwork of reminiscences, or that of Posani, who sees the technique of the centonist as prevalent.”<sup>52</sup> What is lost is an awareness of Ausonius’ complex and emulative engagement with his predecessors. If Ausonius’ *centonic* composition is ignored, however, one also loses his non-emulative and readerly engagement with the past. What is needed, therefore, is a method of analyzing Ausonius’ allusions that leaves room for *aemulatio* but also acknowledges the importance of his centonic quotations.

In the same way that Posani distinguished sharply between Ausonius’ reminiscences and allusions, Maria Lühken has drawn a sharp line between Prudentius’ formal reminiscences and his apparently more meaningful uses of imitation.<sup>53</sup> In *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus: Zur Vergil- und Horazrezeption des Prudentius* (2002), she dispenses with formal reminiscences in two short, introductory chapters. Priority is then given to his more polemical and integrative imitations.

Lühken defines a formal reminiscence in terms of a lack of relevance for its new context.<sup>54</sup> She then discusses lexical reminiscences of a single word, repeated phrases and figures, metrical reminiscences, and structural reminiscences.<sup>55</sup> These are dealt with briefly, as they offer the poet less room to construct his art; and she discusses only shorter phrases, since

---

<sup>52</sup> Green (1991), xx. Hosius wrote (*ad Mosella* 77): “Diese Worte lehren trefflich, wie Auson zuweilen arbeitet; kaum ein oder zwei Ausdrücke sind sein ausschliessliches Eigentum; der Rest ist ein aus Reminiscenzen an antike Muster zusammengestoppeltes Flickwerk.” Hosius exaggerates, but he does touch upon an important aspect of Ausonius’ poetry.

<sup>53</sup> Likewise Anne-Marie Palmer distinguished sharply between “the crude technique of the centonist” and allusions which asked of the reader “a sophisticated appreciation of the poet’s technique” (1989), 106.

<sup>54</sup> (2002), 33.

<sup>55</sup> (2002), 33-43 and 185-92, on reminiscences of Vergil and Horace respectively.

she says that the longer ones are more fully integrated within their text.<sup>56</sup> She describes reminiscences, therefore, as being both non-referential and not meaningful. Although Lühken does not reduce every creative imitation to *aemulatio* and although she often addresses Prudentius' creative use of Vergil and Horace, she does draw a sharp distinction between formal reminiscences that demand less of her attention and more creative imitations, which find their meaning in the interaction between an allusion and the context of its hypotext. And for this reason Lühken does not discuss some of Prudentius' most extended allusions. Although Lühken is too aware of how intertextuality works to be completely carried away by a simple appeal to *aemulatio*,<sup>57</sup> she downplays Prudentius' repetitions in favor of his more active reshaping of traditional material.

Because the studies discussed have shown how *aemulatio* and other complex forms of allusion were used in later Latin poetry, Late Antique poetry can no longer be described as simply derivative. These studies' emphasis upon *aemulatio*, however, has obscured what is most distinctively Late Antique within these poems. In the following sections, I will show that non-referential allusions are important within Late Antique poetry because they are meaningful beyond the more narrow limits of their context. A focus upon the reader will reveal that Late Antique poets were both more active and less emulative than has been thought. Whereas a Classical poet imagines a textual world devoid of temporality, the Late Antique poet's quotations of Latin poetry allow him to present his own work *sub specie praeteritatis*. This aspect of allusion in the poetry of Late Antiquity has been overlooked because *aemulatio* has been emphasized and repetition marginalized.

---

<sup>56</sup> "Im Verlauf der Darstellung wird sich zeigen, daß Prudentius sehr häufig vergilische Verse und Halbverse unverändert übernimmt. In der Regel sind solche rhythmisch unveränderten wörtlichen Reminiszenzen, die um so mehr ins Auge springen, je größer ihr Umfang ist, auch von Bedeutung für die Aussage des Textes" (2002), 39. Despite this, a number of Prudentius' more extended reminiscences are discussed if at all only in footnotes.

<sup>57</sup> See Lühken (2002), 23-30.

### III. Non-Referential Allusions

A number of Late Antique allusions do not function as references back to their sources.<sup>58</sup> In saying this, I do not mean that a reader could not find some connection between the passages I will discuss and their sources. It is certainly possible that another reader will find a reference where I have not; that is in the nature of allusion. Nor do I mean to say that these allusions do not reveal their source: Even in order to say that they are non-referential, it is necessary to compare their contexts. I am asserting that the following allusions leave their own referentiality undefined; the link between the context of their text and its hypotext is indeterminate. In this, their practice diverges from that of the Classical poets.

In his *Liber Apotheosis*, Prudentius<sup>59</sup> uses a half-line from the *Aeneid* as he transitions from his discussion of Jesus' multiplication of food to the raising of Lazarus from the dead. I discuss this allusion first because it is entirely certain and because it is not a reference back to the original context in which its words were found. In changing subjects, Prudentius asks the following rhetorical question:

*Sed quid ego haec autem titubanti voce retexo,  
indignus qui sancta canam? (Apoth. 741-2).*

But why then do I repeat these things in faltering speech,  
I who am unworthy to sing what is holy?

This transitional hesitation was also used by Sinon, the treacherous Greek who had paused, for rhetorical effect, before going on to convince the Trojans to bring the horse into their city<sup>60</sup>:

---

<sup>58</sup> Michael Roberts has observed, in a different context, that the poetry of Late Antiquity displays “a retreat from referentiality” (2007, 147).

<sup>59</sup> On Prudentius' use of allusion, see Mastrangelo (2008), 14-40; Heinz (2007); Lühken (2002), with extensive bibliography; and Pucci (1991).

<sup>60</sup> Lühken (2002) cites Prudentius' allusion in her index of reminiscences but does not discuss it.

*Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata revolve,  
quidve moror?* (*Aen.* 2.101).

But why then do I repeat these unpleasant things in vain,  
And why do I delay?

I do not think that Prudentius is comparing himself to Sinon; but the repetition is not fortuitous. The phrase *sed quid ego haec autem* occurs nowhere else in Latin literature<sup>61</sup>; it was found at a memorable point in the *Aeneid*; and it occurs in the same metrical position in Prudentius' poem as it had in the *Aeneid*. Further, Prudentius' *retexo* both recalls Vergil's *revolve* and also signals the presence of his allusion.<sup>62</sup> However, I can find no reason to think that Prudentius is comparing himself to one of the most despised characters in the *Aeneid*. This allusion is as certain as can be, and it does not interact significantly with the original context of Vergil's poem. Instead, Prudentius' allusion is his own creative use of the earlier poet's words. He alludes, but not to Vergil's context.

The next allusion I discuss is similarly unmotivated by the context of its hypotext. I draw this example from Claudian's<sup>63</sup> mythological epic, the *De Raptu Proserpinae*, in order to show that non-referential allusions are found even in the "higher" genres and in poetry whose subject matter is Classical, although Claudian does seem to use such centonic allusions less conspicuously than his contemporaries. In Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*, Proserpina calls to Jupiter for help, as she is being dragged to the underworld by Pluto. Among her complaints, she asks the following:

---

<sup>61</sup> I base this statement on an electronic search of the *CLCLT Library of Latin Texts* (<http://clt.brepolis.net/clt/start.asp?sOwner=menu>) and of the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana Latina*. The coverage of the two databases is not the same. While the *CLCLT Library of Latin Texts* is extremely useful, it is not always reliable; for example, they have mis-transcribed the beginning of line 741 of the *Liber Apotheosis* so that it reads *sed qui ego haec autem*. The absence of a critical apparatus makes such mistakes especially dangerous.

<sup>62</sup> I am thankful to Carole Newlands and Christopher Polt, each of whom suggested that I give more consideration to Prudentius' use of this verb here.

<sup>63</sup> On Claudian's use of allusion, see Gruzeliier (1989); Cameron (1970), 279-84 and 315-21; and Keudel (1970).

*Cur non torsisti manibus fabricata Cyclopum  
in nos tela, pater? (2.250-1)*

Why, father, did you not throw at me those spears  
made by the hands of the Cyclopes?

The phrase *manibus fabricata Cyclopum* is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.259, a passage in which Ovid describes Jupiter's destruction of the world by a flood, rather than by means of lightning. The strong caesura preceding *manibus fabricata Cyclopum* sets it off from the rest of the line; and the hyperbaton between *torsisti* and *tela*, to which the quoted words refer, further isolate Ovid's words within Claudian's text. Because they are a discreet unit set within Claudian's narrative, they call attention to their difference. At the same time, only the reader who is familiar with book one of the *Metamorphoses* will even be aware that the phrase derives from that work. While the context of Ovid's words does not add meaning to Claudian's description,<sup>64</sup> the reader who recognizes the quotation will appreciate Claudian's juxtaposition of old and new poetry. Thus, the non-referential allusion calls attention to a similarity on the verbal level while declining to engage its hypertext's original context. Put differently, this allusion tells us as much about Claudian's method of composition as about Proserpina's character. Claudian uses Ovid's words, not because he does not have words of his own to express the same thought, but because he would rather recall the poetic past shared by both author and reader. In this respect, *manibus fabricata Cyclopum* might seem to function like Conte's "reflexive allusion." However, in Conte's reflexive allusion, the hypertext and hypotext share a similarity of character or situation on the level of the narrative; and thus the reflexive allusion performs a narrative function. In Claudian's quotation of Ovid, the allusion does not function at the level of the narrative; for it does not tell us anything more about the character of Proserpina or about her plight. Rather,

---

<sup>64</sup> But some readers will disagree here and may point to the importance for Claudian of the gigantomachy. I am grateful to Catherine Ware for sharing her thoughts on this allusion.

Claudian's allusion reveals something about his own construction of poetry: As a reader of Ovid, Claudian creates his own poetry through Ovid's words. Claudian's reader, in turn, appreciates the poet's use of an ancient and fragmentary phrase.

Two passages from Paulinus' poetry will show the danger of reading allusions from Late Antiquity as referential, even when it is possible to do so.<sup>65</sup> Near the end of the second of the *Natalicia* (a series of poems composed in honor of Felix the martyr), Paulinus asks Felix to pray for his safe arrival in heaven. In doing so, he uses Vergil's words from the *Eclogues* and from the *Aeneid*:

*sis bonus o felixque tuis dominumque potentem  
exores, liceat placati munere Christi  
post pelagi fluctus mundi quoque fluctibus actis  
in statione tua placido consistere portu (Carm. 13.31-4).*

Be kind, yes and favorable to your own, and the lord powerful  
do pray, that I, by the gift of Christ's satisfaction,  
and after the turbulence of the world's sea and the driven surf,  
may gain a calm harbor in your resting place.

The first fragment is from *Eclogues* 5.65, where it expresses Menalcas' cry to the recently deified Daphnis. It could, of course, be read as Paulinus' Christianization of pagan prayer; and *felix* is a pun on the saint's name. *Aeneid* 6.621 has already been discussed, in reference to Vergil's reuse of Varius' poetry: Vergil describes those punished in the afterlife for such offenses as selling one's country and handing it over to a harsh master. It would be incredible to read Paulinus' allusion as portraying Christ through the lens of this tyrant from Tartarus. Rather than refer to the specific context of its hypotext, this second allusion (*dominumque potentem*) is composed of a distinct fragment transferred on its own without calling to mind its original meaning. Despite the difficulty of determining a meaning for this allusion, its presence is ratified by the more extensive *sis bonus o felixque tuis*. Just as the first allusion ratifies the presence of

---

<sup>65</sup> On Paulinus' use of allusion, see Ruggiero (1996), 45-54; and Green (1971), 41-60.

the second one, the second allusion's lack of referentiality calls into question the referentiality of the first allusion and therefore the relevance of a Christianizing reading of this passage. Thus, the inert and fragmentary reuse of Vergil's words does not constitute an act of Christianization as much as it portrays Paulinus' reading.

Paulinus' *Carm. 27* employs fragments of Vergilian poetry that have been pulled out of their original context and set within a new and different frame. The passage in question immediately precedes an extended and poetic discussion of divine song. The following series of allusions, in which Paulinus employs Vergil's words in four out of five lines, is significant not only because it calls attention to itself but also because it introduces Paulinus' reflections on the use and importance of poetry. In this passage, Paulinus describes Pentecost and the disciples speaking in tongues:

*hoc sollemne dies sequitur (septem numeramus  
hebdomadas, et lux populis festiva recurrit),  
qua sanctus quondam caelo demissus ab alto  
spiritus ignito divisit lumine linguas,  
unus et ipse deus diversa per ora cucurrit  
omnigenasque uno sonuit tunc ore loquellas,  
omnibus ignotas tribuens expromere voces,  
quisque suam ut gentem peregrino agnosceret ore  
externamque suo nesciret in ore loquellam.  
barbarus ipse sibi non notis nota canebat  
verba, suis aliena loquens; sed in omnibus unum  
voce deum varia laudabat spiritus unus.  
ut citharis modulans unius verbere plectri  
dissona fila movet . . . (Carm. 27.60-73).*

This solemnity is followed by the day (we count off seven weeks, and the festal day comes round for the crowds), on which, at one time, the Holy who descended from high heaven Spirit<sup>66</sup> set out tongues of blazing light, the real and single God ran through each mouth and then spoke all sorts of words from his one mouth, as he gave all of them to express voices they did not understand.

---

<sup>66</sup> Note the hyperbaton and *quondam* ("at one time"), which acts as a "signpost" of the allusion (on which, see below p. 162).

And so each of them recognized his own nation in a foreigner's mouth  
but did not understand the alien speech in his own mouth.  
Even a barbarian would sing words that were understandable, though  
not understood by him, speaking others' words in his own; but in all  
it was one spirit that praised one God in a changing voice.  
As one who plays the lyre moves different strings  
in the movement of a single pick . . . .

The Vergilian contexts are not relevant to Paulinus' poem, and the last three allusions all seem to have been chosen only because they describe speech. *Expromere voces* is from Aeneas' description of Hector's appearance to him in a dream:

*ultra flens ipse videbar  
compellare virum et maestas expromere voces (Aen. 2.279-80).*

Vergil used the phrase *ore loquelas* in the *Aeneid* to describe Sleep bewitching Palinurus:

*puppique deus consedit in alta  
Phorbanti similis funditque has ore loquelas (Aen. 5.841-2).*

He used *per ora cucurrit* to describe the report to the Latins of the news that Diomedes would not fight on their side<sup>67</sup>:

*Vix ea legati, variusque per ora cucurrit  
Ausonidum turbata fremor (Aen. 11.296-7).*

The partial exception to the rule that these allusions are non-referential is *caelo demissus ab alto*, in part derived from *Aen.* 4.575, which describes the appearance of Hermes to Aeneas (. . . *deus aethere missus ab alto*),<sup>68</sup> but also reminiscent of *Ecl.* 4.7: *iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto*, from Vergil's "Messianic" *Eclogue*. The Vergilian context of this last phrase is the one that could most easily be interpreted as relevant to Paulinus' description of the coming of the Holy Spirit; but, even in this case, there is not much to make of the similarity. Though the fourth *Eclogue* was often read in reference to Christ's birth, it was not otherwise used in the context of

---

<sup>67</sup> *Per ora cucurrit* is also used at 12.66, to describe Lavinia's blush before her mother's declaration of loyalty to Turnus. I quote the earlier passage because the hypertext describes speech rather than color.

<sup>68</sup> And perhaps *Aen.* 1.297 as well: *genitum demittit ab alto* (in reference to Cupid).

Pentecost.<sup>69</sup> I would argue that the original Vergilian context is less important than Paulinus' placement of this phrase alongside three other Vergilian phrases. Even in the one case where a reference could be read, Paulinus' practice in the following lines leads us *not* to look for a reference. Despite the absence of a direct reference, each allusion is rather obvious: They each occur in the same metrical position as they did in Vergil, and their appearance together removes the possibility that any one of them is the result of a random confluence.<sup>70</sup> These allusions are non-referential, and yet they draw attention to themselves. They are also significant to Paulinus' poetry and not mere reminiscences, as is evident in the following lines of his poem.

Paulinus goes on in the immediately succeeding portion of this poem to compare God's inspiration of human voices to the harmonies created by a player at his lyre. While the harmony created by the dissonant strings of a lyre is a metaphor for God's inspiration, it is also a metaphor for Paulinus' activity as a poet.<sup>71</sup> When Paulinus describes the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the words of Vergil, he allows Classical Latin poetry a voice within his own poem. The voice of Classical poetry becomes like the Christians at Pentecost who did not understand their own words, while Paulinus—like the Holy Spirit—makes Vergil's words meaningful within his poem. The closest this passage comes to presenting a polemical interpretation of Classical poetry is in the line *barbarus ipse sibi non notis nota canebat*. But even if we were to read Vergil as a *Christianus barbarus*, Paulinus would still be implying that Vergil should be understood correctly and not that he should be dismissed. That is, Paulinus provides a reading and interpretation of the words of Classical poetry. Paulinus' description of Pentecost, moreover,

---

<sup>69</sup> For readings of the fourth *Eclogue* in reference to Christ, see Courcelle (1957), 295-300 and Benko (1980), 670-78. The anonymous cento *De Verbi Incarnatione* applies the phrase *caelo demissus ab alto* to the Holy Spirit's role in the annunciation (at line 15), perhaps in memory of this passage from Paulinus.

<sup>70</sup> Paul. Nol. 33.61-72 presents a similar exaggeration of Vergilian phrases (but the authenticity of this poem has been called into question [see Trout 1999, 272]). Prudentius *Apoth.* 393-6 also gathers a series of allusive fragments (see Heinz 2007, 136-9).

<sup>71</sup> For the importance to Christian poetry of the idea of "harmony in diversity," see Roberts (1989), 145-6; Heinz (2007), 165-7; and especially Fontaine (1974), who explores the theme of the lyre in Paulinus' poetry.

considers the nature of language and the poet's ability to shape his words; for Paulinus, *suis aliena loquens*, sang of Pentecost but replaced the glossolalia of the narrative with his own historical sense. The reader will appreciate the juxtaposition of old and new words but also understand in it Paulinus' investigation of the formal emptiness of the signifying word; his allusions demand authentication and interpretation, but not from Vergil's poetry. These non-referential allusions, therefore, allow Paulinus to explore the use and meaning of language.

I have now argued that a subset of Late Antique allusions are non-referential. It would be possible to examine further cases, but the passages already considered here should demonstrate that the Late Antique poets employed allusions differently than their Classical predecessors. In each of these cases, the poet alludes to a specific antecedent but does not ask the reader to interpret a given hypertext through the context of its hypotext. Since a comparison of the two texts would only show that the poet used his quotation in a new sense, the Late Antique poet alludes to the poetic past and to his own ability to rewrite Latin poetry. Because they call attention to themselves and invite interpretation, the non-referential allusions of the Late Antique poet should be taken seriously. And so, we will turn now to the positive function of these allusions within the textual world of Late Antiquity.

#### IV. Juxtaposed Allusions

The two passages from Paulinus that were discussed above are (in addition to being non-referential) instances of the juxtaposition of disparate, allusive fragments. Such juxtapositions betray an interest in the hypotextual fragment for its own sake, and they set a hermeneutic puzzle

to the reader who will piece together these bits of text.<sup>72</sup> This centonic technique displays the otherness of the poet's material; and, therefore, presents the tradition as malleable and liable to reuse. Because Late Antique poetry brings out the constituent elements in its text, it has often been compared to art contemporary with it, and mosaics in particular.<sup>73</sup> Michael Roberts has shown that a Late Antique poem resembles a mosaic in its staccato phrasing and in the manipulation of its verbal surface. In *The Jeweled Style*, he considered the formal elements of the Late Antique poem, apart from its intertextual units of composition.<sup>74</sup> What remains, therefore, is to show the ways in which Late Antique poetry employed a jeweled style of allusion. Before Roberts, Reinhart Herzog had already discussed the imitative re-use of Classical material by Christian, Biblical poets. Herzog speaks of the Late Antique poet's penchant for neutralizing the meaning of a Classical text and then interpreting the old poet's words in a new sense.<sup>75</sup> I differ from Herzog in so far as I question the necessity of forcing an allusion to neutralize and thereby dismiss the meaning of the original text; but his work remains stimulating and in particular his discussion of the exegetical function of Late Antique poetry. Thus, the poet, by devising allusions in the jeweled style, engages both with the past and with his own readership, in order to create fragments whose potential remains to be actualized. In this way, Late Antique poets wrote allusions in which the referentiality of the borrowed text yields to the reader's active participation in determining the meaning of both texts on their own terms.

As a first case of juxtaposition, Prudentius merges two half-lines, from book eight of the *Aeneid*, into his description of pagan Rome before its Christianization.

---

<sup>72</sup> On the "bits of text" in Late Antique poetry, compare the first preface to Ausonius' *Technopaegnon: quae lecturus es monosyllaba sunt, quasi quaedam puncta sermonum, in quibus nullus facundiae locus est, sensuum nulla conceptio, propositio, redditio, conclusio aliaque sophistica, quae in uno versu esse non possunt, sed cohaerent ita ut circuli catenarum separati* (Auson. *Technop.* 1).

<sup>73</sup> See Roberts (1989), 57 and 70-73, with further references. Patricia Cox Miller discusses the use of juxtaposition in Late Antiquity in (2009), 42-61.

<sup>74</sup> But Roberts does acknowledge the importance of *imitatio*, at (1989), 57-8 and more recently in Roberts (2002).

<sup>75</sup> Herzog (1975), 185-211.

*Romanumque forum et Capitolia celsa tenebant* (Symm. 1.534).

They held the Roman forum and the lofty Capitol.

At *Aeneid* 8.361, Vergil describes the future Rome through which Evander and Aeneas walk with the phrase *Romanoque foro et* (minor syntactical changes are not uncommon in the genre to which this sort of quotation is related, namely the cento<sup>76</sup>). And *et Capitolia celsa tenebat* is used at 8.653 to describe the portrayal on Aeneas' shield of Marcus Manlius guarding the Capitoline. The two phrases used together emphasize Prudentius' borrowing. This is a rather simple case of juxtaposed allusions, in which the positioning of these fragments within their new context is important quite apart from their source. Though these allusions are referential to some extent (after all, it is not irrelevant that Prudentius chose phrases that had, at programmatic moments of the *Aeneid*, described the glory of Rome), their juxtaposition operates on its own within Prudentius' text. By using two quotations side by side, Prudentius draws attention to his own use of the phrases and thus isolates their specific meaning within Vergil's text.

A second and similar case comes from Ausonius<sup>77</sup> *Cupido Cruciatu*s.

*Aeris in campis, memorat quos Musa Maronis,  
myrteus amentes ubi lucus opacat amantes,  
orgia ducebant heroïdes et sua quaeque,  
ut quondam occiderant, leti argumenta gerebant,  
errantes silva in magna et sub luce maligna  
inter harundineasque comas gravidumque papaver . . . .  
(Cup. 1-6).*

In the gloomy plains that the Muse of Maro recalls,  
where a myrtle grove shades the mindless lovers,  
the heroines held their revels and each told the story  
of her own death, how she had once died—  
as they wandered in the great forest and under a barren light—  
between leaves and their reeds and the laden poppy . . . .

---

<sup>76</sup> See Bažil (2009), 187-9. Such substitutions are a deferment of the centonic effect and therefore *less* effective than direct quotation.

<sup>77</sup> On Ausonius' use of allusion, see Pucci (2002) and (2000), Nugent (1990), Newlands (1988), Benedetti (1980), Green (1977), Görler (1969), and Posani (1962). On Ausonius and Vergil, see O'Daly (2004).

First, Ausonius begins his poem with *aeris in campis* (from *Aen.* 6.887) and by stating explicitly his debt to the muse of Maro. So it is clear from the first line that the *Cupido Cruciatu*s will engage closely the poetry of the *Aeneid* and book six in particular.<sup>78</sup> What interests us here, however, are the juxtaposed allusions in line five. *Errabat silva in magna* was used to describe Dido wandering in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.451) and *sub luce maligna* had described Aeneas' descent to the underworld (*Aen.* 6.270). These Vergilian fragments are not unrelated to Ausonius' poem (they are from book six after all), but the relevance of their prior context is not what matters here. Ausonius' *et* functions rather nicely to draw attention to the logic of his two fragments, for it shows that the poetry of line five consists in Ausonius' juxtaposition of two Vergilian half-lines. Its effect depends upon the reader's appreciation of Ausonius' explicit awareness of his part in representing Vergil's poetry. Rather than being deferential to Vergil and the tradition he had established, Ausonius plays with the fact that his own poetry will be read through Vergil. Ausonius does not need to prove that he knows Vergil's text, and he does not need to justify his own poem in any simple-minded way; but he does actively engage the reader in his involvement with earlier Latin poetry. Whereas Vergil would use an allusion to improve upon his Hellenistic competitors, Ausonius leaves Vergil his space and then goes on to tell his own story. Juxtaposed allusions, therefore, dismiss *aemulatio* as the motivation for allusion; instead, allusion becomes a pretext for the poet's recognition of the literary past.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> On this poem and its engagement with Vergil, see Nugent (1990), 41-2, Davis (1994), and Pucci (2009), 66.

<sup>79</sup> Examples have been discussed of Ausonius, Prudentius, and Paulinus each constructing entire lines of poetry by juxtaposing two fragments of (Vergil's) poetry. Claudian does not seem to have written an entire line in this way. Auson. *Cup.* 82 (*terrorem ingeminat stimulisque accendit amaris*) and Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 22.9 (*heia age tendo chelym, fecundum concute pectus*) seem to be the only other cases from these poets of entire lines formed from two or more non-referential fragments (*Terrorem ingeminat* is from *Aen.* 7.578, and *stimulisque agitabat amaris* is *Aen.* 11.337. *Heia age* is found at *Aen.* 4.569, *tendo chelym* at *Theb.* 1.33, and *fecundum concute pectus* at *Aen.* 7.338). There are more numerous cases of juxtaposed allusions that do not take up an entire line.

A third and more extended use of juxtaposed allusions is found in the *Mosella* of Ausonius.<sup>80</sup> Near the end of his poem, Ausonius proclaims that he will someday compose an even greater poem in praise of the Moselle:

*addam felices ripa ex utraque colonos  
teque inter medios hominumque boumque labores  
stringentem ripas et pinguia culta secantem (Mos. 458-60).*

I'll add happy farmers on each bank,  
and you, amid the intervening labors of men and oxen  
brushing past the banks and halving their fertile fields.

*Hominumque boumque labores* comes from *Georgics* 1.118, and it is notable that Ausonius describes his river as being amid (*inter*) those Vergilian labors. *Stringentem ripas et pinguia culta secantem*, from *Aen.* 8.63, had described the Tiber. By indicating the literary context of its project, these fragments further the promise of a future poem that will extend the fame of the Moselle.<sup>81</sup> Of course, such a work was never written, and the hope of (another) Vergilian poem remains a promise for the future. But in the present time of the poem Ausonius' juxtaposed allusions point to the *Mosella*'s ability to re-member Vergil, to renew his Classical poetry and to set it within a new context. Thus, the reader of the *Mosella* could recognize in Ausonius' renewal of Vergil's words a model for his own discovery of meaning in the words of another. For the juxtaposition of these Vergilian fragments draws attention to their individual unity and to the reader's reinterpretation of their meaning within a foreign context. By juxtaposing more than one non-referential allusion, the poet reveals that what is at stake is his own ability to revise and recompose the fragments of poetry.

---

<sup>80</sup> In his *Ep.* 13.4-5 Ausonius again juxtaposes a whole line and a half-line from Vergil. And Paulinus does so at *Carm.* 18.126-7. I discuss the juxtaposed allusions from the *Mosella* because it is the most prominent of these poems.

<sup>81</sup> And this passage is comparable to Vergil's promise at the beginning of the third book of the *Georgics* to erect a temple in honor of Augustus. At line 454, Ausonius clearly alludes to *G.* 3.30.

A fourth case of juxtaposition is found in Claudian's programmatic allusions to Vergil and Statius in the first line of the narrative section of the *De raptu Proserpinae*. By alluding to both poets, Claudian acknowledges that his poem should be read in light of those epics. In this case, Claudian juxtaposes both fragments of Latin poetry and the epic traditions for which they stand:

*Dux Erebi quondam tumidas exarsit in iras  
proelia moturus superis quod solus egeret  
conubiis sterilesque diu consumeret annos . . .*  
(*Rapt.* 1.32-4).

The leader of Erebus once blazed out in swelling anger  
(he was about to make war on the Olympians) because he alone had no  
share in marriage and he had long squandered his years in sterility . . . .

Statius had called Pluto the *dux Erebi* at *Theb.* 8.22, at the beginning of his description of Hades.<sup>82</sup> Vergil uses the phrase *exarsit in iras* to describe Allecto's reaction to Turnus' lack of interest in her advice (*Aen.* 7.445). Further, Jean-Louis Charlet suggested that *tumidas* with *iras* derives from the *tumida ex ira* of *Aen.* 6.407.<sup>83</sup> *Quondam* alerts the reader to the prior history of Claudian's words; it thereby serves as a signpost of his allusions.<sup>84</sup> Because Claudian's allusive phrases are circumscribed (they are distinct syntactic units and they fall within the same metrical position as in their sources), they call attention to the fact that they are repeated fragments. Therefore, these juxtaposed allusions to Statius and Vergil call attention to Claudian's ability to reshape the tradition of Latin poetry through his own reading of it. They call attention to the verbal surface of his poetry and offer a model by which the reader may understand Claudian's poem through his use of Classical and imperial epic. In that sense, these juxtaposed allusions are programmatic for Claudian's poem and his poetics.

---

<sup>82</sup> On the underworld opening to Claudian's epic, see Wheeler (1995).

<sup>83</sup> Charlet (1991), 93.

<sup>84</sup> On the signposting of allusions, see Hinds (1998), 1-3; for this use of *quondam*, compare *Ov. Met.* 14.812, *Auson. Cup.* 4, and *Paul. Nol. Carm.* 27.62 (each discussed above); and *Auson. Praef.* 4.2 (discussed below).

Juxtaposed allusions prominently display the different layers of a text, its composite nature. They make the need for a strong form of reading explicit, because they are not defined by the meaning of any prior context. When readers confront juxtaposed allusions, they make them cohere within their new location. At the same time, such allusions reveal the poet's ability to revise the past and to use its words in a new sense. In writing of the cento, Giovanni Polara compared the allusivity of the cento to antanaclasis, the figure of speech in which a word is repeated in a different sense.<sup>85</sup> Because the Late Antique poets go out of their way—beyond the limits of their centos—to employ the words of their predecessors in a new sense, Polara's analogy of centonic allusion to antanaclasis can be applied also to non-centonic composition in Late Antiquity. By repeating the words of a predecessor with a different meaning, the poet plays with his own ability to reinterpret the text. As does the cento, the non-referential allusion reveals the reception of the text and not its original meaning or context; for the juxtaposition of disparate fragments foregrounds the reader's presence in the text. Though this aspect of allusion is most evident when the poet juxtaposes two disparate fragments, it operates whenever an allusion shuns its own referentiality.

#### V. The Apposed Allusion in Late Antiquity

Whereas juxtaposed allusions permit two fragmentary intertexts to refract each other's presence and thereby work together to reveal the discontinuities between text and intertext, a single allusion apposed to the text disrupts, on its own, the verbal surface of the poem. In this way, an apposed allusion marks itself off as distinct from its text without the need for more than one fragment. Because a single apposed allusion can also show the space between ancient and

---

<sup>85</sup> Polara (1981) and (1989).

modern, it can also take part in the same dynamic employed in juxtaposed allusions. And since the repeated words must still be integrated within their new context, the space between the text and intertext remains as the domain of the reader. While every allusion disrupts the verbal surface of the text, an apposed allusion isolates the foreign element within it. Rather than integrating that previous voice into its new context, an apposed allusion draws attention to the ventriloquism of the intertext. In so doing, it reveals the necessary presence of an interpretive reader.

In his *Hymnus ante Cibum*, Prudentius incorporates half of a line from the *Aeneid* and also alludes more traditionally to Aeneas's return from the underworld.

*Credo equidem (neque vana fides)*  
*corpora vivere more animae:*  
*nam modo corporeum memini*  
*de Flegetonte gradu facili*  
*ad superos remeasse deum (Cath. 3.196-200).*

I believe (and my confidence is not in vain)  
that our bodies will live like our souls:  
for just now I recall that it was in bodily form  
and out from Phlegethon, walking easily,  
that God returned to those above.

In book four of the *Aeneid*, Dido explains to her sister Anna her passion for Aeneas:

*Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!*  
*quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes,*  
*quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis!*  
*credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum (4.9-12).*

Anna, my sister, what dreams these are that terrify me!  
Who is this new guest who showed up in our home,  
how he carries himself in speech, in strength, and in arms!  
I believe (and my confidence is not in vain) that he is divine.

And in his encounter with the Sibyl, Aeneas is warned that a return from the underworld is difficult:

. . . *facilis descensus Averno:*  
*noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis;*  
*sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras,*  
*hoc opus, hic labor est (Aen. 6.126-29).*

. . . it's easy to get down to Avernus:  
The gate of dread Dis stands open day and night;  
but to turn back your step and to get out to the upper air,  
this is the work, this is the labor.

Prudentius' *memini* in line 198 prepares the reader for the second allusion, and the references to Aeneas portray Christ's return from Hades through Aeneas' journey. Maria Lühken characterizes those allusions as a case of *aemulatio*, because the Christian resurrection was corporeal, unlike the afterlife portrayed by Vergil.<sup>86</sup> Prudentius' *corporeum* ensures that the journey in mind is a physical thing; but Christ's journey is not, for that reason, opposed to Aeneas' encounter with Hades. Despite the poetic ambiguity introduced by the gates of sleep at the end of book six, Aeneas also went to and returned from the underworld in his physical body. Instead of contrasting his own poetry with Vergil's, Prudentius portrays Aeneas as a type of Christ. And his allusion to Aeneas is integrative (in Conte's sense), because it creates a complex image, out of the interplay between Christ's harrowing of hell and Aeneas' visit to the underworld. Prudentius, therefore, minimizes the contrast between his own portrayal of Hades and Vergil's book six of the *Aeneid*. Prudentius' Christian reading of the *Aeneid* may even extend to the second half of line twelve of book four of the *Aeneid*: *credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum*. Of course, Dido's words are flippant, but it is possible to read a parallel between Aeneas' descent from the gods and Christ's birth. In that case, Aeneas would be an even clearer type of Christ. And in either case, Lühken's reading of this passage as a *Kontrastimitation* does not suit Prudentius' use of the similarities between his poem and the *Aeneid*.

---

<sup>86</sup> Lühken (2002), 148-9.

While the allusions to book six of the *Aeneid* are integrative, the quotation from book four repeats Vergil's words with only the slightest of changes (from *nec* to *neque*). Lühken describes the quotation only as a set piece and as a marker of the following allusions.<sup>87</sup> While it does prepare the reader for the following allusions, Prudentius' quotation is itself emblematic of his reading of Vergil. For *credo equidem neque vana fides* stands as a fragment of Vergilian speech within Prudentius' poem, and the art of Prudentius' allusion consists in his ability to employ Vergil's words in a new sense. As do juxtaposed allusions, this apposed allusion calls attention to the difference between Vergil's and Prudentius' text. By retaining Vergil's words and by allowing them an entire line to themselves, Prudentius invites reflection on their previous sense and his new use of them. Thus, Prudentius allows Vergil to speak even as he displays his own appropriation of Vergil's words. An exact quotation most neatly embodies the poet's reading, and this apposed allusion isolates Vergil's words within Prudentius' text.

Just as Prudentius places Vergil's words at the head of his stanza, Paulinus begins his paraphrase<sup>88</sup> of the first Psalm with a quotation from Horace. In Horace's own poetry, such an allusion at the beginning of a poem has been called a motto; but, whereas Horace either translates or adapts his mottos, Paulinus incorporates Horace verbatim.<sup>89</sup> Paulinus' fifty-one line development of the first Psalm adds ethical and rhetorical detail that befit a Christian poet, but the first four words are a direct quotation of the opening of Horace *Epodes* 2.1, in which Horace had presented a banker's dream of life in the countryside. This allusion is significant because it

---

<sup>87</sup> (2002), 149.

<sup>88</sup> On the practice of paraphrase in Late Antique Latin poetry, see Roberts (1985). Paraphrase is now the common term, although *metaphrasis* was sometimes used to distinguish a more elaborate reworking of a hypotext (Roberts, 1985, 25-6).

<sup>89</sup> On the Horatian motto, see Cavarzere (1996). The closest adaptation among Horace's mottos is the opening of *Odes* 1.37: *nunc est bibendum*, which translates Alcaeus fr. 332 (Lobel and Page): *νῦν γρη̄ μεθύσθην*. Though Horace adapts Alcaeus closely, his motto is a translation, and not an exact repetition. On this motto, see Cavarzere (1996), 193-7 and Fraenkel (1957), 159.

draws attention to itself, introduces Paulinus' poem, and complicates the relationship between the Christian and Classical ideals.

*Beatus ille qui procul vitam suam  
ab inpiorum segregarit coetibus  
et in via peccantium non manserit  
nec in cathedra pestilenti sederit . . . (Carm. 7.1-4).*

Happy is he who far away leads  
his own life from the gatherings of the wicked,  
and who does not stay in the path of sinners  
or sit in a foul chair . . . .

Horace's epode began:

*Beatus ille qui procul negotiis,  
ut prisca gens mortalium,  
paterna rura bobus exercet suis,  
solutus omni faenore . . . (Epod. 2.1-4).*

Happy is he who far away from business,  
like the olden race of mortals,  
works his ancestral land with his own oxen,  
free from every debt . . . .

Paulinus transfers Horace's words into his version of the first Psalm, but also "contaminates" them with the Latin translation of the Psalm, which begins *beatus vir qui*.<sup>90</sup> By alluding to the first Psalm at the same time as he quotes Horace, Paulinus further complicates his use of Horace's words. Paulinus changes the meaning of Horace's words along with their context; but his technique (exact repetition) complicates the possibility of any kind of emulative or corrective engagement with his source. Therefore, Paulinus' quotation of Horace adds a further, and in some ways incoherent, layer to his poem. Even in formal terms, the hyperbaton of *procul* and *ab* reinforces the separation of Horace's phrase. For, in Horace's poem, *procul* went directly with the ablative *negotiis*; but Paulinus uses it with *ab* to govern *coetibus*; and the imposition of *vitam*

---

<sup>90</sup> On *contaminatio*, compare Farrell (1991), 94-104. Heinz (2007) considers Prudentius' *contaminatio* of Biblical and Classical sources.

*suam* breaks the easy flow of his words. Like Prudentius, Paulinus sets aside his own poetry in favor of repeating the words of a Classical poet. Also like Prudentius, Paulinus allows Horace's words to stand on their own and to blend or not into his own poetry. Paulinus' allusion is a most simple form of intertextuality, in which the hypotext actually stands on its own within the hypertext. Paulinus allows it to remain, not because he cannot integrate it more fully, but because he wants the reader to appreciate the harmony of two poetic voices. While the voice of a single author would disguise the need for a reader, the imposition of a non-authorial voice (or rather the voices of a second and third author) brings forward the question of how and why these words are being read. Paulinus' quotation has been read as constructing a Christian version of the Classical *secessus in villam*, a version intended to surpass and replace Horace's poem.<sup>91</sup> A quotation, however, is precisely the form of allusion that complicates such a reading. Paulinus' quotation depends for its effect upon a reader who appreciates the poet's repetition of Classical poetry. By using an integrative or emulative allusion, Paulinus could have revised Horace's words to fit his poem. If Paulinus had rewritten Horace in that way, he would have presented his own version of Horace's phrase. Instead, Paulinus incorporated Horace's phrase on its own and without criticism. And though his poem does present a different version of beatitude than the one found in the Classical poem, Paulinus does not reduce the impact, within his poem, of Horace's voice.

The exact and extended allusions presented here reduce the difference between an allusion and a quotation. A quotation typically acknowledges its source explicitly, but these apposed allusions also call attention to their source and make no attempt to conceal their borrowing. Because these Late Antique allusions do (implicitly but clearly) acknowledge their borrowing, they could almost be called quotations. And in fact explicit quotations are not absent

---

<sup>91</sup> Nazzaro (1982), 99-100.

from Late Antique poetry. Catullus, Horace, and Vergil are each quoted by Ausonius.<sup>92</sup> We will consider here Ausonius' quotation of the first line of Catullus' first poem, which Ausonius sets at the beginning of a preface, addressed to one Drepanius Pacatus and appended to some collection of his poetry<sup>93</sup>:

*'Cui dono lepidum novum libellum?'*  
*Veronensis ait poeta quondam*  
*inventoque dedit statim Nepoti.*  
*at nos illepidum rudem libellum,*  
*burras quisquillas ineptiasque,*  
*credemus gremio cui fovendum? (Praef. 4.1-6).*

'To whom should I give my pretty new book?'  
the poet from Verona once said,  
and he gave it to Nepos, whom he found on the spot.  
But I have an ugly and rude book,  
ridiculous, trash, absurdity,  
to whom will I give it to be loved on their lap?

Ausonius acknowledges that he is quoting a line from Catullus and then gives the reader a brief summary of Catullus' poem. By explicitly acknowledging his quotation, Ausonius sets the first line apart from the rest of the poem and thereby plays on the difference between himself and Catullus; yet Ausonius also juxtaposes Catullus' poem and his own. Though Ausonius could have composed a different first line for his dedicatory poem, it would not have perpetuated the category of the Classical as does his invocation of Catullus. Rather than simply playing on the

---

<sup>92</sup> Auson. *Prof.* 6.50-4 quotes Hor. *Carm.* 2.16.27-8: *quam fatiloquo dicta profatu versus Horati: "nihil est ab omni parte beati."* Auson. *Ecl.* 19.19-21 quotes Verg. *Aen.* 12.879-80: *Iturna reclamation: / "quo vitam dedit aeternam? cur mortis adempta est / condicio?"* Auson. *Ecl.* 19.18-23 is omitted by V (the oldest of Ausonius' manuscripts), but is probably genuine (Green 1991, *ad loc.*). There is perhaps a 1<sup>st</sup> c. analogue to Ausonius' quotation. Persius seems to quote Ennius at *Sat.* 6.9-10: *Lunai portum, est operae, cognoscite cives, / cor iubet hoc Enni.* The evidence that Persius has actually quoted this line from Ennius is the disjunction of the line from its context, Persius' phrase *cor iubet hoc Enni*, and the scholium to this line of Persius' *Saturae: hunc versum ad suum carmen de Ennii carminibus transtulit.* The scholium's *transtulit*, however, need not imply quotation: H. D. Jocelyn has collected a series of scholia to Vergil in which the scholiast's language (and specifically the verb *transferre*) would seem to imply that Vergil has taken a whole line from a source, when he has actually either adapted freely or borrowed a few words (Jocelyn 1965, 139-44). Whether or not Persius explicitly quoted an entire line from Ennius, his line *does* stand out from the rest of Persius' poem and is therefore a close analogue to Ausonius' quotation of Catullus. Both Ausonius' and Persius' quotations are discussed together by Conte (1986, 59-60).

<sup>93</sup> In the manuscript, this preface comes before a series of "eclogues," but Green does not think they are an introduction to the poems they precede (1991, 242).

cultural capital of Catullus' poetry, Ausonius reinvigorates that poetry by placing it within the context of his own dedication. In that way, his poem ironically reads Catullus's situation as though it were not analogous to his own, though the dedicatee at least would want to read Ausonius' quotation as though it *were* appropriate to this *libellus*. This type of appositional allusion, a quotation in which the source is acknowledged explicitly, is an extreme example of how to incorporate a fragment of previous poetry. Though it is an explicit quotation, I call it an allusion and discuss it here, because it stands on a continuum with the allusions discussed above from Prudentius' *Hymnus ante Cibum* and Paulinus' *Carm.* 7. Even the use of *quondam* is analogous to the more normal signposting of an allusion. Because Ausonius plays with the literary past and allows his reader to play with the meaning of Catullus' words within his own, his quotation is in fact allusive. The only difference between the apposed allusions of Prudentius or Paulinus and Ausonius' quotation is that Ausonius addresses his source explicitly. Ausonius does appropriate Catullus' words, for in the simplest sense they are now a part of his poetry. Since this allusion is explicit, Ausonius is able to dramatize the response that is only implicit when he quotes a Classical poet without acknowledgment. While it is usually the reader who would determine that the Veronese poet had spoken these words, Ausonius here plays the part of the reader in recognizing the second voice within his text.

By setting an allusion in apposition to his own poetry, the Late Antique poet invites the reader to consider his use of previous material. My understanding of these apposed allusions diverges sharply from Conte's explanation of such quotations. Since Conte cites Ausonius' quotation of Catullus in order to distinguish between his reflective and integrative types of allusion, it will be helpful to quote his entire analysis of Ausonius' quotation. He touches on what is different about the function of allusion in Late Antiquity:

[The quoting text] openly acknowledge[s] the work of another, so that no tension is established between the two texts. No “expropriation” of an older text occurs, because the new verbal segment does not rework the old one dialectically; it simply inserts the old text statically within itself. Thus no interpenetration occurs between the two texts—no violence is done to the “propriety” of the old text, and the new text sets up no new meaning to add to its own evident sense (so that there is no complication of sense or of the artistic process).<sup>94</sup>

What Ausonius’ allusion lacks in textual interpenetration is repaid in the hermeneutic puzzle that it sets for the reader. Whereas the integrative allusion accomplishes the interpretation of the hypotext on its own, the quotation leaves that task incomplete, open to the reader’s control. Instead of expropriating its hypotext, the quotation encourages a sense of ease, a more productive relationship between the poet and his tradition. Of course, such a relationship depends upon a reader who also desires to explore the past through the present. Both Ausonius and Drepanius Pacatus were apparently readers of just that sort. The quotation, therefore, is an extreme form of allusion; but (and this is characteristic of allusion in Late Antiquity) it prevents a strong author from expropriating his literary past. Instead of erasing the evidence of his predecessor’s influence, the Late Antique poet presents a layered text in which the words of a prior poet may still find their place.

## VI. The Canon of Classical Literature

The Late Antique poet was able to appropriate his exemplar without violence, because of the poetic distance between himself and his Classical models. We should measure this distance first in terms of general readings habits and then through certain programmatic statements made by Ausonius and some of his contemporaries. I will return presently to the question of *aemulatio*.

---

<sup>94</sup> Conte (1986), 60.

During the fourth century a broad shift occurred in the reading habits of educated Romans. Whereas earlier writers studied, quoted, and alluded to authors from Republican Rome, in the fourth century writers were unlikely to read or cite most Republican authors. They became much more likely to cite an Imperial poet such as Lucan, Statius, or Juvenal rather than Ennius, Accius, or Lucilius. Servius in particular, in his commentary on Vergil, replaced a number of references to Vergil's Republican predecessors with references to his Imperial successors.<sup>95</sup> Vergil came to be cited alongside Republican authors as one of the *antiqui* or *maiores*, and early Imperial authors were cited as *veteres* and *idonei auctores*.<sup>96</sup> The grammatical habit of Late Antiquity created "a gap between the past and the present," and Vergil was the central figure on the other side of the gap.<sup>97</sup> That Imperial rather than Republican authors were read in Late Antiquity lengthened the distance between Vergil and poets such as Ausonius or Prudentius. The other result of this shift was that Latin literature came to have a thick history on its own, quite apart from the Greek sources of a Vergil or a Horace. Because these Latin authors were now sources in their own right, they were read as inspiring a definitively Latin tradition. Because he was considered an ancient poet, Vergil was read as the source of Roman poetry. Therefore, authors could set his poetry apart as being other, as anterior or simply different from their own work. By setting Vergil's words apart, the Late Antique poets created for themselves the opportunity of playing with the cultural distance between themselves and their Classical sources.

Ausonius and his contemporaries imagined themselves as separate from their Classical models. In a letter to an unnamed friend, Ausonius invited the recipient to his villa but asked him

---

<sup>95</sup> Cameron (2011), 399-420. Compare the reading curriculum cited by a Late Antique school text in Dionisotti (1982), 100; the Latin authors cited by name are Terence, Cicero, Sallust, Vergil, Lucan, Persius, and Statius.

<sup>96</sup> Chin (2008), 21-4; Kaster (1978); and Uhl (1998), 419-21.

<sup>97</sup> Chin (2008), 23. Chin locates the "transformative potential of grammar" in its ability to construct "narratives that ultimately conjure readers as actors in the movement from past to present" (170).

not to bring the books that would slow down his journey. For the muses, Ausonius says, are a great burden:

*attamen ut citius venias leviusque vehare,  
historiam mimos carmina linque domi.  
grande onus in Musis; tot saecula condita chartis,  
quae sua vix tolerant tempora, nostra gravant* (Ep. 8.21-4).

But to come more quickly and to travel more lightly,  
leave at home history, mimes, and poetry.  
There's a great burden in the muses, so many ages committed to paper,  
they're scarcely tolerable to their own times and burdensome to ours.

In *Ep.* 4, a separate invitation to Axius Paulus, Ausonius made a similar list of ancient genres. In that letter, Ausonius asks his recipient to bring his books; but he still describes them as mere luggage for his wagon. By listing and objectifying his friends' readings, Ausonius separated himself from his Classical models.<sup>98</sup>

In his *Protrepticus ad nepotem*, Ausonius constructed a curriculum of readings for his young grandson. He lists Homer, Menander, Horace, Vergil, Terence, and Sallust as the principal Greek and Roman authors. As he transitions to his list of Latin authors, Ausonius wonders when his grandson will introduce him again to poetry:

*ecquando ista meae contingent dona senectae?  
quando oblita mihi tot carmina totque per aevum  
conexa historiae, soccos aulaeaeque regum  
et melicos lyricosque modos profando novabis  
obductosque seni facies puerascere sensus?* (Protr. 52-55)

Oh, when will these gifts befall my old age?  
When will you make new for me as you recite them  
so many forgotten poems and so many links through time of history,  
and comedy and the curtains of kings  
and the melodious and lyric meters,  
and when will you make an old man's wrinkled senses<sup>99</sup> grow young?

---

<sup>98</sup> On the role of such moves in creating an idea of the Classical, compare Chin (2008), 11: "Learning to read is always a matter of learning to read *something*. Late ancient grammarians formed their discipline by teaching their students how to read the classics—or rather, by teaching their students how to read in a way that created classics."

<sup>99</sup> Would it be too much to translate *obductos sensus* as "covered meanings"?

The contrast between Ausonius' old age and his grandson's youth is emphasized throughout, and that contrast draws attention to the ways in which Classical poetry needs to be renewed, both for the grandson and for the grandfather. In order to emphasize that his forgetfulness is a trope, Ausonius describes himself in words borrowed from Vergil: *oblita mihi tot carmina* is from the eighth *Eclogue*, where the goatherd Moeris laments that he cannot even remember the poetry he once sang as a boy.<sup>100</sup> Thus, Ausonius' protreptic creates an image of the past as something to be restored through individual acts of re-inscription.<sup>101</sup> The play on age and forgetfulness, youth and education enables the poet to approach the past as both a distant observer and also as a ready participant. For Ausonius, the Classical authors become approachable as they are distanced from the present.

Rather than set themselves up as rivals to the Classical poets, Ausonius and his peers often played with the similarities and the differences between themselves and their noted predecessors. In his *Epitaphia Heroum qui Bello Troico Interfuerunt* Ausonius wrote a two-line epitaph for Odysseus; instead of describing Odysseus, he refers the curious reader to the *Odyssey*; in his epigram for Deiphobus, the hero himself declares that his only tomb is the one that Aeneas and Vergil composed for him.<sup>102</sup> Thus, Ausonius ostentatiously refers the reader back to the canonical treatments of Odysseus and Deiphobus. In the same way, Paulinus begins his panegyric on John the Baptist by declaring that he will have nothing new or original to say; his material comes straight from the Biblical authors.<sup>103</sup> While they sometimes advertised their dependence on their sources, Late Antique poets could also be described as the equals of their

---

<sup>100</sup> *saepe ego longos / cantando puerum memini me condere soles. / nunc oblita mihi tot carmina . . .* (E. 9.51-3). In listing his canon in this poem, Ausonius employs a series of similar allusions, so that his poetry embodies the idea of a continuous tradition.

<sup>101</sup> And so perhaps there was something to Symmachus' playful request for a didascallic poem from Ausonius (Symm. Ep. 1.31.2).

<sup>102</sup> *Epit.* 13.3-4: *non habeo tumulum, nisi quem mihi voce vocantis / et pius Aeneas et Maro composuit.*

<sup>103</sup> *nec nova nunc aut nostra canam; dixere prophetae / cuncta prius . . .* (Carm. 6.14-15).

Classical models. Thus, Symmachus compared Ausonius' *Mosella* to Vergil's poetry.<sup>104</sup> Paulinus compared Ausonius to Vergil and Cicero.<sup>105</sup> On an honorary statue, the Senate compared Claudian to both Homer and Vergil.<sup>106</sup> In the *Mosella*, Ausonius himself combines deference and confidence, in a passage in which he compares his river to the famous rivers in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*:

. . . *quod si tibi, dia Mosella,  
Smyrna suum vatem vel Mantua clara dedisset  
cederet Iliacis Simois memoratus in oris  
nec praeferre suos auderet Thybris honores (Mos. 374-7).*

. . . but if, divine Moselle, to you  
Smyrna or glorious Mantua had given their own poet  
the Simois, famous on the shores of Ilion, would give way;  
and the Tiber would not dare to prefer its honors.

While Ausonius claims that Homer and Vergil would have praised the Moselle more successfully than he has, he also implies that his river is in fact preferable. That combination of deference and assurance mirrors the contemporary praise of Ausonius' poetry. Because the Classical authors are introduced as though they also had written poems about a river, Ausonius both reinforces the idea of the Classical and also elevates his own vision of poetry.<sup>107</sup> Because the Classical poets were separate and distant, Ausonius could advertise their greatness without diminishing his own stature. Because he returns to these sources, Ausonius lends Vergil a voice and an influence within his poem. Thus, the Canonicity of the Classical poets allows them to be appropriated without the textual violence characteristic of an emulative allusion.

<sup>104</sup> Symm. *Ep.* 1.14.5: *ego hoc tuum carmen libris Maronis adiungo.*

<sup>105</sup> *vix Tullius et Maro tecum / sustineant aequale iugum (Carm. 11.38-9).*

<sup>106</sup> Εἰν ἐνὶ Βιργιλίῳ το νόον καὶ μοῦσαν Ὀμήρου / Κλαυδιανὸν Ῥώμη καὶ βασιλῆς ἔθεσαν (*CIL VI*, 1710).

<sup>107</sup> This ostentatious display of deference recalls Statius' command to his *Thebaid* to follow the *Aeneid* at a respectful distance: *nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora (Theb. 12.816-17)*. On this passage and Statian "secondariness," see Hinds (1998), 91-5. Because Ausonius did not write epic, he shifts the field of Vergilian poetry, which is to say that Ausonius' view of Vergil and Homer is radically tendentious.

## VII. Towards a New Theory of Appropriation

We may now address directly the question of *aemulatio*, which was raised earlier both by Paulinus' striking re-use of Horace and by Prudentius' allusions to Aeneas' *katabasis* in book six of the *Aeneid*. An emulative allusion portrays its hypertext and author in opposition to an earlier and outmoded hypotext and author; and, in section two of this chapter, I discussed the trend, within scholarship, towards reading such Late Antique allusions as emulative. While this model of allusion fits Vergil's engagement with Hellenistic poetry, I propose that poetic quotations be read through their reader rather than through the competitive systems of author and text. Because the quotation is exactly repetitive, it distances allusion from *aemulatio* and allows the reader to consider both texts on their own as well as together.<sup>108</sup> Thus, a reader may appreciate two poems at different times (Horace and Paulinus); and he may read an earlier poem through a later one (Horace through Paulinus); further, when he has finished the later poem, he may still return to the earlier poem as it was (Horace without Paulinus remains an option). The quotation reveals the independence of the reader most clearly, for it allows the two texts to remain distinct. In section three, I introduced the non-referential allusions of Late Antiquity; in sections four and five, I explained them through the figure of a strong reader; in section six, I set that reader in the context of the Canonical Augustan poets. Though not all of the allusions I have discussed exclude referentiality, they all make the reader aware of the present instantiation of the text and of the historical distance between the hypertext and its source. Moreover, they make readers aware of their role in the current presentation of the text, by which I mean the reader's present

---

<sup>108</sup> Compare Pucci (1998), 86: "[*Aemulatio*] might be useful to explain the psychology of the allusive author, or the dynamics of a literary culture that would seem to place heavy emphasis on tradition. But it does not explicate allusion, for allusion is not exclusively (if at all) an emulative or competitive form. It requires an engagement of the older work at issue, not a conjuring up of its best features in order to be outdone by a newer version."

enjoyment (through activation) of its poetry. Therefore, the reader's enjoyment of a quotation admits of referentiality while still resisting the movement to integration.<sup>109</sup>

Prudentius' *Psychomachia* begins with an obvious allusion to Vergil's *Aeneid*. It has been read as emulative, but it actually reflects Prudentius' creative reading of Vergil.

*Christe, gravis hominum semper miserate labores,  
qui patria virtute cluis propriaque sed una  
(unum namque deum colimus de nomine utroque,  
non tamen et solum, quia tu deus ex patre, Christe),  
dissere, rex noster, quo milite pellere culpas  
mens armata queat nostri de pectoris antro . . . (Psych. 1-6).*

Christ, you have always pitied the hard labors of men,  
who are famous in the power that is the father's and yours, but still one  
(for we worship one God in either name,  
though again not single, since you, Christ, are God from the father),  
speak out, our king, by what soldiery an armed mind  
may drive blemishes from the cave of our heart . . . .

Prudentius echoes the beginning of Aeneas' prayer to Apollo, from book six of the *Aeneid*:

*Phoebus, gravis Troiae semper miserate labores . . . (Aen. 6.56).*

Phoebus, you have always pitied the hard labors of Troy

Prudentius changes the addressee of the prayer and exchanges *hominum* for *Troiae*. While the changes are meaningful, the similarities are more concerted. Prudentius selected a line from the *Aeneid* which he could adapt, with only minimal changes, as the opening line of this poem on the soul's struggle against vice. Maria Lühken, however, read those slight changes as indicative of *aemulatio* (as a *Kontrastimitation*).<sup>110</sup> For her, Prudentius' *Christe* and *hominum* are decisive, for "Der Gott der Christen ist Hoffnung auf Erlösung für alle Menschen; deshalb muß er – und nicht der heidnische Gott Apollo – im Gebet um sein Erbarmen angefleht werden."<sup>111</sup> No one would deny that there are differences between Christ and Apollo, or that Prudentius does differentiate

---

<sup>109</sup> As defined by Conte's integrative allusion, discussed above, pp. 134-5.

<sup>110</sup> Herzog also read this as a case of correction (1975, 193).

<sup>111</sup> Lühken (2002), 46.

(at times sharply) between Roman paganism and Christian theology. But this is not one of the cases in which he makes a sharp distinction between past and present. In this passage, Prudentius repeats the words of Vergil; and the form of allusion chosen by Prudentius prevents him from marginalizing Vergil's text. Macklin Smith, in his chapter entitled "The Assault upon Vergil," also reads this allusion as an attack upon the *Aeneid*.<sup>112</sup> But Smith went further than Lühken would and claimed that the sense of Prudentius' allusion is parodic. In the case of a similar allusion (Prudentius' quotations of Vergil in his description of the battle between *Pudicitia* and *Libido*), Smith describes Prudentius' use of Vergil as an insult: "The insult is repeated every time Prudentius uses Vergil thus irrelevantly or irreverently: it is as if Prudentius were flaunting his lack of respect for Vergil's content, as if he were saying, 'I can use you for any purpose whatever.'" <sup>113</sup> For Smith, use implies insult rather than play. And Smith thinks that Prudentius means to contrast Apollo and Christ absolutely, so that either Aeneas' prayer will be approved poetically and theologically or Prudentius' prayer will win the day.<sup>114</sup> The emulative readings of this allusion see a sharp contrast between Prudentius' and Vergil's lines.

The difference of content between Vergil and Prudentius need not imply a strong contrast in the case of this particular allusion. In this line, Prudentius went out of his way to portray Christ through Apollo. Indeed, Marc Mastrangelo has recently read this line as the first of a series of passages in the *Psychomachia* in which Prudentius figures Aeneas as a type of the reader whose struggle has become interior and spiritual rather than national and material.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Smith (1976), 271-76.

<sup>113</sup> Smith (1976), 288. Actual parody is rare in the allusive quotations of Late Antiquity, although Ausonius does use Vergil to mock a woman named Crispa: *Crispa tamen cunctas exercet corpore in uno: / deglubit, fellat, molitur per utramque cavernam, / ne quid inexpertum frustra moritura relinquat* (*Epigr.* 75.6-8). The final line plays with the more serious meaning of *Aen.* 4.415.

<sup>114</sup> Smith sets Prudentius within the context of a violent, literary struggle between paganism and Christianity. In the same year in which Smith published his study, Alan Cameron deconstructed the idea of the Circle of Symmachus and of a vicious conflict between paganism and Christianity at the end of the fourth century (Cameron 1976).

<sup>115</sup> Mastrangelo (2008), 15-20.

Mastrangelo, therefore, reads Prudentius as using Vergil in a positive sense, to portray Christ and his prayer through his reader's prior knowledge of the *Aeneid*. In this way, Prudentius can be read as alluding to Vergil without the motive of *aemulatio*.

It is important to note that Prudentius performs this typological reading of Aeneas by quoting nearly an entire line from Vergil. Because Prudentius allows Vergil's words to stand so starkly within his poem, he enables the reader to consider Vergil's words in a new light and to make new sense of them, without setting up a contrast between the two poets. Prudentius' quotation—repeating exactly the words of a predecessor, in a manner which clearly reveals the hypotext and distances its words from the hypertext—resists the movement towards *aemulatio*. Instead of inventing his own invocation to counter Vergil's invocation of Apollo, Prudentius remembers and incorporates Vergil's words. The result is a poetic text that embraces its layers of meaning and invites the reading that will make sense of it: *Aemulatio* recedes in favor of a more balanced awareness of both texts, and the reader may appreciate both the *Aeneid* in its own way and the *Psychomachia* for what it is. In alluding to Vergil in this way at the beginning of his poem, Prudentius invites the reader to consider the difference between the poems (and they are radically different poems), and even to read the *Aeneid* through the *Psychomachia*; but Prudentius does not directly rival Vergil. Instead, Prudentius' quotation connects the two poems and invites further readings both of the *Psychomachia* and of the *Aeneid*.

In a quotation, a poet both repeats the words of a predecessor and appropriates them in a new sense. Both of those actions are important. At the end of his bilingual letter to Axius Paulus, Ausonius appends to his poem two lines from Horace's *Carm.* 2.3. The difference between this case and those already considered is that Ausonius also translated the second line from Latin into Greek. In translating Horace into Greek, Ausonius acknowledges his ability to both retain and

transform the poet's words. Because both the retention and the transformation of Horace are active choices, Ausonius' quotation alludes to the poet's present shaping of prior poetry, even in the case of exact quotation. *Aemulatio* is excluded from this allusion for two reasons: Ausonius repeats exactly the sense of Horace, and his translation into Greek does not challenge the Latin poetry of his predecessor.<sup>116</sup> Ausonius ends his invitation to Paulus as follows:

*ambo igitur nostrae παραθέλωμεν otia vitae,  
dum res et aetas et sororum  
νήματα πορφύρεα πλέκηται (Epist. 6.43-5).*  
We will both then charm the idleness of our life,  
As long as there's money and time and the sisters  
Weave the dark thread.

The next to last line is Hor. *Carm.* 2.3.15. Anyone who did not immediately notice the quotation would be brought to attention by the sudden break in meter, the imposition of the closing lines of an Alcaic strophe, which is apposed to forty-three of Ausonius' hexameter verses. Ausonius' final line translates Hor. *Carm.* 2.3.16 into rather stately Greek. Ausonius elsewhere incorporates fragments of Classical texts into his own narratives in such a way as to distance his own creation from theirs and to create new meanings for those fragments, but nowhere else does he accomplish those twin steps of dislocation and translation more clearly or more emphatically. He makes Horace new within a new context and a new idiom, and at the same time he consigns the Latin text of the old Horace to a footnote.<sup>117</sup> Ausonius' letter to Axius Paulus is programmatic of his own approach to Latin poetry, an invitation to his villa and an invitation to his poetics. Ausonius, therefore, enacts his ability, as a reader, to transform these Classical fragments into something new. This apposed allusion to Horace draws attention to the distance between Ausonius and his source and compels Ausonius' reader to make sense of its placement.

---

<sup>116</sup> But Horace does criticize Lucilius in *Ep.* 1.10 precisely for combining Latin and Greek, and Ausonius does offer in this bilingual letter an alternative to the Horatian poetics of linguistic and imaginative unity.

<sup>117</sup> *Fila trium patiuntur atra.*

As in the case of juxtaposed allusions, the apposed allusion depends for its effect upon a mediation which neither the narrative nor the text can provide. The reader, therefore, is tasked with construing the link between Horace and Ausonius. Such transitive reading makes sense of a quotation, just as Ausonius himself makes new sense of Horace by translating the second line of his quotation into Greek. The change occasions less a sense of competition than an awareness of the poetic distance traversed through the poet's new reading of the past.

### VIII. Conclusion

Because the Late Antique poets designate their sources as other and foreign, they often feel no need to challenge their predecessors. In this respect, they are different from the Classical Latin poets. David West and Tony Woodman's influential collection of essays, *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, demonstrated the artistry of Latin literature against its Greek originals. In his introductory essay to that volume, Donald Russell gives what he calls "five principles" of imitation in the ancient world. Because they outline Classical poetics so neatly, Russell's five principles set the differences of Late Antiquity in high relief. I quote them in full:

- (i) The object must be worth imitating.
- (ii) The spirit rather than the letter must be reproduced.
- (iii) The imitation must be tacitly acknowledged, on the understanding that the informed reader will recognize and approve the borrowing.
- (iv) The borrowing must be 'made one's own', by individual treatment and assimilation to its new place and purpose.
- (v) The imitator must think of himself as competing with his model, even if he knows he cannot win.<sup>118</sup>

Though Russell's theory works for Classical poetry, it fails to account for the use of allusion in Late Antiquity; for (1) while such allusions are usually drawn from an esteemed source, there is

---

<sup>118</sup> Russell (1979), "*De Imitatione*," 16.

no assurance that the particular context of that source is “worth imitating,” (2) though not in every case, the Late Antique poet does often reproduce the letter rather than the spirit of his source, (3) Ausonius, at the least, does acknowledge several of his quotations explicitly and not tacitly, (4) while the allusive quotation works within its new context, it works by resisting the poet’s inclination to make it his own, and (5) the Late Antique poet who alludes to a Classical author may think that he could win a competition with his model, but the quotation is precisely the point at which he silences his competitive instincts. Russell’s five principles of *imitatio* mark a baseline of agreement as regards Classical allusion, an agreement that centers around the creative reuse and emulative strategies of the Classical Latin poets. But his principles are inadequate to treat the concerns of Late Antique poets with their particular methods of reading Classical poetry.

When Ausonius or Prudentius quote Vergil, they are usually not meaning to compete with their source. Instead, they create a poetry that embraces the differences within its units of composition and which thereby compels their reader to engage in its interpretation.<sup>119</sup> Of course, not all allusions from Ausonius, Prudentius or their contemporaries fit this category. These poets (I repeat myself for emphasis) are very good at composing more traditional allusions and at rivaling their peers and their tradition. But they also employ allusions to celebrate their own direct repetition of the past. When he wants to write an allusion, the Late Antique poet often appropriates directly the words of his Classical predecessor while ignoring their original context. By alluding to the past in such a way as to emphasize the difference between these prior words and their present use, the Late Antique poet creates out of the text a strong reader, charged with navigating the meaning of that difference. While every allusion depends for its activation upon

---

<sup>119</sup> This interest in the intertextual units of composition is paralleled by the Late Antique poets’ awareness of the verbal surface of their texts; compare Roberts’ description of *leptologia*, which “directs attention to the differences within the repeated units” (1989, 44).

this strong reader, Late Antique allusions bring that dependence into focus. The allusive techniques discussed in this chapter, therefore, allow the poet to enact—on the level of the text and through the reader—his own appropriation of Classical Latin poetry. Insofar as they resist the movement towards *intertextuality*, these allusions work in ways that are counter to received notions of the dynamics of appropriation in Latin poetry. Because the inclusion of Classical fragments draws attention to the individual unit of composition, this “centonic composition” resists the allusion’s ability to integrate old and new contexts. And that resistance creates a gap between the ancient context and its new use. Thus, the Late Antique poets created an ideal of Classical poetry, against which they were able to write their own poetry. In the history of the reception of Classical Latin poetry, their quotations mark the first attempt to read that tradition from the outside. They create, therefore, a presence for their reader and for the idea of Late Antique poetry.

## Conclusion

### The Space that Remains

The figure of the reader lends a sense of coherence and meaning to the poetry of Late Antiquity. I have described four ways in which the reader structures the textual world of Late Antiquity. In interpretive and theoretical works, contemporary prose authors presented the reader's involvement as central to the present instantiation of literature. In their prefaces, Late Antique poets mediated the eventual reception of their poems through a particular reading of the work in question. In figural poetry, allegory, and centos, Late Antique poets compelled the reader to navigate the multiple, parallel layers of the text. And, by juxtaposing allusive fragments of Classical poetry within their texts, they made the role of the reader obvious and present in the text. In the long fourth century, Latin poets explored the interaction between text, meaning, and interpretation; and the most distinctive forms of Late Antique poetry reflect upon this interplay between source and reading. Moreover, as the reader came to play a central role in mediating the presence of the text, the poetics of Late Antiquity stand out in high relief against the Classicisms of Augustan Rome.

The "presence of the text" consists in the sense that the poem remains to be heard, interpreted, and lived in the particular moment at which it is encountered by the reader. This sense of the reader's presence is what Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes in *The Production of Presence* (2004) as "presentification," the creation or performance of the subject's presence in the world. Because the Late Antique poet allows the reader space within the text, readers inhabit

that space as it becomes present to them. A centonic allusion reveals that the reader is constantly at work sorting the text into coherent fragments. In that way, by invoking the reader's presence, the poet lends a virtual immediacy to the verbal (and therefore mediated) strands of his text. This effect of presence explains the particular coherence and vitality of Late Antique poetry. The repetitions, the gaps, the impressively verbal artistry of Late Antique poetry allowed the works to be present to their first readers. For this reason, many of the tropes that once struck Classicists as frigid formalities are better read as markers of the text's ability to communicate a sense of presence to its contemporary audience. When poets enact through an allusion or a preface the presence of their reader, they reveal most directly the intention of the text to create a sense of transitive, tangible meaning. Therefore, the idea of presence as an effect of the text reveals the way in which different aspects of reading have come together in the poetry of Late Antiquity. Because the words of the poem appear as centonic fragments to be pieced together by the reader, the reader comes to enjoy his own role in receiving and enacting the poem that stands before him.

In the *De raptu Proserpinae*, Claudian provides a vivid image both for the reader's presence and for the openness of his text. He does so in his description of Proserpina's unfinished embroidery. Since ecphrases are a privileged site of metapoetic reflection, it is hardly surprising that Proserpina's weaving should stand as a cipher for Claudian's poem.<sup>1</sup> But Proserpina never finishes the traditional boundary around her work. Although she meant to set the ocean around its margins, she did not finish her text:

*Cooperat et vitreis summo iam margine texti  
Oceanum sinuare vadis; sed cardine verso*

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael von Albrecht (1989) has read Proserpina's weaving as a symbol of the poem's cosmic design, but he ignores the fact that her work is unfinished. The textual metaphor for poetry is common throughout antiquity; and Gineste (2000) surveys the role of weaving within the *De raptu Proserpinae*.

*cernit adesse deas imperfectumque laborem  
deserit . . . (Rapt. 1.269-72).*

She had begun also to bend now, on the very edge of the weaving,  
Ocean with its glassy depths. But as the door opened  
She sees the goddesses approach; and her unfinished work,  
She leaves it behind . . . .

The incompleteness of Proserpina's work is not an idle detail; for Claudian also drew attention to it earlier, when he said that Proserpina was weaving this gift in vain (*inrita texebat rediturae munera matri*, 1.247). But the incompleteness of Proserpina's text only prepares the way for its rediscovery later in the epic.

In book three of the *De raptu Proserpinae*, when Ceres discovers that her house on Sicily has been deserted, she encounters a spider at work on her daughter's unfinished weaving:

*[Ceres] semirutas confuso stamine telas  
atque interceptas agnoscit pectinis artes.  
divinus perit ille labor, spatiumque relictum  
audax sacrilego supplebat aranea textu (Rapt. 3.156-8).*

Ceres recognizes the threads, half ruined around the fallen  
weft, and also the stilled craft of the comb.  
That divine work is lost, and the space that remained,  
An audacious spider filled it in with his sacrilegious text.

Because of Ovid's Ariadne, the spider could naturally be read as a metaphor for the artist.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Claudian also describes his epic as "daring," in both the preface and proem (*ausus, praef. 3; audacia, praef. 9; audaci, 1.3*). This spider, however, fills in the space that remains, the gaps open in the text. If Claudian is like this spider, he is a secondary author; if his poem is like Proserpina's text, its gaps remain for the reader to construe. As Claudian creates a supplemental work, he enables a profound sense of coherence between himself and his epic predecessors; but he also sets a fundamental gap between his work and theirs. Thus, the Late Antique poet enacts

---

<sup>2</sup> And Kellner ([1997], 286-7) reads this audacious spider as a metaphor for the political and religious aspects of Claudian's poem.

his version of reading through a specific appropriation of Classical Latin poetry. And in the interplay of presence and absence, the reader emerges as central to the textual strategies of Claudian's mythological epic.

I have limited myself in this dissertation to a single century and to a single aspect of reading in Late Antiquity. Many questions remain for future study. How much can we say about the development of reading in the second and third centuries CE? What is the relation of Late Antique Latin poetry to Hellenistic poetry, and to the rhetoric of the Second Sophistic, or to Silver Latin poetry? How does the textual construction of reading in Late Antiquity relate to the material and social realities of reading? More broadly, how does the construction of reading in Late Antiquity help us to understand the modern theoretical turn towards the reader? These and other questions would reward further study.

As Late Antique readers enshrined the poetry of Classical Rome, they handed on to their successors a revised version of Latin literature. The tradition of Latin poetry came to include the more active reader of Late Antiquity, and the meaning of the text came to play a more influential role in its reception. Because the meaning of the text continued to be a source of its presence in the world, we should also ask how reading was figured after the fourth century. Specifically, how does the poetry of the fifth and sixth centuries respond to the concerns of the fourth? Or what do poets such as Sedulius, Sidonius, and Ennodius expect of their readers? And how do they construct their authority in the shadows of Ausonius and Claudian? This is a different story, one that begins with the continuing transformations of literature and interpretation in the nascent Medieval world. Thus, at the very end of the *Expositio Virgilianae continentiae*, Fulgentius warns the reader to be attentive: "Farewell, dear sir," he says, "and read the thickets of my heart carefully" (*vale domine, et mei tribulos pectoris cautius lege*). By warning his reader, Fulgentius

admits that his allegorical treatise is a tendentious appropriation of Vergil's epic. Even more than Macrobius or Ausonius, Fulgentius acknowledges the need for a cautious interpretation. Thus, the presence of the reader continued to structure Latin literature after the fourth century. Poets continued to return to the same textual strategies, and they continued to create through the reader a sense of the poem's presence in the world.

## Bibliography

- Abel, Karlhans (1955), *Die plautusprologe* (Mülheim).
- Agamben, Giorgio (2010), *Categorie italiane: Studi di poetica e di letteratura* (Roma).
- von Albrecht, Michael (1989), "Proserpina's Tapestry in Claudian's *De raptu*: Tradition and Design," in *Illinois Classical Studies* 14, 383-390.
- (1994), *Geschichte der römischen literatur: von Andronicus bis Boethius. II* (München).
- Ando, Clifford (2004), "Augustine on Language," in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 40.1, 45-78.
- Auerbach, Eric (1944), "Figura," in *Neue Dantestudien* (Istanbul), rev.; originally published as (1938), "Figura," in *Archivum Romanicum* 22.4, 436-489.
- Babcock, William S. trans. (1989), *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Atlanta).
- Barnes, T. D. (1975), "Optatianus Porphyrius," in *The American Journal of Philology* 96.2, 173-86.
- Bažil, Martin (2009), *Centones Christiani: Métamorphoses d'une forme intertextuelle dans la poésie latine chrétienne de l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris).
- Beatrice, Pier Franco (1971), "L'allegoria nella *Psychomachia* di Prudenzio," in *Studia Patavina* 18, 25-73.
- Benedetti, Fabrizio (1980), *La tecnica del « vertere » negli epigrammi di Ausonio* (Firenze).
- Benko, Stephen (1980), "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue in Christian Interpretation," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. II.31.1* (Berlin), 646-705.
- Bing, Peter (1985), "Kastorion of Soloi's Hymn to Pan (Supplementum Hellenisticum 310)," in *The American Journal of Philology* 106.4, 502-9.
- Bochet, Isabelle (2004), *Le firmament de l'écriture : L'herméneutique augustiniennne* (Paris).
- (2004a), "De l'exégèse à l'herméneutique augustiniennne," in *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 50.2, 349-69.
- Borgo, Antonella (2001), "La *Praefatio* del II libro di Marziale: La *brevitas* principio di poetica," in *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 31.2, 497-506.
- Bright, Pamela (1988), *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame).
- Bright, Pamela ed. and trans. (1999), *Augustine and the Bible* (Notre Dame).

- Brittain, Charles (forthcoming), "Augustine as a Reader of Cicero," in *Tolle, lege: Essays in Honor of Roland J. Teske, S.J.* (Milwaukee), 81-114.
- Brown, Dennis (1992), *Vir Trilinguis: a study in the biblical exegesis of Saint Jerome* (Kampen).
- Bruhat, Marie-Odile (1999), *Les Carmina Figurata de Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius : la métamorphose d'un genre et l'invention d'une poésie liturgique impériale sous Constantin*, Diss. (Paris).
- Cain, Andrew (2009), *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford).
- Calle-Gruber, Mireille and Elisabeth Zawisza ed. (2000), *Paratextes: Études aux bords du texte* (Paris).
- Camastra, Palma (1998), *Il Liber Regularum di Ticonio* (Roma).
- Cameron, Alan (1970a), *Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford).
- (1970b), "Pap. Ant. iii. 15 and the iambic preface in late Greek poetry," in *Classical Quarterly* 20, 119-29.
- (1976), "Paganism and Literature in Late Fourth Century Rome," in *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident* (Vandoeuvres), 1-30.
- (1980), "Poetae Novelli," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 84, 127-175.
- (2011), *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York).
- Castelnérac, Benoît (2007), "The Method of 'Eclecticism' in Plutarch and Seneca," in *Hermathena* 182, 135-163.
- Cavarzere, Alberto (1996), *Sul limitare: Il : « motto » e la poesia di Orazio* (Bologna).
- Cavallo, Guglielmo and Roger Chartier edd. (1999), *A History of Reading in the West: Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Boston).
- Charity, A. C. (1966), *Events and their Afterlife: The Dialectics of Christian Typology in the Bible and Dante* (Cambridge).
- Charlet, Jean-Louis (1988), "Aesthetic Trends in Late Latin Poetry (325-410)," in *Philologus* 132, 74-85.
- (2000), "Comment lire le « De raptu Proserpinae » de Claudien," in *Revue des études latines* 78, 180-194.
- (2003), "Signification de la préface à la Psychomachia de Prudence," in *Revue des études latines* 81, 232-51.

- Chin, Catherine M. (2008), *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World* (Philadelphia).
- Citroni, Mario (1995), *Poesia e lettori in Roma antica: forme della comunicazione letteraria* (Roma).
- Clark, Elizabeth A. and Diane F. Hatch (1981), *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross: The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Chico, CA).
- Comparetti, Domenico (1997), *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans. E. F. M. Benecke (Princeton).
- Conte, G. B. (1974), *Memoria dei poeti e sistema letterario: Catullo, Virgilio, Ovidio, Lucan* (Turin).
- (1984), *Il genere e i suoi confini: Cinque studi sulla poesia di Virgilio*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Turin).
- (1986), *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, ed. and trans. C. Segal (Ithaca).
- Conybeare, Catherine (2000), *Paulinus Noster. Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Oxford.
- (2007), “*Sanctum, lector, percense volumen: Snakes, Readers, and the Whole Text in Prudentius’s Hamartigenia*,” in William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran ed. *The Early Christian Book* (Washington, D.C.), 225-40.
- Cotogni, Laura (1936), “Sovrapposizione di visioni e di allegorie nella *Psychomachia* de Prudenziio,” in *Rendiconti della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 12, 441-61.
- Courcelle, Pierre (1957), “Les exegèses chrétiennes de la quatrième éclogue,” in *Revue des Études Anciennes* 59, 294-319.
- (1984), *Lecteurs païens et lecteurs chrétiens de l’Énéide* (Paris).
- Coulter, James A. (1976), *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden).
- Courtney, Edward (1993), *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford).
- Curtius, E. R. (1953), *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York).
- Davis, N. Gregson (1994), “Cupid at the Ivory Gates: Ausonius as a Reader of Vergil’s *Aeneid*,” in *Colby Quarterly*, Special Issue, *Studies in Roman Epic* 30.3, 162-170.
- Dawson, David (1992), *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley).
- (2002), *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley).

- Desbordes, Françoise (1979), *Argonautica: Trois études sur l'imitation dans la littérature antique* (Bruxelles).
- De Rentiis, Dina (1998), "Der Beitrag der Bienen. Überlegungen zum Bienengleichnis bei Seneca und Macrobius," in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 141, 30-44.
- Dionisotti, A. C. (1982), "From Ausonius' Schooldays? A Schoolbook and its Relatives," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 72, 83-125.
- Dorfbauer, Lukas J. (2010), "Die *praefationes* von Claudian und von Prudentius," in Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl and Dorothea Weber ed. *Text und Bild* (Wien), 195-222.
- Dykes, Anthony (2011), *Reading Sin in the World: The Hamartigenia of Prudentius and the Vocation of the Responsible Reader* (Cambridge).
- Eco, Umberto (1976), *Opera aperta: Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milano). Trans. Anna Cancogni (1989), *The Open Work* (Cambridge, MA).
- (1979), *Lector in fabula: la cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi* (Milano).
- Edwards, John Stephan (2005), "The *Carmina* of Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius and the Creative Process," in Carl Deroux ed. *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History. XII* (Bruxelles), 447-66.
- Elsner, Jas (2000), "From the culture of spolia to the cult of relics: the arch of Constantine and the genesis of late antique forms," in *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68, 149-184.
- (2004), "Late Antique Art: The Problem of the Concept and the Cumulative Aesthetic," in Simon Swain et al. ed. *Severan culture* (Cambridge), 270-309.
- Ernst, Ulrich (1991), *Carmen Figuratum: Geschichte des Figurengedichts von den antiken Ursprüngen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Köln).
- Farrell, Joseph (1991), *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History* (Oxford).
- (2005), "Intention and Intertext," in *Phoenix* 59, 98-111.
- Felgentreu, Fritz (1999), *Claudians Praefationes: Bedingungen, Beschreibungen und Wirkungen einer poetischen Kleinform* (Stuttgart).
- Filosini, Stefania (2008), *Paolino di Nola, Carmi 10 e 11: introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento* (Roma).
- Fitzgerald, William (2007), *Martial: The World of the Epigram* (Chicago).
- Fontaine, Jacques (1974), "Les symbolismes de la *cythara* dans la poésie de Paulin de Nole," in *Romanitas et Christianitas. Studia in I. H. Waszing oblata* (Leiden), 123-44.

- (1977), "Unité et diversité du mélange des genres et des tons chez quelques écrivains latins de la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Ausone, Ambroise, Ammien," in Manfred Fuhrmann ed. *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident* (Vandoeuvres), 425-82.
- Fontaine, Mike (Forthcoming), "Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Comedy: Menander's *Kolax* in three Roman Receptions (Naevius, Plautus, and Terence's *Eunuchus*)," in W. Haase ed. *Ancient Comedy and Reception: Studies in the classical tradition of comedy from Aristophanes to the twenty-first century* (New Brunswick and London).
- Formisano, Marco (2007), "Towards an Aesthetic Paradigm of Late Antiquity," in *Antiquité Tardive* 15, 277-84.
- (2012), "Late Antiquity, New Departures," in Ralph Hexter and David Townsend ed. *Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature* (Oxford).
- Foucault, Michel (1979), "What Is an Author?" in Josué V. Harari ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*, (Ithaca), 141-60.
- Fredouille, Jean-Claude, Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Philippe Hoffmann, Pierre Petitmengin ed. (1997), *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques: Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly 13-15 décembre 1994* (Paris).
- Fraenkel, Eduard (1957), *Horace* (Oxford).
- Fuhrer, Theresa (2008), "Augustine on the Power and Weakness of Words," in Francis Cairns ed. *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar* 13 (Cambridge), 365-83.
- Gamble, Harry Y. (1995), *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven).
- Genette, Gérard (1982), *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré* (Paris).
- (1987), *Seuils* (Paris).
- Gibson, Bruce (2007), *Statius. Silvae 5* (Oxford).
- Gineste, M. F. (2000), "La signification du motif du tissage dans le *De raptu Proserpinae*," in *Vita Latina* 157, 48-56.
- Gnilka, Christian (2000-2001), *Prudentiana* (München).
- Goldlust, Benjamin (2009), "Un manifeste sur l'organicité littéraire : la préface des *Saturnales* de Macrobe," in Perrine Galand-Hallyn and Vincent Zarini ed. *Manifestes littéraires dans la latinité tardive poétique et rhétorique: Actes du Colloque international de Paris, 23-24 mars 2007* (Paris), 279-296.

- González Iglesias, Juan Antonio (2000), "El intertexto absoluto: Optaciano Porfirio, entre Virgilio y Mallarmé," in V. Bécares et al. ed. *Intertextualidad en las Literaturas Griega y Latina* (Madrid), 337-366.
- Goold, G. P. (1970), "Servius and the Helen Episode," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 74, 101-68.
- Görler, Woldemar (1969), "Vergilzitate in Ausonius' Mosella," in *Hermes* 97.1, 94-114.
- Grafton, Anthony and Megan Williams (2006), *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA).
- Green, R. P. H. (1971), *The Poetry of Paulinus of Nola: A Study of his Latinity* (Bruxelles).
- (1977), "Ausonius' Use of the Classical Latin Poets: Some New Examples and Observations," in *Classical Quarterly* 27.2, 441-52.
- (1991), *The Works of Ausonius. Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford).
- (1995), "Proba's Cento: its date, purpose and reception," in *Classical Quarterly* 45.2, 551-563.
- (1997), "Proba's introduction to her cento," in *Classical Quarterly* 47, 548-59.
- (1999), *Ausonii Opera* (Oxford).
- Gruzelier, Claire (1989), *Claudian and the Art of Imitatio in the De raptu Proserpinae*, in *Prudentia* 21.2, 15-24.
- (1993), *Claudian. De Raptu Proserpinae. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford).
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich (2004), *Production of presence: what meaning cannot convey* (Stanford).
- Gurd, Sean (2007), "Cicero and Editorial Revision," in *Classical Antiquity* 26.1, 49-80.
- Gutzwiller, Kathryn (2005), *The New Posidippus: a Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford).
- Hadas, Moses (1952), *A History of Latin Literature* (New York).
- Hadot, Pierre (1979), "La division des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité," in *Museum Helveticum* 36.4, 201-23.
- Haines-Eitzen, Kim (2000), *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford).
- Hall, J. B. (1985) *Claudii Claudiani Carmina* (Leipzig).

- (1991), "Latin Poetry in Late Antiquity" (Review of Roberts [1989]), in *Classical Review* 41, 359-61.
- Hansen, Maria Fabricius (2003), *The eloquence of appropriation: prolegomena to an understanding of spolia in early Christian Rome* (Roma).
- Hardie, Philip (1993), *The epic successors of Virgil: a study in the dynamics of a tradition* (Cambridge).
- (2007), "Polyphony or Babel? Hosidius Geta's *Medea* and the poetics of the cento," in Simon Swain et al. ed. *Severan culture* (Cambridge), 168-76.
- Heinz, Carsten (2007), *Mehrfache Intertextualität bei Prudentius* (New York).
- Henderson, John (2004), *Morals and Villas in Seneca's Letters: Places to Dwell* (Cambridge).
- Hernández Lobato, Jesús (2007), "Ausonio ante el enigma del número tres: política y poética en el *Griphus*," in Gregorió Hinojo Andrés and José Carlos Fernández Corte ed. *Munus Quaesitum Meritis* (Salamanca), 455-62.
- Herzog, Reinhart (1966), *Die Allegorische Dichtkunst des Prudentius* (München).
- (1975), *Die Bibelepik der Lateinischen Spätantike. I* (München).
- Herzog, Reinhart and Peter Lebrecht Schmidt ed. (1989 - ), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike* (München).
- Hexter, Ralph (2006), "Literary History as a Provocation to Reception Studies," in Martindale and Thomas (2006), 23-31.
- Higgins, Dick (1987), *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (Albany, NY).
- Hinds, Stephen (1998), *Allusion and intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge).
- Hose, Martin (2007), "Konstantin und die Literatur – oder: Gibt es eine Konstantinische Literature," in *Gymnasium* 114.6, 535-558.
- Hosius, Carl (1926), *Die Moselgedichte des Decimus Magnus Ausonius und des Venantius Fortunatus*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Marburg).
- Irvine, Martin (1994), *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350-1100* (Cambridge).
- Jackson, Stephen (1997), "Argo: The First Ship?," in *Rheinisches museum für philologie* 140, 249-57.
- Janson, Tore (1964), *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm).

- Jauss, Hans Robert (1960), "Form und Auffassung der Allegorie in der Tradition der *Psychomachia*," in Jauss und Dieter Schaller ed. *Medium Aevum Vivum: Festschrift für Walther Bulst* (Heidelberg), 179-206.
- (1968), "Entstehung und Strukturwandel der allegorischen Dichtung," in Jauss ed. *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters. VI. La litterature didactique, allegorique et Satirique. Tome 1. Partie historique.* 146-244.
- (1982), *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis).
- Jay, Pierre (1985), *L'exégèse de Saint Jérôme d'après son «Commentaire sur Isaïe»* (Paris).
- (2004), "Jerome," in Kannengiesser (2004), 2.1094-1133.
- Jocelyn, H. D. (1964-5), "Ancient Scholarship and Virgil's Use of Republican Latin Poetry," in *Classical Quarterly* 14.2, 280-95; and 15.1, 126-44.
- Johannsen, Nina, (2003), "Statius, *Silvae* 4, praef. und die Lokalisierung der *Praefationes*, in *Rheinisches museum für philologie* 146.1, 110-112.
- (2006), *Dichter über ihre Gedichte: Die Prosvorreden in den »Epigrammaton libri« Martials und in den »Silvae« des Statius* (Göttingen).
- Johnson, William A. and Holt N. Parker (2009), *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford).
- Jones, J. W. Jr. (1961), "Allegorical Interpretation in Servius," in *The Classical Journal* 56.5, 217-26.
- Kannengiesser, Charles (2004), *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Leiden).
- Kaster, Robert (1980), "Macrobius and Servius: Verecundia and the Grammarian's Function," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 84, 220-62.
- (1988), *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley).
- ed. and trans. (2011), *Macrobius. Saturnalia. III* (Cambridge, MA).
- Keaney, J. J. and Robert Lamberton (1996), *[Plutarch] Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* (Atlanta).
- Kellner, Thomas (1997), *Die Göttergestalten in Claudians De raptu Proserpinae: Polarität und Koinzidenz als anthropozentrische Dialektik mythologisch formulierter Weltvergewisserung* (Stuttgart).
- Kelly, Douglas (1999), *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* (Leiden).

- Kelly, Gavin (2008), *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge).
- Kißel, Walter (1990), *Aules Persius Flaccus. Satiren* (Heidelberg).
- Kluge, E. (1922), "Beiträge zur Chronologie der Geschichte Constantins des Grossen, in *Historisches Jahrbuch de Görres Gesellschaft* 42, 89-102.
- Knorr, Ortwin (2006), "Horace's Ship Ode (*Odes* 1.14) in Context: A Metaphorical Love-Triangle," in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 136.1, 149-69.
- Konstan, David (2004), "'The birth of the reader': Plutarch as a literary critic," in *Scholia* 13, 3-27.
- (2006), "The Active Reader in Classical Antiquity," in *Argos* 30, 5-16.
- Laird, Andrew (2003), "Figures of Allegory from Homer to Latin Epic," in G. R. Boys-Stones ed. *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revision* (Oxford), 151-75.
- Lamberton, Robert (1986), *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley).
- (1992), "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer," in Lamberton and Keaney ed. (1992), 115-33.
- Lamberton, Robert and John J. Keaney ed. (1992), *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton).
- Lardet, Pierre (1993), *L'apologie de Jérôme contre Rufin. Un commentaire* (Leiden).
- Laurenti, Joseph L. and Alberto Porqueras-Mayo (1971) *Ensayo Bibliografico del Prologo en la Literatura* (Madrid).
- Lausberg, Marion (1991), "Seneca und Platon (Calcidius) in der Vorrede zu den *Saturnalien* des Macrobius," in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 134, 167-91.
- Lavarenne, Maurice (1948), *Prudence. III. Psychomachie, Contre Symmaque* (Paris). 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., corr. et augm. Jean-Louis Charlet (1992).
- Letrouit, Jean (2007), "Pour une approche du *Carmen* XXV de P. Optatianus Porfyrius en terme de dénombrement," in *Maia* 49.1, 73-6.
- Levitan, W. (1985), "Dancing at the End of a Rope," in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 115, 245-69.
- Lühken, Maria (2002), *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus: Zur Vergil- und Horazrezeption des Prudentius* (Göttingen).
- Luz, Christine (2010), *Technopaignia: Formspiele in der griechischen Dichtung* (Leiden).

- Malamud, Martha (2011), *The Origin of Sin: An English Translation of the Hamartigenia* (Ithaca).
- Marinone, Nino (1990), *Analecta Graecolatina* (Bologna).
- Markus, Robert (1996), *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool).
- Martin, Paul M. (2004), “La prosopopée de la patrie romaine dans la littérature latine,” in Brigitte Pérez-Jean and Patricia Eichek-Lojkine ed. *L’allégorie de l’antiquité à la renaissance* (Paris), 129-59.
- Martindale, Charles (1993), *Redeeming the text: Latin poetry and the hermeneutics of reception* (Cambridge).
- Martindale, Charles and Richard F. Thomas ed. (2006), *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (Oxford).
- Mastandrea, Paolo (2001), “L’epigramma dedicatorio del « Cento Vergilianus » di Proba” : analisi del testo, ipotesi di datazione e identificazione dell’autore,” in *Bollettino di studi latini* 31.2, 565-578.
- Mastrangelo, Marc (2008), *The Roman Self in Late Antiquity: Prudentius and the Poetics of the Soul* (Baltimore).
- McGill, Scott (2001), “Poeta arte Christianus: Pomponius’ Cento Versus ad Gratiam Domini as an Early Example of Christian Bucolic,” in *Traditio* 56, 15-26.
- (2005), *Virgil Recomposed: The Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity* (Oxford).
- (2007), “Virgil, Christianity, and the *Cento Probae*,” in J. H. D. Scourfield ed. *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity* (Swansea), 173-94.
- McKeown J. C. (1987--), *Ovid: Amores. Text, Prolegomena and Commentary* (Liverpool).
- Miller, Patricia Cox (1998), “‘Differential Networks’: Relics and Other Fragments in Late Antiquity,” in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, 113-38.
- (2009), *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia).
- Moreau, Madeleine, Isabelle Bochet and Goulven Madec (1997), *La doctrine Chrétienne. De doctrina christiana. BA 11.2* (Paris).
- Morgan, Llewelyn (1999), *Patterns of Redemption in Virgil’s Georgics* (Cambridge).
- Murgia, C. E. (2003), “The Dating of Servius Revisited,” in *Classical Philology* 98.1, 45-69.

- Nauroy, Gérard and Marie-Anne Vannier ed. (2008), *Saint Augustin et la Bible: Actes du colloque de l'université Paul Verlaine-Metz (7-8 avril 2005)* (Bern).
- Nazzaro, Antonio V. (1982), "La parafrasi salmica di Paolino di Nola," in *Atti del Convegno XXXI Cinquantenario della morte di S. Paolino di Nola (431-1981)* (Roma), 93-119.
- Netz, Reviel and William Noel (2007), *The Archimedes Codex: How a Medieval Prayer Book is Revealing the True Genius of Antiquity's Greatest Scientist* (Philadelphia).
- Newlands, Carole (1988), "*Naturae mirabor opus: Ausonius' Challenge to Statius in the Mosella,*" in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118, 403-19.
- (2009), "Statius' Prose Prefaces," in *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 61, 229-42.
- Nisbet, R. G. M. and Margaret Hubbard (1970), *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I* (Oxford).
- Nugent, S. Georgia (1985), *Allegory and Poetics: The Structure and Imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia* (Frankfurt).
- (1990), "Ausonius' 'Late-Antique' Poetics and 'Post-Modern' Literary Theory," in *Ramus* 19, 26-50.
- O'Daly, Gerard (2004), "*sunt etiam Musis sua ludicra: Vergil in Ausonius,*" in Rees (2004), 141-54.
- Oliensis, Ellen (1998), *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (Cambridge).
- Pagán, Victoria E. (2010), "The Power of the Epistolary Preface from Statius to Pliny," in *Classical Quarterly* 60.1, 194-201.
- Paolucci, Paola (2006), *Il centone virgiliano Hippodamia dell'Anthologia latina. Introduzione, edizione critica, traduzione, commento* (Hildesheim).
- Parravicini, Achille (1914), "Le prefazioni di Claudio Claudiano," in *Athenaeum* 2, 183-194.
- Pasquali, Giorgio, (1942), "Arte allusiva," in *Italia che scrive* 25, 185-187. Reprinted in (1951), *Stravaganze quarte e supreme* (Venezia), 11-20.
- Pavlovskis, Zoja (1967), "From Statius to Ennodius: A brief history of prose prefaces to poems," in *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo* 101.3, 535-67.
- Paxson, James J. (1994), *The poetics of personification* (Cambridge).
- Pellizzari, Andrea (2003), *Servio: Storia, cultura e istituzioni nell'opera di un grammatico tardoantico* (Firenze).

- Pelittari, Aaron (2011), "Symmachus' *Epistulae* 1.31 and Ausonius' Poetics of the Reader," in *Classical Philology* 106.2, 161-9.
- Pépin, Jean (1976), *Mythe et Allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris).
- Perelli, Raffaele (1992), *I proemi claudiane. Tra epica ed epidittica* (Cattania).
- Pernot, Laurent (1993), *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain. II.* (Paris).
- Pilch, Stanislaus (1929), "Horatii C. I 14 quomodo sit interpretandum," in *Eos* 32, 449-72.
- Pirovano, Luigi (2006), *Le Interpretationes Vergilianae di Tiberio Claudio Donato. Problemi di retorica* (Roma).
- Polara, Giovanni (1973), *Publilii Optatiani Porfyrii Carmina. II* (Torino).
- (1974-5), "Cinquant'anni di studi su Optaziano," in *Vichiana* 3.1-2, 110-24; 3.3, 282-301; and 4.1-2, 97-115.
- trans. (1976), *Carmi* (Napoli).
- (1981), "Un aspetto della fortuna di Virgilio: tra Virgilio, Ausonio e *l'Appendix Vergiliana*," in *Koinonia* 5, 48-62.
- (1987), "Optaziano Porfirio tra il calligramma antico e il carme figurato di età medioevale," in *Invigilata lucernis* 9, 163-73.
- (1989), "I centoni," in Guglielmo Cavallo et al. ed. *Lo spazio letterario di Roma antica*, vol. III, *La ricezione del testo* (Roma), 245-75.
- (1991), "Le parole nella pagina: grafica e contenuti nei carmi figurati latini," in *Vetera Christianorum* 28, 291-336. Reprinted in *Retorica ed Egesi Biblica: Il rilievo dei contenuti attraverso le forme. Atti del II Seminario di Atnicità Cristiane. Bari 27-28 novembre 1991* (Bari), 201-45.
- (2004), "Commenti di lettore e commenti d'autore," in Giancarlo Abbamonte et al. ed. *L'ultima parola* (Napoli), 273-87.
- Polara, Giovanni and Enrico Flores (1969), "Specimina di analisi applicate a strutture di 'Verspielerei' latina," in *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli* 44, 111-36.
- Pollmann, Karla F. L. (1993), "Etymologie, Allegorese und epische Struktur. Zu den Toren der Träume bei Homer und Vergil," in *Philologus* 137, 232-251.
- (1996), *DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA. Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der christlichen Hermeneutik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustinus* (Fribourg).

- (2004), "Sex and Salvation in the Vergilian Cento of the Fourth Century," in Rees (2004), 79-96.
- (2009), "Exegesis without End: Forms, Methods, and Functions of Biblical Commentaries," in Philip Rousseau ed. *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester).
- Porter, James I. (2006), *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome* (Princeton).
- Posani, M. R. (1962), "Reminiscenze di poeti latini nella « Mosella » di Ausonio," in *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 34, 31-69.
- Pozzi, Giovanni (1984), *Poesia per gioco: Prontuario di figure artificiose* (Bologna).
- (2002), *La parola dipinta* (Milano), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1981).
- Pucci, Joseph (1991), "Prudentius' Readings of Horace in the *Cathemerinon*," in *Latomus* 50, 677-690.
- (1998), *The Full-knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition* (New Haven).
- (2000), "Ausonius the Centaur: A Reading of the First Preface," in *New England Classical Journal* 27.3, 121-130.
- (2002), "A Reading of Ausonius, *Professores* 1," in G. Bakewell ed. *Gestures: Essays in Ancient History, Literature, and Philosophy for A. L. Boegehold* (New York), 87-101.
- (2009), "Ausonius' *Ephemeris* and the *Hermeneumata* Tradition," in *Classical Philology* 104, 50-68.
- Quilligan, Maureen (1979), *The language of allegory: defining the genre* (Ithaca).
- Raffaelli, Renato (1980), "Prologhi, perioche, didascalie nel Terenzio Bembino (e nel Plauto Ambrosiano)," in *Scrittura e civiltà* 4, 41-101.
- (2009), *Esercizi Plautini* (Urbino).
- Raspanti, Giacomo (2009), *The Significance of Jerome's Commentary on Galatians in his Exegetical Production*, in Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl edd. *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writing and Legacy* (Burlington), 163-71.
- Rebillard, Eric (2000), "A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic: Augustine and the Use of Patristic Citations," in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8.4, 559-78.
- Reckford, Kenneth J. (2009), *Recognizing Persius* (Princeton).
- Rees, Roger ed. (2004), *Romane memento: Vergil in the fourth century* (London).

- Rigolot, François (2000), "Le paratexte et l'émergence de la subjectivité littéraire," in Calle-Gruber and Zawisza (2000), 19-40.
- Roberts, Michael (1985), *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool).
- (1989), *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca).
- (2002), "Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Latin poets of late antiquity," in *Arethusa* (35.3), 403-15.
- (2007), "Bringing Up the Rear: Continuity and Change in the Latin Poetry of Late Antiquity," in Wim Verbaal, Yanick Maes, and Jan Papy ed. *Latinitas Perennis*, vol. I, *The continuity of Latin literature* (Leiden), 141-67.
- Rose, H. J. (1936), *A Handbook of Latin Literature: From the earliest times to the death of St. Augustine* (London).
- Rosenblum, Morris (1961), *Luxorius: A Latin Poet among the Vandals* (New York).
- Ruggiero, Andrea (1996), *Paolino di Nola. I Carmi. II* (Napoli).
- Rühl, Meike (2003), "Confer gemitus pariterque fleamus!": die Epikedien in den *Silven* des Statius," in *Hyperboreus* 9.1, 114-126.
- Russell, Donald Andrew (1979), "De Imitatione," in David West and Tony Woodman ed. *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge), 1-17.
- Salanitro, Giovanni (1997), "Osidio Geta e la poesia centonaria," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II.34.3* (Berlin), 2314-2360.
- Sánchez Salor, Eustaquio (1976), "Hacia una poética de Ausonio," in *Habis* 7, 159-86. Trans. Frank Leinen as "Hinzu einer poetik des Ausonius" and reprinted in Manfred Joachim Lossau ed. (1991), *Ausonius* (Darmstadt), 112-45.
- Scanzo, Roberto (2006), "Leggere l'immagine, vedere la poesia: *Carmina Figurata* dall'antichità a Optaziano e Rabano Mauro, al «New Dada» e oltre," in *Maia* 48.2, 249-94.
- Schmidt, Peter Lebrecht (1976), *Politik und Dichtung in der Panegyrik Claudians* (Konstanz).
- Schröder, Bianca-Jeanette (1999), *Titel und Text : zur Entwicklung lateinischer Gedichtüberschriften, mit Untersuchungen zu lateinischen Buchtiteln, Inhaltsverzeichnissen und anderen Gliederungsmitteln* (Berlin).
- Seo, J. Mira (2009), "Plagiarism and Poetic Identity in Martial," in *American Journal of Philology* 130.4, 567-93.
- Setaioli, Aldo (1966), "L'esegesi omerica nel commento di Macrobio al *Somnium Scipionis*," in *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 38.2, 154-198.

- Sineri, Valentina (2011), *Il Centone di Proba* (Acireale).
- Smith, Macklin (1976), *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (Princeton).
- Smith, R. A. (1997), *Poetic Allusion and Poetic Embrace in Ovid and Virgil* (Ann Arbor).
- Stock, Brian (1996), *Augustine the reader: meditation, self-knowledge, and the ethics of interpretation* (Cambridge, MA).
- Starr, Raymond J. (1987), "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *Classical Quarterly* 37.1, 213-23.
- (1992), "An Epic of Praise: Tiberius Claudius Donatus and Vergil's *Aeneid*," in *Classical Antiquity* 11, 159-74.
- (2001), "The Flexibility of Literary Meaning and the Role of the Reader in Roman Antiquity," in *Latomus* 60.2, 433-445.
- Struck, Peter T. (2004), *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* (Princeton).
- Thomas, Richard (1999), *Reading Vergil and His Texts* (Ann Arbor).
- (2001), *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge).
- Timpanaro, Sebastiano (2001), *Virgilianisti antichi e tradizione indiretta* (Firenze).
- Trout, Dennis E. (1999), *Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley).
- Uhl, Anne (1998), *Servius als Sprachlehrer: Zu Sprachrichtigkeit in der exegetischen Praxis des spätantiken Grammatikerunterrichts* (Göttingen).
- Usher, Mark David (1998), *Homeric stitchings: the Homeric centos of the Empress Eudocia* (Lanham).
- (2003) "The Reception of Homer as Oral Poetry," in *Oral Tradition* 18.1, 79-81.
- Vercruyssen, Jean-Marc (2004), *Tyconius: Le livre des règles*, SC 488 (Paris).
- Vessey, Mark (1993), "Jerome's Origen: The Making of a Christian Literary *Persona*," in *Studia Patristica* 28, 135-45.
- (1994), "Erasmus' Jerome: The Publishing of a Christian Author," in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 14, 62-99.
- (1996), "The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study," in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.4, 495-513.

- (2002), "From *Cursus* to *Ductus*: Figures of Writing in Western Late Antiquity (Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Bede)," in Patrick Cheney and Frederick A. de Armas ed. *European Literary Careers: The Author from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Toronto), 47-103.
- (2007), "*Quid facit cum Horatio Hieronymus?* Christian Latin Poetry and Scriptural Poetics," in Willemien Otten and Karla Pollmann ed. *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity: The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation* (Boston), 29-48.
- Viljamaa, T. (1968), *Studies in Greek Encomiastic Poetry of the Early Byzantine Period* (Helsinki).
- Vogt-Spira, Gregor (2009), "Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe : une poétique implicite de l'Antiquité tardive," in Perrine Galand-Hallyn and Vincent Zarini ed. *Manifestes littéraires dans la latinité tardive poétique et rhétorique: Actes du Colloque international de Paris, 23-24 mars 2007* (Paris), 263-277.
- Ware, Catherine (2004), "Claudian: The epic poet in the prefaces," in Monica Gale ed. *Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry: Genre, Tradition and Individuality* (Swansea), 181-201.
- (2012), *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition* (Cambridge).
- West, David and Tony Woodman ed. (1979), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge).
- Wheeler, Stephen M. (1995), "The Underworld Opening of Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*," in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 125, 113-134.
- Williams, Gordon (1978), *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley).
- Williams, Megan Hale (2006), *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago).
- Woodruff, Helen (1930), *The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius* (Cambridge).
- Young, Francis (1994), "Typology," in Stanley E. Porter et al. ed. *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (Leiden), 29-48.
- (1997), *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge).
- Zarini, Vincent (2000), "Les Préfaces des poèmes épico-panégyriques dans la latinité tardive (IV<sup>e</sup>-VI<sup>e</sup> siècles) : esquisse d'une synthèse," in L. Kohn-Pireaux ed. *Le texte préfaciel* (Nancy), 35-47.
- Zetzel, James E. G. (1981), *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (Salem, NH).

Ziolkowski, Jan M. and Michael C. J. Putnam ed. (2008), *The Virgilian tradition: the first fifteen hundred years* (New Haven).