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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

STUDIES IN FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURY LATIN LITERATURE

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO AUSONIUS

by Geoffrey John Fisher

A thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy

Southampton

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

CLASSICS

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The main theme of this work is a discussion of the literary worth of the works of a number of authors of the Later Roman Empire. The works considered are those of Ausonius, Rutilius Namatianus, the anonymous *Querolus* and, to a lesser extent, Sidonius Apollinaris. The authors will be discussed in turn, beginning with Ausonius, the first chronologically. His work will be examined in the light of his career and of the prevailing conditions in Gaul during his lifetime. Particular attention will be paid to the use made of nature in his works, especially the *Mosella*. The poem by Rutilius Namatianus known as the *De reditu suo* will be examined both from an historical and from a literary viewpoint. The *Querolus* will be considered for its effectiveness as a piece of drama, particular attention being paid to the various kinds of humour to be found in the piece and the way in which it could have been staged. A dating of the play to the mid-fifth century will be suggested. The life and work of Sidonius Apollinaris will be examined in order to provide a view of the change in the political situation in the fifth century and therefore in the environment for literary production. It will be suggested that the writers in Gaul from the fourth century onwards were subject to influences not only from Roman literature but also from native traditions, the result of the Celtic Renaissance of the third century. It will be concluded, however, that despite these indisputable influences and also their undoubted local patriotism, all the writers were basically Roman in outlook, still determined to preserve civilisation on a Roman basis rather than a local one.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Despite the resurgence of interest in the history of the Later Roman Empire in the West, the secular Latin literature of the period has remained comparatively neglected. Ausonius, for example, with the partial exception of the *Mosella*, has been largely ignored, despite his position as the only major Latin poet of his generation. Furthermore, such attention as has been paid to the literature of the period has been historical rather than literary.

I therefore intend to consider the works of various authors of this period, Ausonius, Rutilius Namatianus, Sidonius Apollinaris and the anonymous writer of the *Querolus* from a literary viewpoint, to see what these authors were trying to achieve with their work, and what effect they were trying to bring about among their audience. One cannot of course forget the political and historical aspects of their work to the extent that they bear upon the literary, for all three named writers were at some time involved in politics and government in a way which their predecessors of the Augustan age never were.

On one level literature was of political importance because of its symbolic significance as an aspect of Roman, as opposed to barbarian, culture. On another, the use of the dedication of a piece of work as a *quid pro quo* for some favour must have been commonplace. In a similar fashion the receipt of a letter from Symmachus or Sidonius Apollinaris, or the publication of a letter which one had received and the immortality thus conferred upon one's name, was a *cachet* of personal success. It is within this framework of publication that we must examine the literary achievements of these writers.

The fourth and early fifth century were comparatively peaceful, at least in relation to the invasions which had all but wrecked the Western Empire in the second half of the third century and those which finally brought it down in the fifth. This return to peace brought with it a return to more relaxed and civilised living, partly manifested in the form of education and literature.

Gaul had long been highly regarded for its schools, but Autun, the centre of greatest excellence before the invasions, faded from prominence during the fourth century, perhaps because of its relative proximity to the threatened frontier. As a result, it was the south-western corner of France which took over the palm for education and the town of Bordeaux in particular.

As a result of Bordeaux's rise to pre-eminence in this area, its teachers were soon known throughout at least the western part of the Roman world. In the middle of the fourth century men such as Minervius and Nazarius held sway, being succeeded by Ausonius, one of their pupils and the first of the authors dealt with in this survey. In some respects Ausonius is the father of Gaulish literature; Sidonius clearly looks back to him as a poet of great importance (*Ep.* IV, 14, 2), while Rutilius, although not naming him as a model, is obviously sprung from similar literary roots, an education in south-western Gaul.

The importance of the literary output from southern Gaul during this period must be partly attributable to the high quality of education enjoyed there, but this localization of literary talent, the evidence for any local bias in their work and the reasons for it are also worthy of examination.

As stated above, Ausonius is the earliest of the writers to be discussed, so it is with him that we shall start our investigation of the literature of the period.

Ausonius - His Life and Works

"On peut mépriser le poète: nous demandons
pour l'homme respect et sympathie."

Thus wrote Camille Jullian,¹ generally one of Ausonius' more sympathetic critics. Of course, some of Ausonius' poetry, especially the *Mosella*, has been praised by a majority of critics, but, more often than not, his poetry, in terms of modern taste, does not rise above the indifferent, when it is not downright bad. If this is the case, the question must arise whether his work is worth studying, but the answer must be an emphatic affirmative, for, in the best of his works, which is normally where the influence of the schools of rhetoric is at its most slender, he achieves a freshness and sympathy with his subject which is rarely found in Latin literature. Ausonius is also important for the information which he gives us about life in Gaul in the fourth century, and which provides the social historian with one of his primary sources.

Much of Ausonius' life can be traced in references in his own writings; in fact, without the personal emphasis which pervades much of his work, we should know hardly anything of him from other sources. Ausonius was born in about 310 at Bordeaux² and lived until about 394, his lifetime spanning most of the last period of peace and prosperity in Roman Gaul. He provides his reader with an introduction to his life and family in the first poem of the *Praefatiunculae*, and returns to the topic several times elsewhere.³

His father was a doctor who seems to have been well regarded in his profession,⁴ but whose own ancestry is far from clear, and will be discussed later. By far the major part of the information given by Ausonius pertains to his mother's side of the family, where the detail given takes us back into the middle of the previous century, when the family was prominent among the Aedui during the days of the Gallic Empire. Ausonius' maternal grandfather, Caecilius Argicius Arborius, was exiled with his own father after the Tetrici had seized power, and settled at Dax, where he married Aemilia Corinthia Maura, of an equally poor but noble family.⁵ They are known to have had four children, one of whom, Aemilia Aeonina, was to marry Julius Ausonius and become our poet's mother.

The impression gained throughout Ausonius' comments on this side of the family is one of a respectable line of middle or upper class Gauls, who had achieved real power in the third century, lost out during the troubled period of the Gallic Empire, only to rise again by hard work⁶ to an honourable position after the re-establishment of peace. This position will have been

strengthened by the selection of Aemilia's brother, Aemilius Magnus Arborius, as tutor to a prince, probably Constantine II or Constantius II.⁷

In stark contrast to this picture of worthy generations is the paucity of detail which Ausonius gives his reader about his father's side of the family, that which one might have expected him, under normal circumstances, to regard as the more important. All he gives us, however, is a portrait of his father and other representatives of the same generation, Ausonius' uncles and aunts (although even these paternal aunts and uncles gain comparatively little recognition in the *Parentalia*), and the dubiously helpful piece of information that the "herediolum" which his father left to him, had been cultivated by the generations back to Ausonius' great-grandfather.⁸ Now this "small estate" had an area in fact of over one thousand iugera,⁹ by no means a holding to be ashamed of. Given the apparent reluctance to provide any detail about his father's forebears, it does not take much deductive ability to arrive at the hypothesis that the land had come to Ausonius' father as part of his wife's dowry and had previously been in the hands of Ausonius' maternal grandfather and great-grandfather,¹⁰ Agricinus and his father (or perhaps father-in-law), who were the first of their family to come to the Bordeaux area, as described above.

The question of Ausonius' paternal ancestry, and its secrets, if any, is therefore a vexed one. The most widely held view is that Julius Ausonius was of humble, though free, birth and had risen to at least local prominence through his skills in healing. More recently, a second theory has been put forward, namely that Julius Ausonius was of Greek extraction, possibly of servile parents.¹¹ Apart from his knowledge of medicine, which was traditionally, although by this date by no means exclusively, a Greek art, the key text is one in which Ausonius describes, through his father's mouth, the latter's lack of skill in Latin:

"sermone impromptus Latio, verum Attica lingua
suffecit culti vocibus eloquii."

(*Dom.* IV, 9-10)

Hopkins' interpretation of these lines, that Julius Ausonius' native language was Greek, is, in my opinion, open to two major objections. First, it does not seem likely that the noble Agricinus would have been willing to marry his daughter to a young doctor of Greek ancestry, even presuming that he and she shared any common language. Secondly, if his father were a native speaker of Greek, how is one to explain Ausonius' own difficulties in grasping the most elementary details of the language when at school?¹²

The most likely explanation of Julius Ausonius' words is that he was not a good speaker of Latin, in oratorical terms, but was able to impress by using such Greek as he had acquired through his medical work. By the

fourth century there were, after all, very few men who were fluent in the language, and even a modest competence would probably have been sufficient to impress. Julius Ausonius may well therefore have spoken Iberian or Celtic,¹³ or a mixture of the latter and Latin, a kind of forerunner of Gallo-Roman, when among his family, for there is no doubt that Celtic did survive at least until this time in certain parts of Gaul, and perhaps until the middle of the fifth century in Auvergne.¹⁴

It is true that the name Ausonius has been considered as being of Greek origin,¹⁵ but it has also been claimed as Celtic and appears on several occasions in Gaul.¹⁶ By the fourth century, the ultimate origins of the name were probably no longer important in respect of any connotation of nationality in any case, and so the remaining evidence cited above should perhaps take precedence.

We can therefore presume that Ausonius was born into a respectable, if not rich, family, whose possessions entitled them to membership of the Curia of Bazas¹⁷ (that of Bordeaux may well have come later). The whole family seems to have been closely knit, and Ausonius apparently spent much time with various aunts (maternal, of course), such as Aemilia Dryadia and Aemilia Hilaria, both of whom he describes as having been as mothers to him,¹⁸ and his grandmother, who, he says, had a kind heart hidden beneath a stern exterior. The poem to his grandmother does present us with another puzzle, for Ausonius hints at some trouble at home which compelled him to be given into his grandmother's care:

"haec me praereptum cunis et ab ubere matris
blanda sub austeris inbuit inperiis."

(Par. V, 9-10)

Why Ausonius should have been taken from home so early in life can only be a matter of conjecture. It was not that his mother died early, for she is known to have enjoyed forty-five years of married life with her husband.¹⁹ The mystery must be allowed to remain.

As soon as he was of a sufficient age, Ausonius seems to have begun his education, both at the school of Bordeaux, and also under his uncle, Magnus Arborius, to whose memory he is particularly attached:

"Culta mihi est pietas patre primum et matre vocatis;
dici set refugit tertius Arborius,
quem primum memorare nefas mihi patre secundo,
rursum non primum ponere paene nefas."

(Par. III, 1-4)

Although one cannot be certain that Ausonius' progress into teaching as a profession was the result of the enthusiasm for literature sparked by his uncle, it would be foolish to discount the possibility. Furthermore, as

new teachers often seem to have been drawn from the families of others,²⁰ the fact that his uncle had achieved such fame may have stood Ausonius in good stead when the time came for him to obtain a post as grammarian. Considering that perhaps a half-century passed between Arborius' death and the composition of the *Parentalia*, there is a remarkable depth of fellow-feeling held by Ausonius for his relative, mentor and colleague:

"Ergo vale Elysiam sortitus, avuncule, sedem:
haec tibi de Musis carmina libo tuis."

(*Par.* III, 23-24)

It is reasonable to assume that Ausonius will have married at about the time of his change of status from pupil to master, and his wife Attusia Lucana Sabina brought him happiness for an all too brief period until her death in her twenty-eighth year,²¹ a happiness expressed in one of Ausonius' least artificial works, the hopes contained in which were to be dashed:

"Uxor, vivamus quod viximus, et teneamus
nomina, quae primo sumpsimus in thalamo:
nec ferat ulla dies, ut commutemur in aevo;
quin tibi sim iuvenis tuque puella mihi.
Nestore sim quamvis provectior aemulaque annis
vincas Cumanam tu quoque Deiphoben;
nos ignoremus, quid sit matura senectus.
scire aevi meritum, non numerare decet."

(*Epig.* XL)

It can be regarded as almost certain that, as part of her marriage dowry, she brought him the estate of Lucaniacus,²² which became one of his favourite residences.

Despite the forecasts of glory made by Ausonius' grandfather in a horoscope,²³ the prospects of achieving any great heights of fame must have seemed remote, as he advanced through middle age. Ausonius had spent over thirty years teaching at Bordeaux, first as a grammarian, then as a rhetorician, before he received the summons to the court, as tutor to Gratian, son and then successor of Valentinian. Ausonius' elevation

occurred in the mid 360s, prior to the Alemannic campaigns of 368-69, from which he obtained the young girl, Bissula, and where he probably met Symmachus for the first time, if the military vocabulary used by Ausonius is any guide:

"in comitatu degimus ambo aevo dispari, ubi tu veteris
militiae praemia tiro meruisti, ego tirocinium iam veteranus
exercui."

(*Ep.* II)

Initially under Valentinian, Ausonius received some minor posts on the *cursus honorum*, but after Valentinian's death, his promotions became

rapid, as did those of his relations. This aspect of his career will be considered in more detail at a later point.

After Gratian's murder, and Maximus' usurpation of the throne, Ausonius seems to have settled for retirement to his many properties in and around Bordeaux,²⁴ the existence of which seems to have escaped Isbell, who thinks in terms of Ausonius having returned to the herediolum.²⁵ Although Ausonius does refer to this as the one alternative to the town,²⁶ we can be sure that this is with his usual (literary) modesty. He remained however in sufficiently high regard to receive a letter from Theodosius, asking for a copy of his works, which is couched in terms of the highest flattery:

"Amor meus qui in te est et admiratio ingenii atque eruditionis tuae, quae multo maxima sunt, fecit, parens iucundissime, ut morem principibus aliis solitum sequestrarem familiaremque sermonem autographum ad te transmitterem, postulans pro iure non equidem regio, sed illius privatae inter nos caritatis, ne fraudari me scriptorum tuorum lectione patiaris."

(*Praef.* III)

A letter written in the emperor's own hand seems designed to please the old poet, who apparently remained active in literary composition almost until the time of his death, which is presumed to have occurred in about 394, none of his work being datable later than this. His fame did not die with him, but lasted as long as the Empire survived in the West. Sidonius Apollinaris, the last of the poets of Roman Gaul, obviously held his predecessor in high esteem, for he equates Ausonius' contribution to poetry with that of Tacitus to prose.²⁷

His star was never so high again, and during the Dark Ages he was largely neglected. Only the *Mosella* had any influence, both on Venantius Fortunatus, who wrote poems about this same river, and on the ninth century monk Ermenricus of Ellwangen, who was obviously aware of how little known Ausonius' work was, for he felt able to plagiarise whole lines of the poem.²⁸ This neglect continued throughout the Middle Ages, which would, one might think, have appreciated the mnemonic and didactic nature of some of Ausonius' verse. In modern times, the *Mosella* has again been the favourite, "the lone poetic beacon of the decadent centuries", as one critic put it.²⁹ It is a sad fact, however, that much of Ausonius' poetry does not inspire the reader, and sadder still that this is quite likely to be the material which Ausonius would have felt to have been among his best, where his rhetoric skills showed to the best advantage.³⁰

Ausonius' work can be divided into various sections, the public and the private, the schoolmasterly and the personal, the rhetorical and the natural, categories which do, of course, overlap, but which may be used for the sake

of convenient illustration. In terms of the public work, there are examples such as the *Gratiarum Actio ad Gratianum Imperatorem pro Consulatu*, a panegyric on Gratian, thanking him for granting Ausonius the consulship for 379, and which was surely intended for public consumption, being devoted as much to Gratian's virtues as to the consulship in question. There is also a collection of epigrams,³¹ which are either written about, or at the instigation of, Gratian and the first two Valentinians. The two which deal with the source of the Danube³² were obviously written as a result of Valentinian's transrhenane campaigns, and are perhaps celebrations of success, published for their propaganda value:

"Illyricis regnator aquis, tibi, Nile, secundus
Danuvius laetum profero fonte caput.
Salvere Augustos iubeo, natumque patremque
armiferis alvi quos ego Pannoniis.
Nuntius Euxino iam nunc volo currere ponto,
ut sciat hoc superum cura secunda Valens,
caede, fuga, flammis stratos periisse Suebos
nec Rhenum Gallis limitis esse loco."

(*Epig.* XXVIII, 1-8)

The possibility that the *Mosella* was also composed at the imperial behest, as a further piece of propaganda, has also been suggested,³³ but this is by no means generally agreed, and will be discussed in more detail at a later point.

Most of the remainder of Ausonius' work can be described as private, rather than public, although this is not to say that it was not written with publication in mind. The exchange of letters with Symmachus³⁴ bears all the signs of a polite and open correspondence between two literary gentlemen, written as much for the benefit of admirers of their literary style as for any personal reasons. The remaining letters in the collection are, however, more interesting to the modern reader, because they are genuine expressions of Ausonius' feelings, albeit couched in occasionally obscure and consciously learned language, towards his correspondents, personal friends who would otherwise be unknown to us. As such they have an historical as well as a literary interest.

Much of Ausonius' work reflects his professional interests. Apart from the portraits of his fellow-schoolmasters at Bordeaux, it is likely that the *Epitaphia heroum qui bello Troico interfuerunt*³⁵ and the majority of the *Eclogae*, such as those poems dealing with the names of the days of the week and the Latin equivalent of the rhyme: "Thirty days hath September",³⁶ were also composed either in memory of his schoolteaching days, or even as mnemonics for his pupils. The *Ludus Septem Sapientium* also smacks of the schoolroom, with its parade of the Seven Sages, each introducing his own maxim. This

piece does however display a certain dramatic flair, and could thus have been performed, again perhaps as an aide-mémoire for Ausonius' students, or possibly as an after-dinner entertainment among literati, rather in the manner of the *Querolus*. That its appeal would be chiefly to the literary professional, is reinforced by the dedication to Drepanius, the panegyrist of Theodosius, and probably a colleague of Ausonius from Bordeaux.

To speak of personal poetry with reference to someone whose whole life is apparently geared to professional literature, may seem at first glance to be paradoxical, but a series of poems such as the *Parentalia*, while being geared to the immortalizing of Ausonius' family for posterity (presenting it rather as an aristocrat of an earlier age might have paraded the *imagines* of his ancestors³⁷), is also a record of personal feelings, in which emotion sometimes overcomes mechanical composition. The *Ephemeris* is personal too, in this sense, although again geared for public consumption, as is the *Domestica*.

Rhetoric and the tricks of the schools can of course be found throughout Ausonius' work, and the displays of learning in which he indulges sometimes "rendent illisibles des poèmes entières et gâtent dans les autres ce qu'il y a d'agréable élégance et de fraîche spontanéité".³⁸ The *Mosella* represents an interesting contrast, one might almost say clash, between the rhetorical and the natural. On the one hand are numerous reminiscences of Statius and Vergil, and overlong developments of certain themes,³⁹ while on the other is some of the finest descriptive and most sensitive writing about nature in Latin poetry.

Before passing on to a detailed study of Ausonius' work, something must be said about his position with regard to Christianity, both in his life, and in the way in which it influenced his work. The difficulty has been well summed up by Blanchet:⁴⁰ "Ausone est-il chrétien? On en a longuement discuté, et qu'on ait pu seulement poser la question serait déjà un signe; que la solution reste encore incertaine montre assez combien l'oeuvre d'Ausone reste dans son ensemble étrangère à l'esprit du christianisme." The majority of critics do however accept that Ausonius held, rather than merely professed, Christian beliefs, although Martino did make a brave attempt to demonstrate his paganism almost in spite of the evidence. He sums up his view of the *Versus Paschales*⁴¹ in this way: "(Ausone) se contente de développer poétiquement ses connaissances de fraîche date et bien superficielles; il a voulu se mettre au ton de la cour, et, comme presque tous les nouveaux venus, il le fait vite et maladroitement."⁴² The prayer itself devlops into gross flattery, and the holy trinity is compared to the three reigning emperors on earth:

"trina fides auctore uno, spes certa salutis, ...

... Tale et terrenis specimen spectatur in oris

Augustus genitor, geminum sator Augustorum,
 qui fratrem natumque pio complexus utrumque
 numine partitur regnum neque dividit unum."

(Dom. II, 22, 24-28)

The close association of emperors and gods as a literary device is at least as old as Ovid, who, in Book One of the *Metamorphoses*, speaks of Jupiter as living on a heavenly Palatine and compares Jupiter's influence and power over other gods with that of Augustus over his subjects.⁴³

Nor does Martino countenance the possibility of other members of Ausonius' family, with the exception of his sister,⁴⁴ having adopted the new religion. He finds the idea of a conversion difficult to accept, but, to argue from the viewpoint that Ausonius' family background was against such a switch in beliefs, would, if accurate, mean that very few people could ever have changed from paganism to Christianity. Despite this, Martino does not deny the Christian element in Ausonius' work: "Assurément il a connu le christianisme, il en a parlé avec bienveillance, de manière même à faire supposer que c'était la croyance qu'il professait".⁴⁵

Martino's interpretation seems to me to be too superficial, for it is clear from the work done by Langlois⁴⁶ that biblical references and echoes in this poem are more frequent than hitherto suspected, even though some of the parallels which he draws may seem a little forced, or perhaps coincidental. It could be argued that even this is not conclusive, as even a limited reading of scripture might have impressed phrases in Ausonius' memory.⁴⁷ However Ausonius does take a full part in Easter celebrations in Bordeaux,⁴⁸ and his mention of the fact in letters to his fellow-teacher and worshipper of the Muses, Axius Paulus, is apparently natural in the context of describing Ausonius' movements, and surely not designed to impress.

In my opinion, however, critics have not fully grasped the position of Christianity in fourth century Gaul. It is easy to look back from a distance and define, for example, orthodoxy and heresy, but, for those who lived through the bitter divisions caused by the controversy between Arian and Catholic, the distinction might not be so easily drawn. Nor should one assume that the vast majority of Christians, let alone the still-pagan majority of the population of the Western Empire, would have been particularly concerned by a wrangle among bishops. Compromise and syncretism had ruled Roman religion for as long as anyone remembered, and one suspects that many a pagan senator might have been willing to accept Christianity as a religion of the Empire, had the Christians themselves not taken up, as he saw it, such an extreme position. Symmachus might well have realised that his plan for tolerance on the grounds that "uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum",⁴⁹ was doomed to failure, but many might have wished it to be possible.

Ausonius himself indulges in similar syncretism, as regards Dionysus, including the peculiar remark that he and his estate regard Dionysus as the universal god:

"Ogygiae me Bacchum vocant,
 Osirin Aegypti putant,
 Mysi Phanacen nominant,
 Dionyson Indi existimant,
 Romana sacra Liberum,
 Arabica gens Adoneum,
 Lucaniacus Pantheum."

(*Eph.* XLVIII)⁵⁰

Moreover it is true that when Ausonius writes a Christian prayer, it is as if he is parading the purity of his beliefs:

"Da, genitor, veniam cruciataque pectora purga:
 Si te non pecudum fibris, non sanguine fuso
 quaero nec arcanis numen coniecto sub extis."

(*Eph.* III, 49-51)

"nec tus cremandum postulo
 nec liba crusti mellei
 foculumque vivi caespitis
 vanis relinquo altaribus."

(*Eph.* II, 11-14)

It is not necessarily the case, however, that this apparent difficulty in expressing himself in Christian terms is a sign of any insincerity on his part. Christian literature was still in its infancy and Ausonius' strong point was never true innovation. In fact, with his background of teaching, and his thorough knowledge of, and deep affection for, the writers of a past and glorious age, it would be more surprising if, in the composition of his verse, he could divorce the concept of religion from the old pagan ideas. An Augustine, bent on spiritual self-discovery might; the elderly schoolmaster, only too satisfied with the state of his life, could not.

It has been said jokingly⁵¹ that Vergil was the only god whom Ausonius worshipped. This is, of course, strictly untrue, but the sheer quantity of Vergilian quotation and allusion in his work might lead one to think otherwise. The truth of the matter is that Ausonius probably did not have any strong religious convictions; certainly they did not form an important part of his life. He would have worshipped with the Court, and would have said that he believed in the Christian god, but I suspect that, deep within him, conviction would have been lacking, in respect of both Christian and pagan religions. To be sure, he mentions the resurrection that is to come to all, but only a few pages beforehand, he has cast doubt upon life after death,⁵²

which leads one to suppose that he may well not have known in his own mind what to believe.

It can be seen, therefore, that literature and the teaching of it were of paramount importance in Ausonius' life. Furthermore, since it was as a schoolmaster that Ausonius rose to fame, and the effect of his years spent in teaching can be seen throughout his work, it is this aspect of his life which we must examine first in detail.

Notes

1. Revue Historique XLVII (1891) p. 266.
2. *Praef.* I, 7. All references will be to Evelyn White's text in the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise stated.
3. e.g. *Parentalia*; *De Herediolo* (= *Domestica* I).
4. Marcellus Empiricus: *De medicamentis Praef.*, if this is not just a reflection of the glory acquired late in life through his son.
5. *Prof.* XVI, 8; *Par.* IV, 8-14.
6. *Par.* IV, 15.
7. *Prof.* XVI, 15, and Evelyn White's note, opting for Constantine II. cf Etienne, *Bordeaux Antique* p. 340-41, expressing a preference for Constantius II. Booth's suggestion of Constans (*Phoenix* 1978, p.245) seems to me to be too dependent upon textual emendation to remove the chronological difficulties which it creates.
8. *Dom.* I, 2.
9. *Dom.* I, 21-23.
10. Hopkins, *Classical Quarterly* N.S. XI (1961) p. 241.
11. Hopkins, *op.cit.* p. 241.
12. *Prof.* VIII, 12-16.
13. Whatmough: *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul*, p. 269.
14. Sidonius Apollinaris *Ep.* III, 3; Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* I, 27.
15. Holder: *Alte-Keltischer Sprachschatz* I col. 1299.
16. Jullian, *op.cit.* p. 245; Whatmough, *op.cit.* pp. 258, 410, 1111.
17. *Dom.* IV, 4-5.
18. *Par.* XXV, 9-10; *Par.* VI, 1-2.
19. *Dom.* IV, 37-38.
20. cf. *Prof.* IV, the family of Attius Patera.
21. *Par.* IX, 25-26.
22. Lucaniacus = Lucani + *acus, estate of Lucanus.
23. *Par.* IV, 19ff.
24. Etienne, *op.cit.* p. 282-83.
25. Isbell, in J.W. Binns (ed.) *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, p. 35. cf. Chadwick: *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul*, p.30.

26. *Dom.* I, 29ff.
27. *Sid. Ap. Ep.* IV, 14, 2.
28. Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry*, I, p. 239; Manitius: *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, p. 495.
29. *Wild. Classical Journal*, 46 (1951) p. 381.
30. Pichon: *Les derniers écrivains profanes*, p. 152.
31. *Epigg.* XXV-XXXI.
32. *Epigg.* XXVIII, XXXI.
33. Ternes, *Revue des Etudes Latines* 48 (1970) p. 376-97.
34. These letters are best consulted in the edition of Symmachus' works by Callu; *Epp.* I, 13-43.
35. Perhaps excluding the miscellaneous epitaphs (XXVII-XXXV) added to the end of this collection.
36. *Ecll.* VII and XII.
37. Martino: *Ausone et les commencements du christianisme en Gaule*, p.10.
38. Pichon, *op.cit.* p. 159.
39. e.g. the excursus on vines, *Mos.* 157 ff.
40. Quoted in Langlois, *Revue de Philologie* XLIII (1969) pp. 39-40.
41. *Dom.* II.
42. Martino: *Ausone et les commencements du christianisme en Gaule*, p. 40.
43. *Ovid. Met.* I, 176; 199 ff. I am grateful to Mrs. Jane Keen for these references.
44. Martino: *op.cit.* pp. 82-83.
45. Martino, *op.cit.* p. 33.
46. Langlois, *op.cit.* p. 39-58.
47. For the prodigies of memory perpetrated by some schoolmasters, see *Prof.* I, 25 ff.
48. *Epp.* IV, 9; VI, 17.
49. Symmachus: *Rel.* III, 10.
50. It is worthy of note here that Macrobius, in the *Saturnalia* (I, 18, 18 ff), the dramatic date of which is 383/84, speaks of the various aspects of the Sun-god, including Liber and Iow, the Hebrew Yahweh, who would probably be known to Christians as well as to Jews as the one god. We are thus faced with the intriguing possibility of an identification of the Christian God with Bacchus! But perhaps one should just view Ausonius' poem as a manifestation of syncretistic monotheism.

51. J.R. Hussey: *Ausonius and his Concept of the Worthwhile Life*, p. 43. Ausonius does actually describe Vergil as a "divinus vates", *Eph.* VIII, 22.
52. *Prof.* XXVI, 11-14; I, 38 ff.

Chapter 3

Ausonius the Teacher - the Influence of the
Schools in his Work

For anyone who makes even the briefest perusal of Ausonius' work, his connections with the Schools of Bordeaux should be obvious. Apart from the most blatant examples, such as the *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* and the letter written to his grandson, in which he describes both the schoolroom and the books studied in class,¹ the influence of the years which Ausonius spent teaching is also manifest in a number of other works, mnemonic or technical in nature, such as the *Griphus*, the *Technopaegnon* or a number of *Eclogues*.

Ausonius is therefore one of the major sources for the structure of education during the fourth century, and his contribution to our knowledge of the social history of this period will be discussed later. Here I propose only to deal with those aspects of his work which reflect his professional interests, and the way in which the time spent studying grammar and rhetoric influences his entire work.

As far as can be ascertained, Ausonius pursued an unbroken career at Bordeaux, graduating from scholar to teacher of grammar without a break.² He makes no mention of having served as a subdoctor or proscholus, like the talented but ill-fated Victorius,³ to whom the modern postgraduate student's heart must go out as a long-departed colleague, and there seems to be no reason why he should have had to do so as several of his fellow-teachers apparently began their academic careers in the even more exalted position of rhetor. It is not known how the academic structure of the Bordeaux Schools was arranged, and so we can have no real idea when or how Ausonius advanced from the post of grammarian to the more illustrious, and certainly better paid, one of rhetor.

In as much as the *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* provides the most obvious link between Ausonius and the schools of grammar and rhetoric, we may begin our examination of the scholastic aspects of his work with this collection, viewing them rather for their style and presentation than for the information which they impart to us. Considering the poems as a group, one fact immediately strikes the eye: the metrical versatility which Ausonius shows, not to say parades. Perhaps this marks an attempt by Ausonius to match the diversity of the people who form his subject to his way of treating it.⁴

The collection *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* has been studied, particularly with reference to its overall structure and broad content, by

Szelest in two articles.⁵ The major motif is that of praising the dead,⁶ and the tone of the poems is very much one of commemoration rather than of mourning or consolation. Unfortunately, in her attempts to reinforce her case,⁷ Szelest goes rather too far, and her suggestion that Ausonius is obeying a "lex commemorandi" rather than one of mourning, does violence to the original context of the phrase in the poem:

"Hactenus observata mihi lex commemorandi
cives, sive domi seu docere foris."

(Prof. XX, 1-2)

It should be clear that Ausonius is not talking about a rule of commemorating the dead, but rather that he had a self-imposed rule of commemorating his fellow-countrymen (in which he includes some who were not native to Bordeaux, but spent their teaching lives there, such as Citarius⁸), to which he is about to make an exception, in order to include Staphylius in the collection.

The concept of a shared native-country was an important one for Ausonius,⁹ and something which he stresses, together with the fellow-feeling which he had for his teaching colleagues:

"Vos etiam, quos nulla mihi cognatio iunxit,
set fama et carae relligio patriae,
et studium in libris et sedula cura docendi,
commemorabo viros morte obita celebres."

(Prof. Praef. 1-4)

In fact, Staphylius' inclusion, it appears, is due not so much to his competence as a teacher as to his personal relationship with Ausonius:

"tu mihi, quod genitor, quod avunculus, unus utrumque
alter ut Ausonius, alter ut Arborius."

(Prof. XX, 5-6)

If Ausonius was to commemorate this man, to whom he was clearly attached, and as he obviously could not justifiably include him in the *Parentalia*, as they were neither related by blood nor marriage, he no doubt included him in the *Commemoratio*, which is in some ways closely related to the *Parentalia*. The beginning of the *Commemoratio*, with its reference to the commemoration of those unconnected with Ausonius' family, is surely an indication that at least some of the motives in the composition of the two collections were similar, and that they were closely linked in Ausonius' mind.

Other aspects of the collection also display Ausonius' originality. Whereas the traditional metres of elegy and epicedia were hexameter and elegaic couplet, which were also used, together with iambic trimeters, for grave epigrams, the *Commemoratio* also employs a number of lyric metres, which apparently represents a new departure for such poetry, and perhaps

also suggests that Ausonius was well aware of the special nature of these poems.¹⁰ Because of their metrical variety and their equally varied content, the poems of the collection do not become tedious, a remarkable achievement when the subject-matter, the commemoration of long-dead teachers of grammar and rhetoric, is considered in the abstract. Ausonius may have been fortunate in that these teachers possessed sufficiently varied traits of character and careers to be of interest; it is to his own credit that he managed to present them in an interesting variety of ways.

One important area in which Ausonius himself departed from the purely laudatory sentiments which one might have expected, is in his candidness about the dead teachers' abilities and also over their private faults. He chronicles thus the too great ambitions of Attius Tiro Delphidius:

"felix, quietis si maneres litteris
opus Camenarum colens
nec odia magnis concitata litibus
armaret ultor impetus
nec inquieto temporis tyrannici
palatio te adtollereres.
dum spem remotam semper arcessis tibi,
fastidiosus obviae,
tuumque mavis esse quam fati bonum
desiderasti plurima,
vagus per omnes dignitatum formulas
meritusque plura quam gerens.

(*Prof. V*, 19-30)

The pervasive tone is surely one of sadness rather than of criticism. Nor does the rather shady life of Dynamius, who fled to Spain and lived there under an assumed name, because of a charge of adultery, incur sufficient criticism to overcome Ausonius' friendly feelings towards him:

"Qualiscumque tuae fuerit fuga famaue vitae,
iungeris antiqua tu mihi amicitia."¹¹

(*Prof. XXIII*, 11-12)

Even those whose abilities did not match up to the work required of them are commemorated kindly, as the short poem to Lucundus shows:

"Et te, quem cathedram temere usurpasse locuntur
nomen grammatici nec meruisse putant,
voce ciebo tamen, simplex, bone, amice, sodalis,
Lucunde, hoc ipso care magis studio:
quod, quamvis impar, nomen tam nobile amasti,
es meritos inter commemorande viros."

(*Prof. IX*)

Failure, then, is not important in Ausonius' eyes, for Iucundus' efforts were clearly praiseworthy in his opinion, and they, together with his personal character, outweigh his lack of academic worth.

Ammonius is one of the very few to get short shrift in all respects, being described both as a poor teacher and also as of unpleasant character;¹² one wonders just what kind of an ogre he must have been for Ausonius to find nothing good to say about him. Another to receive criticism rather than praise is Marcellus, who seems to have lost his good position and name by some merited stroke of ill fortune:

"sed numquam iugem cursum fortuna secundat,
praesertim pravi nancta virum ingenii.
verum oneranda mihi non sunt, memoranda recepi
fata; sat est dictum cuncta perisse simul:
non tamen et nomen, quo te non fraudo, receptum
inter grammaticos praetenuis meriti."

(Prof. XVIII, 9-14)

The most vivid portraits by far are those of teachers for whom Ausonius felt the deepest affection. His old master Minervius is a case in point, the man who was the brightest star in Bordeaux in the years before Ausonius himself reached this position. Aside from the flattering comparisons, which Ausonius makes between Minervius and earlier orators and teachers, such as Demosthenes and Quintilian, he also illustrates Minervius' outstanding memory at the end of a long dice-game:

"vidimus et quondam tabulae certamine longo
omnes, qui fuerant, te numerasse bolos,
alternis vicibus quot praecipitante rotatu
fundunt excisi per cava buxa gradus:
narrantem fido per singula puncta recursu,
quae data, per longas quae revocata moras."

(Prof. I, 25-30)

It is by the introduction of trivial but nevertheless apt episodes like this one that Ausonius is able to bring his subjects really alive, and say more about them to the modern reader than by any amount of rhetorical hyperbole.

The high development of the memory among the teachers in Gaul at this period is interesting and may possibly be a relic of the traditionally oral education of the druids during an earlier age. It would of course be rash to claim a direct link but it is a strange coincidence that one of Bordeaux's foremost teaching families, that of Attius Patera, was alleged to be descended from the druids of Bayeux.¹³

One final figure from the collection deserves mention here, for the young Victorius, described as "subdoctor sive proscholus" provides another

fascinating picture, the affection displayed in which is also tinged with gentle humour:

"Victori studiose, memor, celer, ignoratis
 adsidue in libris, nec nisi operta legens,
 exesas tineis opicasque evolvere chartas
 maior quam promptis cura tibi in studiis.
 quod ius pontificum, quae foedera, stemma quod olim
 ante Numam fuerit sacrifici Curibus.....
 nota tibi potius, quam Tullius et Maro nostri
 et quidquid Latia conditur historia.
 fors istos etiam tibi lectio longa dedisset,
 supremum Lachesis ni celerasset iter."

(Prof. XXII 1-6, 13-16)

It is clear that Victorius had passed the stage of ordinary study as a student, while not yet having achieved the rank of grammarian.¹⁴ Is it beyond the bounds of belief to see him as the ancient equivalent of a postgraduate student, burrowing away alone among obscure texts? If this is the case, then it provides us with an interesting sidelight on the organisation of ancient education.

Ausonius' own conclusion to the collection of poems sums up the two main threads which run through it, the affection for learned men and the glorification of Bordeaux:

"ergo, qui nostrae legis otia tristia chartae,
 eloquium ne tu quaere, set officium,
 quo claris doctisque viris pia cura parentat,
 dum decora egregiae commeminit patriae."

(Prof. XXV, 7-10)

The use of 'parentat' is interesting as this word is often used of sacrifices to deceased parents, and the impression given by Ausonius is therefore that he regarded his former colleagues as on a par with his family, their sharing of a common profession providing as strong a bond as that of blood. Personal friendships do seem to have been particularly important to writers at this period, and as we shall see in the works of Rutilius Namatianus and Sidonius Apollinaris, Ausonius was not alone in wearing his heart on his sleeve. As for the praise heaped upon Bordeaux, to which the *Commemoratio* also contributes, this pervades Ausonius' work, from the false modesty of its last position in the *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* to the last line of the *Mosella*, which concludes with a reference to the Garonne, the river on which Bordeaux stands.

Immediately following the collection dedicated to Ausonius' fellow-teachers is another group of epitaphs, those of the heroes who took part

in the Trojan war. Ausonius claims to have come across these epigrams in another scholar's works (or possession?) and to have translated them into Latin:

"Quae antiqua cum apud philologum quendam repperissem, Latino sermone converti, non ut inservirem ordinis persequendi [studio],¹⁵ set ut cohercerem libere nec aberrarem."

(*Epit. Praef.*)

As regards the second half of this statement, it is almost impossible to judge how Ausonius treated his original material, because we do not possess more than a handful of the possible sources. Evelyn White's¹⁶ remark that the pseudo-Aristotelian *Peplos* "contains the originals of many ... of these pieces", seems to me to be of doubtful accuracy, for some of his suggested comparisons are apparently based on very slender grounds.

As an initial example, we may take Ausonius' first epitaph, that of Agamemnon:

"Rex regum Atrides, fraternae coniugis ultor,
oppetii maribus coniugis ipse meae.
quid prodest Helenes raptum punisse dolentem,
vindicem adulterii cum Clytemnestra necet?

(*Epit. I*)

Peplos I, however, runs as follows:

"λεῦσσεις Ἀτρεΐδῳ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ᾧ ξενε, τύμβον,
ὃς θάν' ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου κούλομένης ἀλόχου."

The similarities between the two pieces seem to be confined to the fact that both mention Agamemnon to be a descendant of Atreus and both tell of his wife's involvement in his death, the inclusion of neither of which piece of information should cause any surprise; it might be more surprising if they did not appear. Similarly, there is very little common ground between the two epitaphs of Odysseus:

"Conditur hoc tumulo Laerta natus Ulixes
perlege Odyssean omnia nosse volens."

(*Epit. V*)

Apart from both inscriptions being on tombstones, there does not seem to be any affinity between this and the corresponding epigram in the Greek collection:

"ἄνδρα τὸν πολυμητιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ τῇδε θανόντα
κλεινότατον θνητῶν τύμβος ἐπεσκίασεν."

(*Peplos XII*)

This is not to say that the poems of the *Peplos* could not have influenced Ausonius, or rather, that some of the poems now found in the *Peplos* may also

have appeared in the collection on which Ausonius based his own versions.¹⁷
 Ausonius' epitaph on Ajax may be instructive in this respect:

"Aiacis tumulo pariter tegor obruta Virtus,
 inlacrimans bustis funeris ipsa mei,
 incomptas lacerata comas, quod pravus Atrides
 cedere me instructis compulit insidiis.
 ian dabo purpureum claro de sanguine florem,
 testantem gemitu crimina iudicii."

(*Epit.* III)

The first four lines of this poem do seem to be closely modelled on the surviving Greek original, unless one is to postulate the same source for both of them:

"ἄδ' ἐγὼ ἂν τλάμων Ἀρετὰ παρὰ τῷδε κᾶθημαι
 Αἴαντος τύμβῳ κειραμένα πλοκάμους,
 θυμὸν ἄχει μεγάλῳ βεβολημένα, ὡς παρ' Ἀχαιοῖς
 ἂν δολόφρων Ἀπάτα κρέσσον ἐμεῦ κέκρυται."

(*Peplos* VII cf *Anth. Pal.* VII, 145)

The problem does remain, however, as to where Ausonius got his last couplet from, if this poem were indeed the source of his translation. From his own remarks at the start of the collection, one might have presumed that he found at least some hint of the reference to the hyacinth in his model; some might even say that without such a reference in his model, Ausonius would never have thought of including the point in his work, and it is true that genuine originality did not come easily to him, especially in this scholarly kind of poetry.¹⁸

Overall, it is probably best to postulate a source for the *Epitaphia* which is now lost. Short poems of this nature were not of course confined to the *Peplos*, for a number are also to be found in the Greek Anthology,¹⁹ and the existence of other collections in the ancient world is by no means unlikely. Pastorino,²⁰ slightly amending the view put forward by Evelyn White, has claimed that Porphyry extracted a set of poems from the *Peplos*, and that this was the source of Ausonius' translation, but it is not clear on what he bases this claim. The very fact that such epitaphs were in wide circulation, and consequently became included in various collections, suggests that Ausonius may well have drawn on a compilation no longer extant, whether put together by Porphyry or another.

Ausonius' inclusion of this collection of epitaphs in his work, and its placing directly after those poems commemorating his former colleagues at Bordeaux, seems to me to be significant in more than one way. The epitaphs themselves are probably aimed at an academic audience, both as an illustration

of his own abilities of translation and allusion, and also perhaps as an aide-mémoire for younger pupils, who would find many essential points of the heroes' ancestry and biography included. The epitaph of Odysseus is perhaps intended as gently amusing in this respect, with its directive to the student to consult the primary source, the *Odyssey*.

But the juxtaposition of these poems about the great heroes of the Trojan War with those commemorating the teachers of Bordeaux is possibly intended as a further tribute to the memory of the latter. As Achilles and Hector had dominated the Trojan War, so Minervius, Alcimus and Arborius had been the leading figures in the rise to prominence of Bordeaux as an intellectual centre. The comparison between these intellectual giants and the great warriors of the heroic age is perhaps a fanciful one, but Ausonius would undoubtedly have found it pleasing.

These epitaphs combine a content suitable for the schoolroom, but the presentation of which does Ausonius as a teacher a great deal of credit, together with a rather neat pendant to the poem about the giants of Ausonius' own age.

The last few epitaphs of the book are unconnected with the Trojan War, and may well have been placed here in the collection by an editor after Ausonius' death.²¹ Those about Niobe and Diogenes²² are most probably adaptations of similar Greek epigrams, but the last five in the collection are apparently original. Perhaps the most appealing of these is the last of all: "In tumulum sedecennis matronae", which even the briefest examination will show to contain many of the most obvious rhetorical tricks, but which, especially in the compressed message of its middle couplet, manages to express real sadness and pity:

"Omnia quae longo vitae cupiuntur in aevo,
artequater plenum consumpsit Anicia lustrum.
infans lactavit, pubes et virgo adolevit.
nupsit, concepit, peperit, iam mater obivit.
quis mortem accuset? quis non accuset in ista?
aetatis meritis anus est, aetate puella."

(*Epit.* XXXV)

The fourth line, with its string of verbs, suggests the all too quick transition from marriage to motherhood and death, while the heavily spondaic nature of the couplet gives an impression of gravity and sadness.

As stated above, the *Epitaphia* may well have found an application in the schoolroom, and the same can be said of a number of other pieces of Ausonius' work. Even if they were not actually used there, then poems such as the *Technopaegnion*, *Griphus* and a number of the *Eclogues* undoubtedly have their origins in Ausonius' time as a teacher in Bordeaux. The

Technopaegnion, if one is to believe Ausonius' own words, is a useless work, "inertis otii mei inutile opusculum".²³ However, the fact that he feels free to issue the poem twice in slightly different forms, and dedicated to two different people, would tend to show that he had a certain pride in this exercise of including all the monosyllabic nouns which occur in Latin in one set of poems, and that he did regard the end result as being of some worth.

The first thing which it is essential to bear in mind, when approaching poems such as these, is that any appraisal of their worth, or of Ausonius' intentions in writing them, which is made through twentieth century eyes, is bound to be misleading. It is undoubtedly true that we find little in them to commend in terms of what we think poetry should be, but to dismiss the *De Vere Primo* as having "all the poetic inspiration of a thick fog"²⁴ is to miss the point entirely. If one bears in mind the rules, albeit self-imposed, under which Ausonius is writing, whereby he ends each line with a different monosyllable, then the result can be seen as a tour de force of versifying, if not of poetry. Given these constraints, in terms of sense and effect, then the *De Vere Primo* is in fact one of the best parts of the *Technopaegnion*:

"Annus ab exortu cum floriparum reserat ver,
cuncta vigent: nemus omne viret, nibet auricomum rus
et fusura umbras radicitus exigitur stirps.
non denso ad terram lapsu glomerata fluit nix.
florum spirat odor, Libani ceu montis honor tus."

(*Tech.* XI)

The poetry is of a catalogue or encyclopaedic type, which Ausonius seems to favour,²⁶ (as a different example, in a far more "poetic" context, one might mention the list of fish in the *Mosella*), and which might be thought to belong more to the Middle Ages than to Antiquity.

It is clear that Ausonius felt the need to vary the presentation of the different parts of the *Technopaegnion*, perhaps because he was aware that the exercise might otherwise have lost any charm which it did hold for the reader. Thus it is that we have one section on food, another on the gods, another composed as question and answer, and one, containing, as a deliberate matter of policy, the most obscure words and details, and which is headed by the jocular neologism "Grammaticomastix":

"Et logodaedalia? stride modo, qui nimium trux
frivola condemnas: nequam quoque cum pretio est mers!
Ennius ut memorat, repleat te laetificum gau."

(*Tech.* XIV, 1-3)

The ending of this section, and with it the whole poem, is also marked by its light-hearted, if not humorous, tone:

"indulge, Pacate bonus, doctus, facilis vir;
totum opus hoc sparsum, crinis velut Antiphilae: pax."

(*Tech.* XIV, 21-24)

The allusion is to Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*, where Antiphila's hair is described as hanging loosely over her shoulders, not done up in a fashionable style; the speaker, Syrus, is in a hurry to finish: hence the final word, "pax":

"capillus passus prolixo et circum caput
relictus negligenter; pax."

(*Heaut.* 289-90)

Ausonius' echoing of this passage is perhaps meant to indicate that he acknowledges the rather "unkempt" nature (as was inevitable, allowing for the material involved) of the work which he has just completed.

If the *Technopaegnion* is perhaps a work generated out of Ausonius' deep knowledge of grammar, gained in the schoolroom, then the poems of the *De XII Caesaribus* would have been eminently suited to use there, as an aid to learning Roman history. Although Ausonius composed single verses on the succession, length of reign and death of each of the first twelve emperors, it is his quatrains on each individual, and a further series on the twelve emperors who followed these, which stand out. By their pithy, epigrammatic style, they should have reminded pupils about much of the characters and reigns of each emperor. Possibly the best point is made by that on Claudius:

"Claudius inrisae privato in tempore vitae,
in regno specimen prodidit ingenii.
libertina tamen nuptarum et crimina passus
non faciendo nocens, set patiendo fuit."

(*Caes. Tetr.* V)

The fact that the poet has managed to allude to the mockery of a life which Claudius had before achieving the purple, as well as referring to the abuses of his freedmen and wives, says something for his skill in bringing out the essentials by means of the compression of detail, a stark contrast to the Ausonius who wrote the prolix panegyric on Gratian in thanks for his consulship. The last line of the epigram is particularly effective, being striking while summing up Claudius' character. A similarly well-pointed epigram is that on Marcus Aurelius, who achieved perfection in his rule and life, except in the one matter of having left an heir, Domitian:

"Post Marco tutela datur, qui scita Platonis
flexit ad imperium patre Pio melior."

successore suo moriens, set principe pravo,
hoc solo patriae, quod genuit, nocuit."

(*Caes. Tetr.* XVII)

The use of alliteration is also noteworthy, as this most simple of oratorical tricks adds considerably, one suspects, to the ease with which the quatrains could be remembered. But it is in the lines on Caligula that Ausonius goes to the very extremes in his use of alliteration, perhaps going beyond what is either useful or acceptable, possibly in an attempt to outdo Suetonius, from whom he had drawn his material ("Caligulae cognomen castrensi ioco traxit", *Calig.* IX):

"Post hunc castrensi caligae cognomine Caesar
successit saevo saevior ingenio,
Caedibus incestisque dehinc maculosus et omni
crimine pollutum qui superavit avum."

(*Caes. Tetr.* IV)

These poems are similar in vein to those which Ausonius actually does label as epigrams. The epigram is of course a genre in its own right, and does possess a literary identity completely unconnected with the schoolroom. Nevertheless, as Ausonius does draw some of the material for these poems from the scholastic field, mention should perhaps be made here of the relevant epigrams. We may quote for example the epigram about Auxilius the grammarian, whose own name is a grammatical solecism:

"Emendata potest quatenus vox esse magistri,
nomen qui proprium cum vitio loquitur?
auxilium te nempe vocas, inscite magister?
da rectum casum: iam solicismus eris."

(*Epig.* VI)

This jest is one which is obviously a product of Ausonius' own background, and one which would probably have been greatly appreciated among the teaching fraternity, probably even by the butt of the joke, if we assume him to have existed, and, despite Evelyn White's doubts as to the name's authenticity, which he expresses in his index,²⁸ I do not think that there would have been much point in the epigram had he not done so.

There is perhaps less to be said in favour of the existence of Rufus, the target of a number of Ausonius' lampoons, although he is described as a rhetor of Poitiers.²⁹ The first epigram about him is another of those based around grammatical points:

"Reminisco" Rufus dixit in versu suo:
cor ergo versus, immo Rufus, non habet."

(*Epig.* VIII)

One might be tempted to view this as a serious criticism of a fellow-poet, if the epigram did not reappear in more general terms, later in the same collection:

"Qui "reminisco" putat se dicere posse latine
hic ubi "co" scriptum est, faceret "cor" si cor haberet."

(*Epig.* LX)

But the majority of the other epigrams about Rufus³⁰ can be traced to Greek models, to be found in the Palatine Anthology, and aimed there at various targets, which suggests that they are probably being employed by Ausonius on a purely literary basis. If "Rufus" had any real identity at any time (even as an alias, disguising the name of a genuine rhetor), then in the majority of cases it is certainly used merely as a peg on which to hang Ausonius' translations of epigrams from the Greek. Finally here, we may mention the macaronic epigram, which depends on a knowledge of Greek grammar (the use of the privative prefix "α-"), and for which a Greek source may be postulated, although none is definitely known:

"Χρηστος, 'Ακύνδυνος, αὐτοαδελφεοῦ, οἰκτρὰ δὲ τέκνα,

moribus ambo malis nomina falsa gerunt:

οὐδ' οὗτος χρηστος, οὐδ' οὗτος ἀκύνδυνός ἐστιν.

una potest ambos littera corrigere.

αἶ κεν Χρηστος ἔχη παρ' ἀδελφοῦ 'Ακινδύνου ἄλφα,

κύνδυνος hic fiet, frater ἀχρηστος erit."

(*Epig.* LVII)

The following epigram makes exactly the same point, but is composed entirely in Latin.

Apart from these epigrams which can be considered as having been motivated directly by the school environment, many others are dependent upon stock literary themes,³¹ but the dividing line, which is at best only vague, can be imagined here for the purpose of convenient consideration of those specifically school-orientated works of Ausonius.

The *Griphus* is interesting as much for Ausonius' long dedication of the poem to Symmachus, as for itself. The long explanation of Ausonius' reasons for publishing the work, which amounts to a kind of apology, almost makes one wonder at first reading whether he did have his doubts as to how well the work would be received, and intended in some way to compensate for any shortcomings in it by means of a highly literary introduction.³² As usual, Ausonius expresses polite doubts about the merits of his work, here parodying Catullus' own dedication:

"cui dono inlepidum rudem libellum."

(*Griph.* Praef.)

Nor did the composition of the poem take much time:

"ac ne me nescias gloriosum, coeptos inter prandendum
versiculos ante cenae tempus absolvi, hoc est, dum
bibō et paulo ante quam biberem."

(*Griph. Praef.*)

Indeed, Symmachus is recommended to get himself into the same state ('male sobrius') to read the poem as Ausonius was when he wrote it!

Remarks such as these, and similar ones about the *Cento Nuptialis* have led at least one critic to believe that Ausonius "knew how to form a fair estimate of his own productions".³³ Nothing could really be further from the truth, and it is clear that the critic in question, Byrne, has not realised to what extent of fulsome flattery and apology the literary device of professed unworthiness had reached by this period. Furthermore, in the case of the *Griphus*, the poem had clearly not just been rescued from Ausonius' bottom drawer,³⁴ as it had been circulating, albeit perhaps unofficially, for some time:

"igitur iste nugator libellus iam diu secreta quidem, sed
vulgi lectione laceratus perveniet tandem in manus tuas."

(*Griph. Praef.*)

If anything, it rather looks as though Ausonius had been trying out the work on some of his other friends, prior to sending it to Symmachus. As we shall see, the dedicating of books was a serious process, and Ausonius may well have wanted to make quite sure that everything was just right before sending off Symmachus' copy.

The poem itself, *Griphus ternarii numeri*, is an expression, one might say a celebration, of the number three in as many ways as the author finds possible. It contains not only items which occur in threes, but almost anything which is even remotely connected with the number. Clearly the fact that three was a mystic number generated a fair amount of mythological material around it:

"Tergemina est Hecate, tria virginis ora Dianae;
tris Charites, tria Fata, triplex vox, trina elementa."

(*Griph. 18-19*)

Ausonius also brings in the historical, such as the three orders of the Roman people, senators, knights and plebs,³⁵ and even the biblical, as he draws the poem to its logical conclusion:

"Ter bibe. tris numerus super omnia, tris deus unus.
hic quoque ne ludus numero transcurrat inertī,
ter decies ternos habeat deciesque novenos."

(*Griph. 88-90*)

Returning to the works which can be regarded as having more direct pedagogic significance, we can single out a number of the *Eclogae* for discussion. Mention should perhaps first be made of a group of poems³⁶ concerning the names of the days of the week, the months of the year, and the dates on which the fixed sacrificial days fell. That concerning the calculation of dates is fairly typical:

"Bis senas anno reparat Lucina Kalendas
et totidem medias dat currere Iuppiter idus
nonarumque diem faciunt infra octo secundi,
haec sunt Romano tantum tria nomina mensi;
cetera per numeros sunt cognomenta dierum."

(*Ecl.* XI)

Apart from their didactic nature, linked to Ausonius' schoolmasterly interests, the poems dealing with matters of religious celebration and festivals do suggest that he had become very attached to the traditional Roman ideals and the *mos maiorum*. As we shall see elsewhere in his work, and in that of Rutilius Namatianus and Sidonius Apollinaris, the true spirit of the Roman Empire was at least as alive in Gaul as in Italy at this period. The poem *De feriis Romanis*³⁷ can thus be considered as a kind of fourth century equivalent to Ovid's *Fasti*,³⁸ although not, of course, on anything like the same scale.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that Ausonius' pedagogic instincts were likely to emerge at the most unlikely times, as in the middle of his letter to Theon, when he launches upon an exposition of the hendecasyllable.³⁹ Similarly, in his preface to the *Centio Nuptialis*, he goes into great detail as to his method of composition:

"variis de locis sensibusque diversis quaedam carminis structura
solidatur, in unum versum ut coeant aut caesi duo aut unus et sequens
<medius> cum medio. nam duos iunctim locare ineptum est, et tres
una serie merae nugae. diffinduntur autem per caesuras omnes, quas
recipit versus heroicus."

(*Cent. Praef.*)

Although this patchwork of Vergilian quotations is the result of long years of exposure to the original texts, and a phenomenal memory for the details of them, especially bearing in mind Ausonius' claim to have written it in less than twenty-four hours,⁴⁰ the content would hardly have been suitable for the schoolroom, but perhaps rather the barrack-room. Indeed it may well have been written while Ausonius was on active service with Valentinian, who instigated the project with a similar production of his own.

The *Cento* is therefore in many ways a typical work of Ausonius. It draws extensively on his teaching skills and background, and owes its composition to his position as tutor to the emperor's son. It is this "public" aspect of Ausonius' career which we shall examine next, before returning to the works themselves, and the ways in which they display influences other than those of the schools.

Notes

1. *Ep.* XXII.
2. Unless the time he spent as an advocate intervened. The text however suggests that this was concurrent with his early career as a grammarian, *Praef.* I, 17ff.
3. *Prof.* XXII.
4. Isbell, *op.cit.* p. 40.
5. H. Szelest: "Lyrische Motive in Ausonius' Sammlung "Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium" in *Živa Antika* XXV (1975) p. 156-63 and "Valete Manes Inclitorum Rhetorum" in *Eos* LXIII (1975) p. 75-87.
6. Szelest, "Valete", p. 85.
7. Szelest, "Valete", p. 86.
8. *Prof.* XIII.
9. Szelest, "Lyrische Motive", p. 160.
10. Szelest, "Valete", p. 87.
11. The alliteration of the letter 'f' is strange, as this was normally avoided by writers of the Classical period, except for particular effect (Vergil: *Aen.* IV, 218, Iarba's sarcasm) because of the unpleasant effect on the ear (Quintilian XII, 10, 29). I can only assume that this consideration no longer applied in fourth century Gaul, or else the sound of the words would surely have vitiated the spirit of forgiveness and friendship contained in them. A similar phenomenon occurs at *Prof.* IV, 8.
12. *Prof.* X, 32ff.
13. *Prof.* IV, 7-8.
14. *Prof.* XXII, 17-18.
15. suppl. Peiper.
16. Vol. I, p. 140.
17. There is some evidence of overlapping between collections, e.g. *Peplos* VII = *Anth. Pal.* VII, 145.
18. The difficulty is not confined to this instance. A similar example is proved by *Epit.* XXVIII, described by Evelyn White (I, 156) as "a close imitation of *Anth. Pal.* VII, 64, "but developing a reference to Diogenes as living in the stars ("ὄν δὲ θανὼν ἀστερας οἶκον ἔχει") into a whole couplet:

"Et quonam? - Clari flagrat qua stella Leonis,
additus est instat nunc canis Erigonae"

(*Epit.* XXVIII, 5-6)
19. e.g. *Anth. Pal.* VII, 136-152.

20. Pastorino: *Ausonio*, p. 88.
21. Evelyn White, I, p. 141.
22. *Epit.* XXVII-XXX.
23. *Tech.* II.
24. *Tech.* XI.
25. Hussey, *op. cit.* p. 88.
26. Chadwick, *op. cit.* p. 52.
27. This word is perhaps formed by analogy with *Homeromastix*.
28. Evelyn White, II, 355. *Auxilius* must have been quite a common name, to judge from the frequency of the toponym *Auxiliacus*, Holder, *op. cit.* III, col. 766.
29. *Epig.* X, 2.
30. *Epigg.* IX-XII; cf. *Anth. Pal.* X, 30; XI, 145, 149, 151; XVI, 317.
31. e.g. *Thais'* mirror, *Epig.* LXV.
32. See Evelyn White's footnotes to the poem for the numerous echoes of earlier authors.
33. Byrne: *Prolegomena to the works of Ausonius*, p. 42.
34. *Griph. Praef.*: "Latebat inter nugas meas libellus ignobilis: utinamque latuisset".
35. *Griph.* 78.
36. *Ecll.* VIII ff.
37. *Ecl.* XXIII.
38. Ausonius' list of festivals may not necessarily be accurate for the fourth century. There is little overlap with a list of pagan festivals to be held in *Capua* in 387 (*ILS* 4918).
39. *Ep.* XIV, 82 ff.
40. *Cent. Praef.*

Chapter 4

Ausonius the Politician

At first glance, the political side of Ausonius' life may seem to have little or no bearing upon the many literary works which he produced, other than for such obvious points as that he would not have written a *Mosella* (though he might well have written a "*Garumna*"), had he not been with Valentinian's military expedition. It is however a fact that most of the authors under consideration in this study combined politics and literature in their lives, although by no means always in the same manner. Ausonius was a writer who became a politician; as far as we can tell, Rutilius was an aristocratic administrator who happened also to write poetry.

Yet politics and literature do meet; one only has to examine the names of those to whom Ausonius dedicated his work, or those to whom Symmachus wrote his ineffably polite and literary letters to discover this. And perhaps on the most basic level of contact of all, one finds the panegyrics, literary productions by the greatest orators of their day, but whose purpose is evidently propagandistic. The career and output of Claudian probably mark the high point of the use of literary propaganda at this period.

Ausonius' political career and his apparent reaction to the power which fell into his hands are also worth examination for what they tell us about his character, although the reactions, one suspects, were fairly typical of the age, possibly of any age, with distinct benefits accruing to other members of his family.

First, let us examine Ausonius' own official career. He had come to Valentinian's court about 365, charged with the supervision of Gratian's entire education. Presumably as a reward for the satisfactory progress made by his pupil, he becomes 'comes' in 370, and then 'quaestor sacrae palatiae', probably not long before Valentinian's death in November 375, a post which he continued to hold during the early part of Gratian's reign. With this elevation of his pupil to be senior Augustus in the west at the age of sixteen, and still, it would appear, under his tutor's influence, Ausonius' career soon made great strides forward. In 377 he became praetorian prefect of Gaul and in the following year he and his son Hesperius jointly ruled the prefectures of Gaul, Italy and Africa, and Illyricum. Ausonius continued in office into 379, in which year he also held the consulship, the culmination of his official career. It is not clear how he stood at court after this point, for Gratian seems to have fallen more and more under the influence of Ambrose. He was apparently still at court after Maximus'

usurpation of power (possibly held against his will¹), but he certainly does not seem to have been actively involved in Maximus' regime. Presumably at a later date Theodosius wrote kindly to him asking for a copy of his works, which suggests that the old man was still held in high favour, even in his retirement.

Returning to his earlier career, his appointment as 'quaestor sacrae palatiae' may well have been intended to add a literary and stylistic gloss to the pronouncements, in the form of laws and messages to the senate, which issued from the palace. The use of rhetoric in legal documents, with its apparently wilful obfuscation of the imperial intentions, has been well noted by Macmullen, who points out the way in which various 'literati' reached seemingly totally unsuitable posts in the imperial service.² The very necessary existence of the numerous interpretations of various laws of the Theodosian Code is further evidence of the verbiage produced by the literary law-mongers.³

It is however indisputable that the beginning of Gratian's reign was marked by a new 'liberal' policy, especially in relations with the Roman Senate and also in the legal position of various professions. It is true that the reign of Valentinian had not been particularly severe for doctors and teachers, despite Ammianus' remark about Valentinian's dislike of the learned,⁴ as those in Rome, at least, had been freed of all obligations to supply or quarter soldiers.⁵ In passing, we may note here that Valentinian, notoriously a man given to helping the poorest classes, was also responsible for the establishment of one of the first health services, directing that a number of doctors, one for almost every district of Rome, should be paid out of public funds to treat the poor rather than to serve the rich, as had been customary.⁶

At the start of Gratian's reign, the influence of Ausonius can perhaps be seen⁷ in the instruction⁸ to Antonius, then prefect of Gaul, to organise the payment of rhetoricians and grammarians in all the major cities, in a law issued in May 376. Although the procedure of paying from central funds for these distinguished men to teach in the large cities may not have been new, the salary scale almost certainly is, and seems to have been a generous one at that,⁹ especially where the seat of government, Trier, was concerned.¹⁰ In fact it is possible that one reason for the edict was to attract a good class of teacher from, say, Bordeaux to the less peaceful northern diocese of Gaul.¹¹ In this respect it is noteworthy that most of the teachers, about whom we possess information at this period, are from the southern diocese, an area probably more suited to quiet study and teaching. Also from Gratian's reign dates a law confirming the rights of court physicians not to perform certain menial public services.¹²

Whether or not one is to attribute direct responsibility for such measures to Ausonius, it is clear that he can be credited with at least indirect responsibility, in that he trained Gratian to a love of the liberal arts, and to a high regard for the exponents of literature and medicine. Furthermore, there must also be some suspicion that Gratian's liberalizing of the relations between Court and the senatorial aristocracy can be attributed partly to the lessons which Ausonius will have inculcated into him about the traditions of Roman government. Ausonius himself had of course been on good terms for a long time with Symmachus, one of the acknowledged leaders of the senate, and will certainly have favoured any moves towards improving relations with that body and facilitating access for its members to the offices to which they felt themselves to be entitled. The senate's reaction to Gratian's message marking the start of the new era of relations at the beginning of 376 is portrayed by Symmachus,¹³ whose effusions, for once, may contain some semblance of the joy which genuinely did infuse the senate. The new year message which was the cause of the delight is, however, unlikely to have come as much of a surprise to Ausonius, as it is possible that, as 'quaestor sacrae palatiae', he had a hand in drafting it.

Before examining in more concrete terms exactly who benefited among the senators by the new imperial policy, and to what extent their career prospects were improved, it is necessary first of all to examine the rise to prominence of Ausonius' own family, which was swift, and briefly all-embracing in the Western Empire. His son Hesperius held office, as we have seen, jointly with his father in the prefectures of Gaul, Italy and Africa and Illyricum, remaining in office alone in Italy and Africa at least as late as May 380.¹⁴ Prior to his prefectship, he had been proconsul of Africa (March 376-July 377), during which time he investigated a scandal at Lepcis together with Flavianus, then vicar, using "aequitas auctoritate mixta iustissima",¹⁵ and also gained the thanks of the town in an inscription.¹⁶ This, and the fact that he was still engaged in public business as late as 384,¹⁷ would suggest that, at least in this case, the ability of the man might well counterbalance the nepotism of his appointment.

There is no way, however, that one can find any justification in practical terms for the appointment of Ausonius' father as prefect of Illyricum at the age of nearly ninety;¹⁸ such an appointment may only have been honorary, but nevertheless, to deprive the Danube frontier of energetic government at this critical time can only be described as short-sighted.

Ausonius' patronage also extended to his son-in-law, Thalassius,¹⁹ who was vicar of Macedonia in 376/77 and then proconsul of Africa from 377-78, before returning home to Bordeaux. Either his abilities or his taste for office do not match up to those of his brother-in-law, for he is not heard of again. An equally brief prominence was enjoyed by Arborius;²⁰ probably the son of Ausonius' cousin and old mentor, who held the offices of comes sacrarum largitionum in 379 and prefect of Rome briefly in 380. More doubtfully one can add to the list of Ausonius' relatives who gained office at this period, the name of Catafronius (vicar of Italy 376-77), who may possibly be related in some way to Ausonius' aunt Iulia Cataphronia.

Nor did Ausonius restrict his bounty to his family connections, for a number of other figures owe their advance to his influence, as Matthews has pointed out.²¹ The web of influence and connections woven by both Ausonius and Symmachus can be traced to some extent through the extant evidence, although it must be borne in mind that Symmachus' letters, as published, are written almost exclusively to the famous and to those holding, or having held, office, so, in most cases, he will only have begun correspondence with the new men from Gaul after Ausonius had secured their acceptance in office.

One such example seems to be Siburius, magister officiorum 375/79 and prefect of Gaul in 379. According to Marcellus,²² he was a native of Bordeaux and wrote about medicine, which would perhaps suggest a connection with Ausonius' father. This link between the court and the medical fraternity of south-western Gaul is further strengthened by the careers of Marcellus himself and, possibly, Vindicianus. The latter, who rose to become proconsul of Africa by 380, was also the man to whom Gratian's law benefitting court physicians had been addressed. Given the apparent pre-eminence of south-west Gaul in medicine at this time, a connection between Vindicianus and this area is perhaps to be postulated.²³ Marcellus is not so easy to fit into the emerging pattern, as he is first recorded somewhat later, as magister officiorum (in the east) in 394-95, where his fall from office at this point suggests that he may have been linked with the disgraced Rufinus. Evidently, however, he did survive, to return home to Gaul and write his book on medicine, at some time after 401.²⁴

The first of the medical writers from Bordeaux, whom Marcellus mentions, to make his way into the world of politics was Eutropius, now probably best known for his historical *Breviarium*. His official career stretched over some thirty years, for he seems to have first held office before 361 as magister epistularum under Constantius.²⁵ He himself writes that he accompanied Julian on his Persian expedition,²⁶ and the dedication

of his *Breviarium* tells us that he was Magister Memoriae under Valens in 369. He was then proconsul of Asia in 371/72 and survived a charge of treason brought against him after relinquishing the post. A period in retirement was ended when he visited Gratian's court and then Rome in 378-79, before returning to a place of importance in the Eastern court, and the prefectship of Illyricum in 380-81. His career was crowned by the consulship in 387.

Although his career begins long before that of Ausonius, his reappearance in 378-79 may possibly be attributable to Ausonius' influence, as the latter may well have known Eutropius through his father, if Eutropius' medical work did extend to his own practical experience, rather than just represent a digest of other writers, and he will certainly have been aware of Eutropius' historical work.²⁷ It would however be unwise to claim any certain knowledge of the circumstances around Eutropius' return to politics; the empire was in need of good servants at this time of crisis, with the Gothic threat making itself felt in the months leading up to the disaster of Adrianople.

Turning from this group of men mentioned by Marcellus, we return to very safe ground with the certain influence which Ausonius exercised over the career of Meropius Pontius Paulinus,²⁸ better known to later ages as Paulinus of Nola. He probably gained his suffect consulship with Ausonius' help.²⁹ He was also appointed governor of Campania in 381, an advantageous post as he held estates in the area around Nola.

Another official who can be linked with Ausonius with some degree of certainty is Proculus Gregorius, who received the dedications of Ausonius' *Cupido Cruciat~~ur~~* and also the first edition of the *Fasti*. He first held major office as praefectus annonae at Rome in 377, a post which had proved politically sensitive during the last years of Valentinian's reign, when its occupant, Maximinus, took the first steps to hated notoriety by setting in motion the trials for sorcery and treason. Subsequently Gregorius progressed to be quaestor sacrae palatiae by 379, and was finally prefect of Gaul in 383. In passing we may note that while he was quaestor he seems to have been at least partly responsible for obtaining the vicariate of Africa for Symmachus' brother, Celsinus Titianus.³⁰ It is probable that Gregorius was destined for the consulship of 384,³¹ but was prevented from achieving this final honour by Maximus' revolt and the subsequent fall of Gratian.

Another member of the group around Ausonius and Symmachus is the Syagrius who receives a dedication of Ausonius' work and is also a correspondent of Symmachus,³² so long as this is the same man in both cases.

The careers of the two Syagrii who held high office at this period have long been the subject of confusion and discussion, although it is possible to separate two distinct and coherent careers for the two men.³³

Flavius Syagrius³⁴ first comes to notice when, as notarius, he was cashiered by Valentinian after being the sole survivor of a military expedition across the Rhine.³⁵ He must have returned to the imperial service under Gratian, in company with Fl. Afranius Syagrius, who was probably related in some way. If he is to be identified with the Syagrius who was magister officiorum in 379, then he must be Symmachus' correspondant.³⁶ Therefore, as the letters to Syagrius appear in the first book of Symmachus' collection, which is generally agreed to have been compiled by the author himself,³⁷ there can be no real doubt that all this group of letters are addressed to this same Syagrius; Symmachus is hardly likely to have confused letters to two different people. After his court post, Syagrius then held office as prefect of Italy 380-82 with the consulship in 381. He probably died while in office as prefect, as the post was next held by an interim prefect, Valerius Severus,³⁸ and nothing further is heard of Syagrius.

His near-namesake, Flavius Afranius Syagrius³⁹ only emerges for the first time under Gratian. He was proconsul of Africa in 379, perhaps comes sacrarum largitionum in 381, and then prefect of Rome in the same year, before receiving the consulship for 382, and the prefectship of Italy in the middle of that same year. According to Sidonius Apollinaris he was buried at Lyon, which makes a Gallic ancestry likely. Sidonius also states that he wrote poetry,⁴⁰ but this is hardly sufficient evidence on which to identify him with Ausonius' dedicatee in preference to the other Syagrius. The writing of poetry was, after all, an accomplishment almost expected of the educated aristocracy.

Finally brief mention should be made of the people who trekked from Rome to the court at Milan armed with their letters of recommendation from Symmachus to Ausonius.⁴¹ Potitus seems to have delivered one such letter and is soon found as vicar of Rome.⁴² Claudius Lachanius may well have been another, but his career will be discussed in detail later. Lastly mention must be made of Latinus Pacatus Drepanius, who delivered a panegyric on Theodosius in 389. Considering that this seems to be the start of his public career (he rose to be comes rei privatae in the East in 393), it is perhaps surprising to find three of Ausonius' works dedicated to him.⁴³ It is not stretching the imagination far to suggest that Drepanius may well have been a junior colleague of Ausonius at Bordeaux, and possibly therefore the last of Ausonius' protégés to make their way into politics.

Although it is possible to show certain links, whether in terms of common nationality and background, or just of common interest, between all these men, the road to high office was not blocked completely for other able candidates. For example, although the fact of his relationship to Theodosius I by marriage may have helped his later career, Fl. Claudius Antonius seems to have made steady progress up the ladder of promotion throughout the reigns of Valentinian and Gratian. He is known to have been *magister scrinii* in 370/73, being promoted to *quaestor sacrae palatiae*,⁴⁴ and then to the praetorian prefecture, first of Gaul (376-77) and then of Italy (377-78), before achieving the consulship in 382. Nor were Fl. Hypatius,⁴⁵ the brother-in-law of the emperor Constantius, or the aristocratic Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius prevented from serving as prefects during Gratian's reign. Even the latter's brother, Faltonius Probus Alypius,⁴⁶ was able to re-emerge as vicar of Africa, after being sentenced to banishment "*ob levem errorem*"⁴⁷ by Maximus in about 370.

As our last example, we may take the career of Fl. Mallius Theodorus,⁴⁸ for whose career during this period almost the only source is Claudian's panegyric written to celebrate Theodorus' consulship in 397, some twenty years later. He was apparently of humble birth, for Claudian does not mention his ancestry; nor can any direct connection with either Ausonius or Symmachus be traced. He seems to have begun his career as an advocate in a prefect's court, and then risen to the post of *comes sacrarum largitionum* (or *comes rei privatae*; this post is the only one for which there is any evidence independent of the panegyric⁴⁹) and thence to the prefecture of Gaul, perhaps in 382.

Even with the relatively large amount known about the office-holders of this period, it is difficult to evaluate to exactly what extent the patronage of Ausonius or of one of his intimates was required for advancement at this period. That the family of Ausonius reaped great benefit is certain; but the extent to which they may have excluded others from office is less easy to determine. Members of the great senatorial houses did still hold office, and it is probably as much due to their lack of ambition as to their lack of opportunity that few attained the highest offices. A local governorship or a proconsulship, especially in an area where the family held land, seems to have satisfied the ambitions and consciences of most.

The main casualties of the rise to power of the "Ausonian" Gauls seem to have been the Pannonians who had held office under Valentinian. Many, such as Maximinus, had gained great unpopularity, at least in certain powerful circles, and so their eclipse is not surprising. The difference between the attitudes of the Gauls and the Pannonians to their careers

has been noted by Matthews.⁵⁰ Whereas the Pannonians were professional public servants, the Gauls, like their Italian senatorial colleagues, were rather more "amateur". Coming from rich, powerful backgrounds, at least in local terms, they sought honours and titles to add to, and to reinforce, those which they possessed already. Bearing in mind this similarity of background between the Gauls and the senatorial aristocracy, it is not surprising that Gratian's reign saw the re-emergence of senatorial influence, which would have been motivated by much the same ideas and interests as were shared by the clique around the emperor.

It is also worth remarking that Ausonius, having spent his life studying and preaching the glories of Rome as portrayed in its literature, may well have held the senate and its trappings of power in some esteem. His reaction to his own consulship is important in this respect, I think. Although it was undoubtedly necessary to present some sort of formal thanks to Gratian for this honour, the manner in which Ausonius harps constantly on the consulship in historical terms⁵¹ suggests that, for him at least, the office still means a great deal, and his appointment as senior consul something more.⁵²

Such was the way in which Ausonius favoured his family and friends. The important question remains as to whether he can be said to have acted in any way justifiably in the exploitation of his ascendancy over Gratian. We should not be surprised that Gratian should have looked to his tutor for support in the early years of his reign, for he was only sixteen years of age at the time of his father's death. Although Ausonius' tuition may well have been thorough in the school curriculum, it is inconceivable that Gratian was in any sense ready to rule the Western Empire at his age. Therefore, even if a *de iure* regency was not necessary, then a *de facto* one certainly was, at least in limited terms. Regardless of whether any contemporary reference is intended,⁵³ the *Historia Augusta* probably speaks for many men of the fourth century:

"di advertant principes pueros et patres patriae dici impuberes
et quibus ad subscribendum magistri literarii manus teneant."

(*Vita Taciti* VI, 5)

Of course Gratian was past boyhood, but the sentiment is still valid, and if the emperor were to be under the influence of another man, then it would be as well for it to be an honest and capable one.

In some ways Gratian is to be pitied, as he never had a real chance to prove himself as a ruler, for the influence of Ausonius, and later Ambrose, is manifest. Whether the apparent decline of the former is to be attributed to Ambrose's growing influence is hard to say, as Ausonius, almost seventy

at the time of his consulship, may well have welcomed the chance of a graceful retreat from power and back to his books.

For the most part, therefore, it seems that Ausonius emerges fairly well from his involvement in politics. It is true that he did not let the opportunity pass by to advance his family and friends; that is a human failing. More importantly, during the time in which he was arguably the most powerful man in the Western Empire, he does seem to have directed an intelligent and liberal rule. Perhaps he was a schoolmaster set on helping colleagues, but it was time that the abuses of the existing system of fees (which pupils avoided by transferring to another teacher when the time came for their payment) were eliminated and some security for the teachers introduced. Furthermore, it hardly seems possible that, had Ausonius been a particularly unpopular figure at Gratian's court, he would have survived unscathed the advent of Maximus. Macedonius, Gratian's magister officiorum was arrested, although not immediately brought to trial,⁵⁴ and Vallio, the magister equitum was executed.⁵⁵ There is some suggestion that Ausonius may have been unable to leave Trier,⁵⁶ but, at least in the initial time of unrest, it would not be surprising if he were asked to remain, while Hesperius was sent away. He is clearly in no sense under arrest, as he depicts himself pacing the banks of the Moselle.

It seems that Ausonius' use of power, if not exactly altruistic, was at least not entirely selfish or misguided. A number of officials seem to have succeeded even to high office without needing Ausonius' patronage, and, with the exception of the appointment of his father to the prefectship of Illyricum, there is no reason to suppose that his nominees were any more or less efficient than their contemporaries.

We have seen already how the literature of the period enables us to trace certain connections between important men of the period, and also mentioned the way in which a knowledge of rhetoric could bring advancement, as in the case of Latinus Pacatus Drepanius, whose panegyric on Theodosius apparently brought him the proconsulship of Africa and thus to a successful public career. Later still, both Eugenius and Attalus achieved the purple, if only as usurpers, to demonstrate just how high a knowledge of grammar and rhetoric could lead.⁵⁷

In more indirect terms also, literature had political importance. It is known how highly prized the letters of Symmachus were as models of literature, so highly that his letter-carriers apparently faced robbery, so precious was their load.⁵⁸ To receive a letter from Symmachus was obviously a cachet of political success, and it is likely that the pressure

which Sidonius Apollinaris felt he was under to include letters to as many people as possible in his published collection,⁵⁹ was probably reflected to a lesser degree in Symmachus' own compilations (the difference being that Symmachus' were published initially for their style and literary value, and in groups according to their original recipient, while Sidonius seems to have had the intention of satisfying his friends' thirst for immortal fame through connection with his work from the very beginning).

Similarly, to receive the dedication of any new literary work by, say, Ausonius, would be a signal mark of honour; the very fact that Ausonius can rededicate some of his works, with only slender differences from their previous form is suggestive of the eagerness with which the honour of appearing as a dedicatee was sought. Moreover this procedure probably brought advantages to both sides, for, while the dedicatee might be thought to profit by his association with the new work, the author might expect, as any artist of a patron, some favour in return. Symmachus and Ausonius do perhaps in their exchanges give the modern reader the impression of a mutual admiration society, but their literary bond was the most obvious manifestation of their 'amicitia' in both its social and political sense. This affinity of literary interests, no doubt discovered during their service together under Valentinian on the Rhine frontier, led to a long political relationship marked by a stream of hopeful bearers of letters of introduction from Symmachus to Ausonius.

One further thought: would Ausonius' work ever have survived if he had not left Bordeaux in late middle age for the court and a prominent position in the Roman world?

Notes

1. This is not clear from the only evidence, the unfinished poem, *Ep.* XX.
2. Macmullen: "Roman Bureaucratic" in *Traditio* 18 (1962) p. 364-378, esp. p. 368.
3. *ibid.* p. 371, note 27.
4. Ammianus Marcellinus XXX, 8, 10; Valentinian did however indulge in literary exercises himself, at least of a light-hearted nature, Ausonius, *Cent. Praef.*
5. *Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 10.
6. *Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 8.
7. S.F. Bonner: *American Journal of Philology* 86 (1965) p. 133.
8. *Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 11.
9. Bonner, *op. cit.* p. 132-33.
10. Although, according to Ausonius, Trier was well-blessed with eloquent men, *Mos.* 399 ff.
11. Bonner, *op. cit.* p. 134. On the arguments for interpreting the law as applying solely to the northern diocese of Gaul, *ibid.* p. 114 ff.
12. *Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 12. (14th Sept. 379).
13. *Ep.* I, 13.
14. For details, see *PLRE* Hesperius 2.
15. Ammianus Marcellinus XXVIII, 6, 28.
16. Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania 526, Lepcis Magna; *PLRE* Hesperius 2.
17. Symmachus: *Rel.* 23, 1.
18. Ausonius: *Dom.* IV, 51 ff, 61 ff.
19. *PLRE* Thalassius 3.
20. *PLRE* Arborius 3.
21. J.F. Matthews: *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*, p. 71 ff.
22. Marcellus: *De Med.* Praef.
23. Matthews, *op. cit.* p. 72.
24. *PLRE* Marcellus 7.
25. For details of his career, see *PLRE* Eutropius 2.
26. Eutropius: *Brev.* X, 16, 1.

27. Symmachus seems to know of it, *Ep.* III, 47; Seeck: *Symmachus* p. CXXXII
28. Paulinus admits his debt to Ausonius, *Carm.* X, 93-96.
29. Perhaps in 378, as it precedes Ausonius' own consulship. Ausonius, *Ep.* XXIV, 3-4.
30. Symmachus, *Ep.* III, 19.
31. Ausonius, *Fasti* IV, 6.
32. Ausonius, *Praef.* 2; Symmachus, *Ep.* I, 94-107.
33. Marhndale: "A Note on the Consuls of 381 and 382" in *Historia* XVI, (1967) p. 254-56.
34. *PLRE*, Syagrius 3.
35. *Amm. Marc.* XXVIII, 2, 5-9.
36. Matthews: *op. cit.* p. 75 + n. 4, the argument based on *Ep.* I, 94. Some scholars are unconvinced, e.g. Demandt: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 64 (1971) p. 38-45.
37. Callu: *Symmaque. Lettres* I, p. 18.
38. *PLRE*, Severus 29.
39. *PLRE*, Syagrius 2.
40. Sid. Ap. *Ep.* V, 17, 4, his tomb; *Ep.* V, 5, 1, his poetry.
41. e.g. Patruinus (*Symm. Ep.* I, 22); Claudius (*Ep.* I, 28); Rusticus I (*Ep.* I, 30); Innocentius (*Ep.* I, 36); Victor (*Ep.* I, 40).
42. *PLRE*, Potitus 1; *Symm. Ep.* I, 19.
43. The *Eclogues*, *Technopaegnon* (second edition) and *Ludus Septem Sapientium*. The school-like nature of all these works suggests that Ausonius was writing for a fellow professor.
44. For these posts see Symmachus *Ep.* I, 89; *PLRE* Antonius 5.
45. *PLRE*, Hypatius 4.
46. *PLRE*, Alypius 13.
47. Ammianus Marcellinus XXVIII, 1, 16.
48. *PLRE*, Theodorus 27.
49. *Cod. Th.* XI, 16, 12.
50. Matthews: *op. cit.* p. 80.
51. e.g. Ausonius, *Act. Grat.* VI, the numbers of consulships held by Valerius Corvus, Marius and Augustus.
52. *Act. Grat.* XII.
53. Syme: *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Historia Augusta*, p. 74.

54. Symmachus: *Rel.* 36, 1, 2.
55. Pacatus: *Pan. Lat.* XII, 28, 4; Ambrose, *Ep.* XXIV, 11.
56. Ausonius, *Ep.* XX.
57. This does not mean that certain educational achievements were required of the office holders, for as Pedersen, *Classica et Mediaevalia* 31 (1970) pp. 161-213, has pointed out, definite competence was not required for many posts, and the major advantages of education were in social terms, such as acceptance among the senatorial order. Dismissal for incompetence, other than among the liberal professions, was almost unknown, Pedersen, *op. cit.* p. 194.
58. Symmachus, *Ep.* II, 48; Callu. *op. cit.* p. 18.
59. Sid. Ap. *Ep.* VIII, 1, 1, to Petronius: "etiam scrinia Arverna petis eventilari; *Ep.* IX, 1, 1, to Firminus.

Nature and Emotion - The Personal Poetry

While it is true that the rhetorician in Ausonius can leave us cold, the poet is capable of arousing feelings in his modern readers when he allows his own emotional responses to guide his writings. Thus it is that the sections of his work which tend to appeal most now are those where he allows free rein to his appreciation of nature or permits his personal feelings vis-a-vis others to overcome his normal tendency to ornament and embellish subjects beyond recognition.

It is for this reason that the *Mosella*, unlike the majority of Ausonius' works, has generally been showered with praise rather than opprobrium. This "charming poem"¹ gains its modern popularity largely through the use of natural description of the river and the greenery of the Moselle valley, which strikes far more of a chord² for us than do the mythological references with which it also abounds. Its popularity, and the scholarly attention devoted to it, has rather obscured the fact that there are other works in the Ausonian corpus which display a similar freshness and love of nature and the world around us.

Therefore I propose first to discuss Ausonius' use of nature in some of his other works, before returning to the *Mosella* in detail. Something has already been said of the way in which Ausonius attempted to bring some life and realism into his didactic poetry, and the fact that the section of the *Technopaegnion* called the *De Vere Primo*, and dealing with the beginnings of spring in the countryside, must be considered within the constrictions of the work as a whole, where it can be seen as moderately charming, rather than outside its framework, where it loses most of its merit. But it is in the letters to his more intimate friends and family, where he was perhaps not trying so hard to impress, that Ausonius writes some of his most attractive lines, such as those accompanying a gift of thrushes and ducks to his son Hesperius:

"Qualis Picenae populator turdus olivae
clunes opimat cereas
vel qui lucentes rapuit de vitibus uvas,
pendetque nexus retibus,
quae vespertinis fluitant nebulosa sub horis
vel mane tenta roscido."

(Ep. XVIII, 1-6)

It is the detail which is startling and attractive, the different ways in which the nets hang at different times of day, or the way that the bunches of grapes shine amidst the vine-leaves. The remainder of the gift is also described with a wealth of natural detail, which does at least partially

compensate for the somewhat consciously poetic language:

"tum, quas vicinae suggessit praeda lacunae,
anites maritas iunximus,
remipedes, lato populantes caerula rostro
et crure rubras Punico,
iricolor vario pinxit quas pluma colore,
collum columbis aemulas."

(*Ep.* XVIII, 11-16)

The lines which he wrote after his son had been forced to part from him during Maximus' usurpation show a similar awareness of his surroundings:

"desertus vacuis solisque exerceor oris.
nunc ego pubentes salicum deverbero frondes,
gramineos nunc frango toros viridesque per ulvas
lubrica substratis vestigia libro lapillis."

(*Ep.* XX, 13-16)³

The atmosphere of loneliness is reinforced by the combination of words signifying solitude and emptiness in the first line. Even the Moselle itself had nothing to offer Ausonius in his current mood, being dismissed as "egelidae stagnantia terga Mosellae",⁴ in stark contrast to the largely sunny impression to be gained from the *Mosella*. In some way the experience of parting, with all its sadness, has brought out Ausonius' feelings and he is apparently writing what he genuinely feels rather than what he thinks he should say. It is in fact noticeable that this rough draft of a poem⁵ contains only one learned reference in its twenty-two lines, an indication of what Ausonius was capable, when the man took over from the schoolmaster. It is a sobering thought, when considering the simplicity of this poem, that, had Ausonius prepared it for publication during his lifetime, he would quite probably have refined it to include far more "artistic" elements, with a view to making it more attractive to his ancient readers, if unfortunately less so to his modern ones.

Occasionally too, in his letters to Paulinus, now resident in Spain, Ausonius departs from rhetoric long enough to give us a brief vignette of life in the fourth century, such as the description of a local village:

"me iuga Burdigala, trino me flumina coetu
secernunt turbis popularibus otiaque inter
vitiferi exercent colles laetumque colonis
uber agri, tum prata virentia, tum nemus umbris
mobilibus celebrique frequens ecclesia vico
totque mea in Novaro sibi proxima praedia pago,
dispositis totum vicibus variata per annum,

egelidae ut tepeant hiemes rabidosque per aestus
adspirent tenues frigus subtile Aquilones."

(*Ep.* XXVII, 90-98)

The description of the Bordelais would have been true for hundreds of years and can still be recognised today. Another description, or rather rhetorical accumulation, employing nature, occurs in the letter complaining about Paulinus' continued silence:

"respondent et saxa homini et percussus ab antris
sermo redit, redit et nemorum vocalis imago;
litorei clamant scopuli, dant murmura rivi,
Hyblaeis apibus saepes depasta susurrat.
est et harundineis modulatio musica ripis
cumque suis loquitur tremulum coma pinea ventis."

(*Ep.* XXIX, 9-14)

Even apart from such stylistic features as the chiasmic construction of the second line, the passage impresses by its use of illustrations taken from the natural world, which display Ausonius' powers of observation. Regrettably, however, in the majority of these poems, Ausonius' careful composition of myth and learning leaves us cold, as cold as it probably left the recipient, whose heart was no longer open to the Muses and Apollo.⁶

Another recipient of Ausonius' letters is the rustic Theon, who certainly seems to have been Ausonius' social inferior, and who, therefore, generally receives correspondence written on an entirely different, and more human, level from that addressed to Paulinus. Theon does not appear to have been educated to the highest level, as was Paulinus, or if he had been, he cannot have been a very good student, as Ausonius' most polished wit is lost on him, a fact which Ausonius seems to relish.⁷ This does not of course prevent him from indulging in his customary word and number play, but he sets his learned digressions within a framework of playful mockery, even suggesting at one point that he must be careful in case the cost of his paper should outweigh the value of Theon's gift of oysters to him:

"Parcamus vitio Dumnitonae domus,
ne sit charta mihi carior ostreis."

(*Ep.* XV, 55-56)

The fact that Theon was a country squire (he seems to have lived at the furthest point of Médoc⁸) increases the possibilities for Ausonius to write about nature and every day life in the country. For, although the poem concerning oysters has its deliberately obscure and learnedly mythological passages, it also displays a fine knowledge of the mussel, its habitat and the preparations for eating it:

"Iunctus limicolis musculus ostreis

primo conposuit fercula prandio,
 gratus deliciis nobilium cibus
 et sumptu modicus pauperibus focis.
 non hic navifrago quaeritur aequore,
 ut crescat pretium grande periculis;
 set primore vado post refugum mare
 algoso legitur litore concolor.
 nam testae duplicis conditur in specu,
 quae ferventis aquae fota vaporibus
 carnem lacteoli visceris indicat."

(*Ep.* XV, 36-46)

In some ways this piece displays the essential Ausonius, with its combination of didacticism and awareness of the natural world.

It is in the preceding letter that Ausonius best portrays life in the unsophisticated country area where Theon lived. Although it is clearly poetic exaggeration to describe Theon's home as he does, the flavour of the general standard of living of the area comes vividly over:

"vilis harundineis cohibet quem pergula tectis
 et tinguit pices lacrimosa colonica fumo."

(*Ep.* XIV, 6-7)

Ausonius also suggests that Theon may be buying up wax and tallow with clipped coin, so he can sell the goods for a profit,⁹ presumably in town, and even indulging in some rather dubious dealings with the local banditry:

"An maiora gerens tota regione vagantes
 persequeris fures, qui te postrema timentes
 in partem praedamque vocent? tu mitis et osor
 sanguinis humani condonas crimina nummis
 erroremque vocas pretiumque inponis abactis
 bubus et in partem scelerum de iudice transis?"

(*Ep.* XIV, 22-27)

The letter is not however composed entirely of mocking jests, for it seems to me that the concern which he expresses about Theon becoming injured in over-enthusiastic boar-hunting is genuine:

"At cum fratre vagos dumeta per avia cervos
 circumdas maculis et multa indagine pinnae?
 aut spumantis apri cursum clamoribus urges
 subsidisque fero? moneo tamen, usque recuses
 stringere fulmineo venabula comminus hosti.
 exemplum de fratre time, qui veste reducta
 ostentat foedas prope turpia membra lacunas
 perfossasque nates vicino podice nudat."

(*Ep.* XIV, 28-35)

Theon's brother's behaviour in displaying his wounds, which would hardly have been approved by some of Ausonius' senatorial friends, allows Ausonius to make play with mythological allusion, which this time is extremely apposite, in its ironic comparison of the bumpkin and the heroes of old:

"inde ostentator volitat, mirentur ut ipsum
Gedippa Ursinusque suos prolesque Iovinus
Taurinusque¹⁰ ipsum priscis heroibus aequans,
qualis in Olenio victor Calydonius apro
aut Erymantheo pubes fuit Attica monstro."

(*Ep.* XIV, 36-40)

The fanciful comparison which Ausonius then draws between Theon and Adonis, who was himself killed by a wounded boar, does tend to reinforce the genuineness of the plea, despite its exaggerated account of Theon's handsomeness, which contradicts Ausonius' remarks elsewhere:¹¹

"Set tu parce feris venatibus et fuge nota
crimina silvarum, ne sis Cinyreia proles
accedasque iterum Veneri plorandus Adonis
sic certe crinem flavus niveusque lacertos
caesariem rutilam per candida colla refundis,
pectore sic tenero, plana sic iunceus alvo,
per teretes feminum gyros surasque nitentes
descendis, talos a vertice pulcher ad imos."

(*Ep.* XIV, 41-48)

The brief physical description, which proceeds from head to foot, and is common in the Middle Ages, apparently occurs here for the first time.¹²

Ausonius passes on from boar-hunting to sea-fishing, a far less dangerous pastime, and the equipment with which Theon's house at Dumnitonus, being situated near the mouth of the Gironde, is well stocked. This section suggests that the better-known passage in which Ausonius describes the fish of the Moselle¹³ is not a purely literary invention but is also representative of a genuine interest on Ausonius' part. Here, as there, he displays a knowledge not only of the fish but also the methods of fishing:

"nam tota supellex
Dumnitoni tales solita est ostendere gazas,
nodosas vestes animantum Nerinorum
et iacula et fundas et, nomina vilica, lina
colaque et insutos terrenis vermibus hamos.
his opibus confise tumes? domus omnis abunda
litoreis dives spoliis. referuntur ab unda
corroco, letalis trygon mollesque platessae
urentes thynni et male tecti spina elacati.
nec duraturi post bina trihoria corvi."

(*Ep.* XIV, 53-62)

In passing we may note the echo in this last line of the description of the chub in the *Mosella*

"nec duraturus post bina trihoris mensis."

(*Mos.* 87)

There does not appear to be any particular reason for this close similarity; one might suspect it to be a subconscious recollection, had the works been written by different authors. Possibly Ausonius is being playful in echoing the *Mosella*, with its imperial undertones, in a letter to the rustic Theon. I would regard this as a possible explanation as Ausonius does himself make reference to his exalted position vis-à-vis Theon later in the letter, after expounding the theory of hendecasyllabic poetry:

"set iam non poteris, Theon, doceri,
nec fas est mihi regio magistro
plebeiam numeros docere pulpam."

(*Ep.* XIV, 94-96)

Throughout this letter, it seems to me that Ausonius is telling us nearly as much about himself as he does about Theon. The picture which he actually portrays is of Theon hunting and fishing, but the knowledge of detail which he displays, with loving care one might say, suggests that he himself was not averse to such pursuits, or had not been in his youth, if one is to view the advice to beware of boar-hunting as being given by an older man to a younger one. At any rate, he is well aware of the countryside of the Médoc and its wild life and seems to have enjoyed it in a more vigorous manner than at least one of his literary predecessors, the Younger Pliny.¹⁴

It is not just the countryside which arouses Ausonius' perceptions, for his description of Bordeaux, full of people for the Easter festivities, is also striking in its confusion of briefly sketched images:

"Nam populi coetus et compita sordida rixis
fastidientes cernimus
angustas fervere vias et congrege volgo
nomen plateas perdere.
turbida congestis referitur vocibus echo:
"Tene, feri, duc, da, cave!"
sus lutulenta fugit, rabidus canis impete saevo
et impares plaustro boves."

The run of imperatives which create the atmosphere of confused shouting among the congested traffic is especially effective and the reference to the inconvenience of animals in the streets is none the worse for being closely modelled on Horace.¹⁵

Ausonius' willingness to be guided by his emotions when he writes is

not confined to descriptions of his surroundings, but also manifests itself in his depiction of his friends and friendships. His personality also occasionally comes through in some of the poems addressed to his dead relatives, and more particularly, in the epigrams written to his wife.

We have already seen Ausonius' genuine concern over the possibility of Theon being injured in boar-hunting, and his concern to preserve the friendship also clearly outweighs any financial considerations, for he appears to be quite prepared to sacrifice a loan he has made to his friend, rather than their friendship:

"an quia per tabulam dicto pangente notatam
debita summa mihi est, ne repetamus abes?
bis septem rutilos regale nomisma Philippos,
nec tanti fuerint, perdere malo, Theon,
implicitum quam te nostris interne medullis
defore tam longi temporis in spatio."

(*Ep.* XVI, 17-22)

Behind the mocking facade, Ausonius is surely attempting to reassure Theon that there is no need to avoid him, thus reducing a possible sore point to a joke.

The generally bantering nature of Ausonius' address to Theon suggests a great intimacy, as does the occasionally similar tone of his remarks to Axius Paulus, a fellow teacher. Once again, however, when concern is expressed, it is undoubtedly genuine, as here when he expresses the desire to see his friend as soon as possible, but only when the latter is well enough to travel:

"congressus igitur nostros pete. si tibi cura,
quae mihi, conspectu ian potiere meo.
sed tantum adpropera, quantum pote corpore et aevo
ut saluum videam, sat cito te video."

(*Ep.* X, 3-6)

It is of course true that his further remarks are jestingly gratuitous for Axius Paulus will not need telling to avoid the more energetic forms of transport, but such humour need not imply an attempt to wound, but perhaps an attempt to cheer up his friend:

"sed cisium aut pigrum cautus conscende veraedum:
non tibi sit raedae, non amor acris equi.
cantheris moneo male nota petorrita vites,
ne celeres mulas ipse Metiscus agas."

(*Ep.* X, 13-16)

Ausonius' *Epistulae* are particularly significant in respect of the various forms of *amicitia* which might be expressed therein, from what we

might term friendship to something altogether more serious and dutiful. Mention has already been made of Ausonius' literary and political links with Symmachus and Petronius Probus, and a letter such as that to Ursulus (*Ep.* XII) is so full of mythological reference and comparisons between Ursulus and his colleague Harmonius and the great grammarians of the past, rather than any personal comment, that one suspects a lack of true intimacy between the two men.

If one compares this with the letters to Paulus, the difference is immediately apparent, for Ausonius, while churning out equally learned verse for Paulus' delight, and even macaronic lines, of mixed Greek and Latin, which is perhaps the ultimate in affectation, does so with tongue placed at least sometimes firmly in cheek. Once while calling on the Muses, he even terms himself a "σκαλὸς Διονυσιοποιητής"¹⁶ which is reminiscent of his remarks about composing the *Griphus* while in a state of at least partial inebriation.¹⁷ Ausonius is merely playing with his knowledge of language, in the same humorous spirit as when he "corrects" Paulus on a point of vocabulary in another letter:

"denique pisonem, quem tollenonem existimo proprie a philologis appellatum, adhibere, ut iubebas, recenti versuum tuorum lectione non ausus, ea quae tibi iam cursim fuerant recitata, transmisi"

(*Ep.* VII)

There is also an openness in Ausonius' friendship, a willingness to display what he genuinely feels. He is also generous with his hospitality, inviting both Theon and Paulus to stay with him, as we saw above, and also Tetradius, another poet, whom he summons almost pleadingly to his side:

"cur me supino pectoris fastu tumens
spernis poetam consulem,
tuique amantem teque mirantem ac tua
desiderantem carmina
oblitus alto neglegis fastidio?
plectendus exemplo tuo,
ni stabilis aevo pectoris nostri fides
quamquam recusantes amet.
Vale. valere si voles me, pervola
cum scrinio et musis tuis."

(*Ep.* XI, 29-38)

The sole qualification for admission to Ausonius' table appears to be a willingness to indulge in literary pursuits, whatever the limits of one's ability, while a guest under his roof. Similarly, in his epitaph on the teacher Jucundus,¹⁸ Ausonius praises the man's qualities as a friend and companion and his honest endeavours to fulfill his post, for which he was not really equipped. In itself such manifestations of friendship are not

perhaps important but the fact that Ausonius makes so great a point of them is significant. The sentiment is so natural to him, that he incorporates it in his work without question, as indeed does Sidonius Apollinaris, another inveterate visitor and receiver of guests, at least in the happier times before the siege of Clermont-Ferrand.

What is true of Ausonius' relationships with his friends is perhaps even more the case for his family and his wife. We have already seen one example of the evident love which he felt for his wife, and which he expressed in one of the simplest of his poems.¹⁹ As Wild said of this poem, "the author forgot himself for the moment",²⁰ producing a piece uncluttered with rhetorical expression of feeling. The same is true of a number of the other epigrams, which give us an interesting sidelight on the poet's relationship at home with his wife, and show her trust in him, despite the evidence of his amatory works to the contrary:

"Laidas et Glyceras, lascivae nomina famae,
Coniunx in nostro carmine cum legeret,
ludere me dixit falsoque in amore iocar*i*.
tanta illi nostra est de probitate fides."

(*Epig.* XXXIX)

There is a hint of cosy domesticity too in the three poems devoted to his wife's talents as a weaver, one of the oldest virtues of the Roman matron:

"Laudet Achaemenias orientis gloria telas:
molle aurum pallis, Graecia, texe tuis;
non minus Ausoniam celebret dum fama Sabinam,
parcentem magnis sumptibus, arte parem."

(*Epig.* LIII)²¹

It is rather ironic that the sentiments expressed, including that of the advantages of economy, should emanate from the pen of a Gaul, so long after they had departed from Italian life, which perhaps demonstrates again how much Ausonius and his contemporaries in Gaul idealised the past glory of Rome, and saw themselves in terms of continuing a tradition, which no longer existed but for a few.

After Attusia Lucana Sabina's untimely death, the poet mourned her for many years, thirty-six before the composition of her memorial in the *Parentalia*, and never remarried, which probably says as much for his continued affection for her as any number of words. Of course he probably felt affection too for Bissula, his prize from the Alemannic wars, but his wife's place in his heart and memory clearly remained unchallenged:

"torqueo deceptos ego vita caelibe canos,
quoque magis solus, hoc mage maestus ago.

vulnus alit, quod muta domus silet et torus alget
quod mala non cuiquam, non bona participo."

(Par. IX, 13-16)

The lament is made all the more poignant, by the stress on the mother's abandonment, by her death, of their children, which had reinforced the bond between man and wife:

"quae modo septenos quater inpletura Decembres
liquisti natos, pignora nostra, duos.
illa favore dei, sicut tua vota fuerunt,
florent, optatis adcumulata bonis.
et precor, ut vigeant tandemque superstite utroque
nuntiet hoc cineri nostra favilla tuo."

(Par. IX, 25-30)

The last line, with its mingling of their ashes, so to speak, is perhaps symbolic of the hope of reunion which Ausonius holds, when he joins his wife among the shades.

The early death of Ausonius' grandson, Pastor, also rouses him to a display of emotion, both pity and anger, at the unfortunate boy's death:

"occidis emissae percussus pondere testae,
abiecit tecto quam manus artificis.
non fuit artificis manus haec: manus illa cruenti
certa fuit fati suppositura reum.
heu, quae vota mihi, quae rumpis gaudia, Pastor!
illa meum petiit tegula missa caput."

(Par. XI, 9-14)

For someone to whom the *mos maiorum* was of such importance, the loss of his descendants before their time, and before they could continue the family name and glory must have been particularly tragic.

Perhaps Ausonius missed his wife as a companion as much as anything, which may account partially for his gregarious habits in later life, although the impression gained from the *Professores* is also one of strong brotherhood and friendship among the teachers, and one in which Ausonius shared from the time of his youth. The *Ephemeris* too casts light on the importance of friendship to Ausonius:

"habitum forensem da, puer.
dicendum amicis est have
valeque, quod fit mutuum."

(Eph. IV, 4-6)

Thus does Ausonius exchange greetings with his neighbours, almost in the manner of an old Roman client leaving his house early in the morning to go and greet his patron. Ausonius must however be at least the social equal

of those whom he goes to greet, for friendship overrules any divisions of class, especially, as we have seen, a friendship based on shared literary tastes. The *Ephemeris* also gives us an insight into Ausonius' tastes in entertaining, a lunch for six being considered as suitable:

"quinque advocavi; sex enim convivium
cum rege iustum: si super convicium est."

(*Eph.* V, 5-6)

It seems to me that this gives the key to Ausonius' views on friendship, in that one can imagine six people holding an intimate conversation after a meal, while a larger gathering, if superficially more showy, and suggestive of greater numbers of close companions, would by its generally noisy atmosphere, entirely lose any intimacy. It is not parsimony which makes Ausonius restrict the numbers of his guests, but the knowledge that all will get far more enjoyment from the smaller party than from a larger one. Friendships, in his eyes, should be close enough not to need the support of a large room full of people.

Because of the importance of friendships to Ausonius and his circle, it is all the more painful when one of them does break up, as happened when Paulinus of Nola decided to quit the round of visits in Aquitania for a more ascetic existence in Spain, and then in Italy. Ausonius' plaintive pleas for Paulinus to come and visit him are marked by a total incomprehension of Paulinus' motives for leaving his previous life, for the way to Paulinus' heart was certainly not through an appeal to their previous enjoyment of pagan literature together. Ausonius' initial letter of appeal is one of the most consciously literary pieces which he ever wrote, so the references must have been calculated to touch Paulinus; as such they are a measure of Ausonius' inability even to glimpse the chasm which now separated their outlooks on life:

"Discutimus, Pauline, iugum, quod nota fovebat
temperies, leve quod positu et venerabile iunctis
tractabat paribus Concordia mitis habenis ...
Inpie, Pirithoo disiungere Thesea posses
Euryalumque suo socium discernere Niso;
te suadente fugam Pylades liquisset Oresten
nec custodisset Siculus vadimonia Damon."

(*Ep.* XXVII, 1-3, 34-37)

It is not just Paulinus whom these appeals leave cold, for the very accumulation of trite reference and learning is equally daunting to the modern reader, who may well sigh for Ausonius to return to his "off-duty" letters, where it is actually possible to see emotion and feeling, without having to peer through acres of verbiage.

Ausonius' personality comes across to us, then, in two ways. First in his appreciation of nature, and secondly in his stress on friendship. When writing about topics which may be said broadly to come within either of these two areas, he is able at times to cast off the mantle of a teacher and rhetorician and express himself with less diligent attention to *imitatio* and other literary devices. These passages are not those which he would have regarded as being for public consumption and likely to guarantee his future fame, for when he tried to shine, he often achieves effects that to us are the most dull of all. As we shall see, this is something which is especially true of the *Mosella*, with its occasionally strange mixture of sensitive appreciation of nature and rhetoric hyperbole.

Notes

1. Tattersall, *Greece and Rome* 10 (1940) p. 39.
2. Edwards, *Classical Journal* 4 (1909) p. 259.
3. Ausonius also used the image of the footsteps on the banks, (though described here as sandy) in the *Mosella*.
 "hic solidae sternunt umentia litora harenae,
 nec retinent memores vestigia pressa figuras." (*Mos.* 53-54)
4. *Ep.* XX, 4.
5. *Ep.* XX, lemm. The only learned reference is that to Meton in line 12.
6. *Ep.* XXXI, 19 ff.
7. *Ep.* XV, 19-21; *Ep.* XIV, 71 ff.
8. *Ep.* XIV, 3. cf Pastorino: *Ausonio* p. 683 n.
9. *Ep.* XIV, 17 ff.
10. Evelyn-White prints 'taurinusque', presumably accidentally.
11. *Ep.* XVI, 30.
12. See Appendix.
13. *Mos.* 85-149.
14. Pliny, *Ep.* I, 6.
15. Horace, *Epist.* II, ii, 75.
16. *Ep.* VIII, 17.
17. *Griph.* Praef.
18. *Prof.* IX.
19. *Epig.* XL.
20. Wild, *Classical Journal* 46 (1951) p. 382.
21. cf *Epigg.* LIV, LV.

Chapter 6

The *Mosella*

"All artists are necessarily subject to a plethora of influence, conscious or unconscious; and while it is no doubt useful to be able to identify as many of these as one can, ultimately such identifications must be regarded as only prolegomena to literary criticism. To have discovered a poet's immediate source is by no means to have explicated his literary adaptations of the material in question."¹

Although Parry here was discussing chiefly the works of Ovid, his words are just as applicable to the works of any Latin poet, and provide a very necessary counterbalance to much Ausonian scholarship in particular. Lists of supposed echoes of, and parallels to earlier authors in the *Mosella* can be found easily,² and I do not propose to discuss them further here, unless in terms of the artistic use to which they have been put by Ausonius. The remarks about the *Mosella* which follow are therefore deliberately selective, concentrating largely on the often neglected, literary aspects of the poem.

A fair amount has also been written about Ausonius' motives in composing the *Mosella*, but it would be as well to look, at least briefly, at the poem itself, before moving on to a discussion of its political significance, if any. The work begins with a picture of the poet himself on a journey from Bingen to Neumagen, which it is reasonable to assume that he undertook during Valentinian's campaign against the Alemanni in 368-69, although it would be perhaps wrong to read any official significance into it.³ Ausonius commences the poem briskly, plunging *in medias res*, and immediately grasping the reader's attention with his use of the first person singular:

"Transieram celerem nebuloso flumine Navam,
addita miratus veteri nova moenia Vinco."

(*Mos.* 1-2)

This first section is by way of a preface to what follows, and is almost in the manner of a pilgrimage to the sacred home of the river, whose praises Ausonius is about to sing. The name of the river is not mentioned until the end of the twenty-second line of the poem, to be promptly followed by Ausonius' greeting to it:

"culmina villarum pendentibus edita ripis
et virides Baccho colles et amoena fluenta
subter labentis tacito rumore Mosellae.
Salve, amnis laudate agris, laudate colonis."

(*Mos.* 20-23)

During his journey, Ausonius had been compelled to pass through rather inhospitable country:

"unde iter ingrediens nemorosa per avia solum
et nulla humani spectans vestigia cultus."

(Mos. 5-6)

The juxtaposition of avia and solum seems to reinforce the idea of solitude and the distance from civilization, while the choice of the former word may well be because of its original meaning, "trackless", thereby adding to the impression of wild, uncivilized country which Ausonius is trying to create. Small wonder then that, as soon as he reaches Neumagen, and coincidentally the Moselle, everything is so much the better:

"Purior hic campis aer Phoebusque sereno
lumine purpureum reserat iam sudus Olympum."

(Mos. 12-13)

The use of Purior in the strong position of first word in its line brings out the superiority of Neumagen, Constantine's former base, over the pathless forests, a comparison reinforced by the introduction of the word Olympum, with its divine overtones, to describe the heavens visible from the area of the city, but not before:

"nec iam, consortis per mutua vincula ramis,
quaeritur exclusum viridi caligine caelum."

(Mos. 14-15)

The impression swiftly created in these lines is a complex one, but one thing stands out; the superiority of the civilized (i.e. Roman) town over the dense forests, through which the town and the river Moselle, on which it stands, is approached. This is not to say that Ausonius could only feel any sympathy for the tamed variety of nature. He could not love the deep forests, but may well have appreciated them.⁴ Before we pass on to the part of the poem devoted to the river itself, it is worthy of note in passing that the name of Bordeaux is mentioned even before that of the Moselle, and in such a way as to combine the two places, both with their villas and vines:

"in speciem quin me patriae cultumque nitentis
Burdigalae blando pepulerunt omnia visu,
culmina villarum pendentibus edita ripis
et virides Baccho colles et amoena fluenta
subter labentis tacito rumore Mosellae."

(Mos. 18-22)

The emphasis on Bordeaux is important, for Ausonius' local patriotism is strong, bordering at times on *l'esprit de clocher*, and in a sense, his ideal is as much Roman Gaul, or even Roman Bordeaux, as Rome itself. The melting from one location to another, from Bordeaux to the Moselle as above, is a technique familiar from modern cinema, the use of which has led Ternes to comment that "Ausone ... aurait fait un bon cinéaste."⁵ We shall see this technique used elsewhere in the *Mosella*, but it also occurs in other

poems of Ausonius, most notable in the *Ephemeris*,⁶ where the images of the dream which Ausonius is recalling flicker swiftly from one to another:

"cerno triumphantes inter me plaudere: rursum
inter captivos trahor exarmatus Alanos.
templa deum sanctasque fores palatiaque aurea
specto et Sarrano videor discumbere in ostro
et mox fumosis conviva adcumbo popinis."

(*Eph.* VIII, 17-21)

After the introductory section, the Mosella receives Ausonius' formal greeting, if not as a god,⁷ then at least as an animated and sentient being which is in some way responsible for the surrounding fields and their inhabitants:

"Salve, amnis laudate agris, laudate colonis
dignato imperio debent cui moenia Belgae."

(*Mos.* 22-23)

From this point, up to the second salutation to the river,⁸ the poem is devoted directly to the river itself, its contents, and its immediate surroundings, and as such contains that part of the work most appealing to the modern reader, while the final hundred or so lines, after this second *salutatio* are devoted more to the Moselle's rôle in the Roman world.

As Ternes has pointed out at length, the part of the poem devoted to the river itself is a strange mixture of fact and fiction, or perhaps wishful thinking. For example, the claim that the Moselle has neither rapids nor islands to interrupt its smooth flow (*Mos.* 36-38) and thus reduce it to the rank "du premier torrent venu",¹⁰ is strictly inaccurate, although the former occur chiefly in its upper reaches, well away from Trier, and the latter are neither large nor often found in mid-stream.¹¹

Nor can it be regarded as certain that Ausonius had evidence for some of the species of fish which he claims for the river, as, clearly, the more varieties which he can name, the more important will seem his subject. Indeed he does seem to hint at this in his remarks about the eel-pout:

"quaeque per Illyricum, per stagna binominis Histri
spumarum indiciis caperis, mustella, natantum,
in nostrum subvecta fretum, ne laeta Mosellae
flumina tam celebri defrudarentur alumno."

(*Mos.* 106-109)

Fiction may be said perhaps even to run riot when Ausonius deals with the sheat-fish (itself an improbable visitor to the river), where the image grows from dolphin to whale, and a whale threatening the existence of the very mountains, before collapsing into presumably deliberate bathos:

"Nunc, pecus aequoreum, celebrabere, magne silure:
 quem velut Actaeo perductum tergora olivo
 amnicolam delphina reor....
 talis Atlantiaco quondam ballena profundo,
 cum vento motuve suo telluris ad oras
 pellitur: exclusum exundat mare magnaue surgunt
 aequora vicinique timent decrescere montes.
 hic tamen, hic nostrae mitis ballena Mosellae
 exitio procul est magnoque honor additus amni."

(Mos. 135-37; 144-49)

The effect is as bizarre as the image created at the very beginning of the poem, when Ausonius describes the dead bodies on the battlefield at Bingen as though they were still lying where they had fallen three hundred years before:

"addita miratus veteri nova moenia Vinco
 aequavit Latias ubi quondam Gallia Cannas
 inflataeque iacent inopes super arva catervae."

(Mos. 2-4)¹²

But then perhaps Ausonius felt it artistically necessary for Gaul to be able to equal the most impressive example which Italy could produce, even in the matter of human carnage. The word order does nothing but strengthen the idea of a Gallic Cannae.

For Ternes however, the consistent building up of the Moselle through Ausonius' linking of it with Italy, Rome, and perhaps most of all, Bordeaux, is to give it a significance "qu'aux yeux du poète elle n'avait manifestement pas".¹³ It seems to me that this is to misunderstand Ausonius' method of composition. The use of comparison with other, more renowned places, and, in this case, rivers, is a common feature of Latin literature and Ausonius was rarely a man to hide his learning. Therefore it does not seem unreasonable to take the comparisons at face value, and as complimentary, rather than presuming any irony or desperation on the poet's part. Similarly, it is more than likely that Ausonius did not know the identity of the architects of the villas found in the Moselle valley,¹⁴ but the fact that he rates them with the best of their profession, quoting the greatest builders of both legend and history,¹⁵ does not imply a slight.

Ternes' main thesis is that Ausonius is writing his poem under the instructions of the emperor Valentinian, at a time when he is trying to gain the Germans' friendship and co-operation and not just their submission.¹⁶ This seems to me to be open to two major objections; first were the Germanic tribes likely to read, let alone appreciate, the *Mosella* and thus realise what a good life was to be had within the Roman fold? And if not, who else

might be impressed? Valentinian might possibly gain some favourable reaction from court and aristocracy, but one doubts that there was any real need for such subtlety. Secondly, it seems to me that Valentinian himself was not the kind of man to appreciate the poem; if not the semi-cultured barbarian which Ammianus Marcellinus makes him out to be,¹⁷ it is perhaps fair to say that his literary tastes were more suited by the *Cento Nuptialis* than by Ausonius' other works. That Valentinian might have asked his court poet for an epic on his victories is credible, but the *Mosella* is not this; one only has to glance at any panegyric written at this period, even Ausonius' *Acto Gratiarum* to Gratian, to appreciate the fact. The message, if any, is far too subtle and refined to suit the tastes of the time in that field.

In my opinion, then, the inspiration behind the *Mosella*'s composition was Ausonius himself. Of course the poem is connected with Valentinian's campaigns, and indeed would not have been written had they not taken place, but this is simply because Ausonius had to accompany the court on its campaign, in his position as royal tutor. And if Ausonius can be convicted of writing from an excessively optimistic viewpoint, there is no need to assume that he is being forced to do so. There is no suggestion that others among his works, such as the *Ordo Nobilium Urbium* were written under any form of duress. If Ausonius' work were to be considered in a vacuum, divorced from our knowledge of the period, one would not guess that the Empire was anything but at peace. In conclusion, therefore, I feel that one should look elsewhere for the explanation of Ausonius' occasionally strange blend of fact and fiction in this poem.

To return first to our sheat-fish, the *mitis ballena* of the Moselle. Ausonius is not devoid of humour as a writer and he may well in this passage be poking gentle fun at his own rhetorical abilities, and seeing just how far the image could be forced, before bringing the reader back to reality with a bump. Some of the vocabulary used in the passage would be well suited to epic, such as *amnicola* and *Actaeus*, and the foisting of such modes of expression on the topic of freshwater fish leads one easily to suppose that humour may be intended. The last couplet in the passage can then be seen without difficulty as tongue in cheek:

"hic tamen, hic nostrae mitis ballena Mosellae
exitio procul est magnoque honor additus amni."

(*Mos.* 148-49)

The stress is once again on the honour done to the Moselle by the presence of this fish, a dubious visitor by all accounts;¹⁸ perhaps even Symmachus saw the joke, for he complains that he never saw the fish, which Ausonius attributes to the Moselle, on Ausonius' dinner table.¹⁹

Returning to the rest of the poem, one is struck by its episodic nature, and the way in which Ausonius moves from one aspect of the Moselle valley to another, from the river itself to agriculture and from fishing to architecture, rather in the manner of an illustrated travelogue, if we may extend Ternes' cinematic metaphor. Initially Ausonius moves from a general description of the river and its traffic to concentrate more minutely on the surface and then beneath:

"Spectaris vitreo per levia terga profundo,
secreti nihil amnis habens: utque almus aperto
panditur intuitu liquidis obtutibus aer
nec placidi prohibent oculos per inania venti,
sic demersa procul durante per intima visu
cernimus, arcanique patet penetrabile profundum."
(Mos. 55-60)²⁰

But it is with the description of the river-bed that Ausonius achieves freshness and originality, by displaying his powers of observation and his appreciation of the beauty of nature:

"cum vada lene meant liquidarum et lapsus aquarum
prodit caerulea dispersas luce figuras:
quod sulcata levi crispata harena meatu,
inclinata tremunt viridi quod gramina fundo:
usque sub ingenuis agitatae fontibus herbae
vibrantes patiuntur aquas lucetque latetque
calculus et viridem distinguit glauca muscum."
(Mos. 61-67)

A particularly nice touch is provided by the ending of the penultimate line, where both the similar sounds and also the juxtaposition of "lucetque latetque" serve to emphasize the intermittent view of the pebbles at the bottom of the stream. Although the picture of the river bed contains nothing out of the ordinary to modern eyes, its very existence in the poem is significant of a change of approach in poetry, and one to be seen elsewhere in other Gallic poets. Others must have seen the simple beauties of the river; Ausonius' original contribution lies in the fact that he observed and recorded them, and in a way as natural as the objects described themselves. In this he is a modern rather than an ancient. The description itself is timeless but perhaps only to be truly appreciated in more recent times.

After a brief comparison of the pebbles on the bed of the Moselle with the pearls and coral of Scotland, Ausonius passes on to the fish to be found in the river. He begins in general terms, melting from a description of the riverbed to the creatures flitting around above it:

"detegit admixtos non concolor herba lapillos.
 Intentos tamen usque oculos errore fatigant
 interludentes, examina lubrica, pisces."

(Mos. 74-76)

In this last line Ausonius skilfully fits the metre to the actions of the fish, which can be imagined as floating slowly into view (the spondaic opening of the verse, reinforced by the one word *interludentes* being used to fill the whole hemistich²¹) and then suddenly, with a flick of the tail (the dactylic ending), disappearing out of sight.

A similar effect is achieved in the later passage describing a Gallic "Glaucus", a boy, who, having lost his catch at the last moment, dived into the water in an attempt to recapture his prize. His first reactions are fast (dactyls), but, once in the water, he becomes sluggish in comparison with the fish, and the end of the verse is heavily spondaic:

"impetit et stolido captat prensare natatu"

(Mos. 275)

In another verse, concerning the speed of the graylings' movement, Ausonius emphasizes the rapidity of their disappearance from view by a string of dactyls including an elision:

"effugiensque oculos celeri levis umbra natatu"

(Mos. 90)²²

The very name of the fish is of course significant of its elusive quality, as one may only catch sight of a fleeting shadow on the river bed, rather than the creature itself.²³

Throughout the catalogue of fish, Ausonius concentrates largely on two points, the fishes' appearance and their edibility. The emphasis on these two areas is suggestive of a close personal knowledge of fish and their characteristics, which leads one to feel that his acquaintance with them did not begin at the moment they reached his dinner-table. One would expect the fisherman or cook to know that a chub had to be eaten within six hours of being caught,²⁴ but perhaps not the master of the house, unless the latter had himself taken the trouble, or pleasure, to indulge in fishing.

Although Ausonius' catalogue of fish is in one sense similar to the encyclopaedic works of Pliny or to the *Halieutica*, it is composed with a greater emphasis on local varieties than the more abstract compilations to be found elsewhere possess. Thus the barbel is described as having passed beneath the bridge at Consarbrück:

"tuque per obliqui fauces vexate Saravi,
 qua bis terna fremunt scopulosis ostia pilis,
 cum defluxisti famae maioris in amnem,
 liberior laxos exerces, barbe, natatus."

(Mos. 91-94)

It is perhaps noteworthy that the Moselle, with its innate *Romanitas*, is seen as an influence of peace and calm, where life, even for a fish, is easier.

One feature of this whole passage, and very striking by its absence, is the comparative lack of learned allusion. To be sure, Ausonius gives the Danube its inevitable epithet of *binominis* (*Mos.*106), and the phrase *dubia cena* (*Mos.*102), meaning a meal where the guest is faced with an *embarras de choix*, is borrowed from Terence's *Phormio*,²⁵ but these are exceptions and the latter at least is apposite in its context. He is similarly plain-speaking when it comes to those fish whose lot is the cottage hearth rather than the banqueting-table, and in far less detail, as perhaps befits, in his view, the food of the commons:

"hic etiam Latio risus praenomine, cultor
stagnorum, querulis vis infestissima ranis,
lucius, obscuras ulva caenoque lacunas
obsidet. hic nullos mensarum lectus ad usus
fervet fumosis olido nidore popinis.
Quis non et virides, vulgi solacia, tincas
norit et alburnos, praedam puerilibus hamis,
stridentesque focus, obsonia plebis, alausas?"

(*Mos.* 120-27)

Even the pike's habitat seems to disqualify it from associating with the rich, and the alliteration of the letter 'f' may express scorn for the fish on the writer's behalf, or be intended to summon up the sound of the fish frying. Similarly the use of sibilants in the last line strongly reminds the reader of the fish hissing as it fries over the fire.

Before the mock-epic description of the sheat-fish, which closes this section of the poem, Ausonius also includes in his list of fish the salmon-trout and the gudgeon. The remarks about the latter close with a comparison between it and the barbel, which it does indeed resemble on a smaller scale:

"gobio, non geminis maior sine pollice palmis,
praepinguis, teres, ovipara congestior alvo
propexique iubas imitatus, gobio, barbi."

(*Mos.* 132-34)

"Mit starker Brachylogie" remarked Hosius,²⁶ followed by Ternes, of the last line, but surely Ausonius is here punning on the two words *barba* and *barbus* (hence: "imitating the tufted beard of the well-groomed barbel"), and introducing a humorous note, perhaps significantly just before the introduction of the sheat-fish.

After the passage on fish comes one devoted to the vines of the Moselle valley introduced by a transitional phrase which suggests that Ausonius was

very well aware of the catalogue and display aspects of his work:

"Iam liquidas spectasse vias et lubrica pisces
agmina multiplicesque satis numerasse catervas.
inducant aliam spectacula vitea pompam
sollicitentque vagos Baccheia munera visus."

(Mos. 150-53)

The idea of pageantry within the work occurs again later, with the battles between skiffs and their crews,²⁷ an obvious manifestation of the celebration of the Moselle itself which Ausonius is composing. In this transition to the vines, the poet is intrusive with his conscious leading of his reader by the hand to show him the further wonders of the region. This section provides a clear contrast with both what precedes and what follows it, for the treatment is almost entirely in allusive and learned terms as opposed to the earlier, more natural descriptions of the fish and also of the description of the workers on land and water which follows:

"sollicitentque vagos Baccheia munera visus,
qua sublimis apex longo super ardua tractu
et rupes et aprica iugi flexusque sinusque
vitibus adsurgunt naturalique theatro.
Gauranum sic alma iugum vindemia vestit
et Rhodopen proprioque nitent Pangaea Lyaeo;
sic virescunt Ismarius super aequora Thracia collis;
sic mea flaventem pingunt vineta Garumnam."

(Mos. 153-60)

Of course it is far more difficult to speak in anything other than generalities where vines are concerned than it was for the fish, whose different species are immediately distinguishable one from another by the layman, even if he does not know their names. Hence no doubt the rather vague picture of the valley slopes and then the references to famous wine-growing areas.²⁸

There now follows another of Ausonius' "cinematic" transitions, as his personal camera pans down from the slopes and towards the river banks, passing by the various agricultural workers, to finish focussed on a solitary traveller and on the bargees who are exchanging merry banter with those on land:

"summis quippe iugis tendentis in ultima clivi
conseritur viridi fluvialis margo Lyaeo.
laeta operum plebes festinantesque coloni
vertice nunc summo properant, nunc deiuge dorso,
certantes stolidis clamoribus. inde viator
riparum subiecta terens, hinc navita labens,
probra canunt seris cultoribus: adstrepit ollis
et rupes et silva tremens et concavus amnis."

(Mos. 161-68)

So idyllic is the scene that Ausonius introduces a supernatural element in the form of satyrs and nymphs to replace the human forms of husbandmen and boatmen. Although, at first glance, these figures seem to be entirely artificial, merely part of the mythological furniture, Ausonius is in fact making quite a subtle point by their inclusion. For he does not actually state that they are to be found playing in the Moselle, merely that he could believe it possible in such pleasant surroundings that they might be there:

"hic ego et agrestes et glauca tuentes
Naidas extremis credam concurrere ripis."

(Mos. 170-71)

As the nymphs and gods traditionally take over the countryside from man at mid-day,²⁹ Ausonius cannot claim to be retailing accurate information, and indeed would not wish to do so,³⁰ perhaps for fear of ending up like Actaeon who had also intruded into the gods' privacy during their time for possessing the countryside.³¹

There follows the description of an aspect of the river to be enjoyed by god and man alike, the reflection in the water itself of the scenery bordering the stream. This is an aspect of the river which Ausonius alone among the Latin poets develops to anything approaching its full potential, even though some of his phrases may be taken from Statius, or possibly Pliny:³²

"Illa fruenda palam species, cum glaucus opaco
respondet colli fluuius, frondere videntur
fluminei latices et palmite consitus amnis
Quis color ille vadis, seras cum propulit umbras
Hesperus et viridi perfundit monte Mosellam!
tota natant crispis iuga motibus et tremit absens
pampinus et vitreis vindemia turgent in undis."

(Mos. 189-95)

Although the description is extremely bold for ancient tastes, the river being pictured as "sown with vineshoots", Ausonius does subtly insist upon the unreality of the scene by occasional hints, such as the use of *absens*, reminding the reader that the trembling leaf is elsewhere than where it seems. So too the boatman is spoken of as being mocked as he attempts to count the vines which he can see:

"adnumerat virides derisus navita vites,
navita caudiceo fluitans super aequora lembo
per medium, qua sese amni confundit imago
collis et umbrarum confinia conserit amnis."

(Mos. 196-99)

Ausonius' skilful use of word order is again apparent, as the image of the vines does indeed become confused in the river, by means of the elision of "sese amni". Ausonius returns later in the poem to the theme of reflection

and more particularly the distortion of truth involved when the sun reaches its zenith:

"hos Hyperionio cum sol perfuderit aestu,
reddit nautales vitreo sub gurgite formas
et redigit pandas inversi corporis umbras
unda refert alios simulacra umentia nautas,
ipsa suo gaudet simulamine nautica pubes,
fallaces fluvio mirata redire figuras."

(Mos. 222-24; 227- 29)

Once again, Ausonius' abilities as an observer of people and their habits have to be admired, for the scene is another one which is timeless, although he was apparently the first to feel its charm and record it. And just as these boys enjoy watching their reflections in the river below, so a girl, seeing her face in a mirror for the first time, believes her eyes, and tries to kiss the image, as she would her twin:

"laeta ignorato fruitur virguncula ludo
germanaeque putat formam spectare puellae:
oscula fulgenti dat non referenda metallo
aut fixas praetemptat acus aut frontis ad oram
vibratos captat digitis extendere crines:
talis ad umbrarum ludibria nautica pubes
ambiguus fruitur veri falsique figuris."

(Mos. 233-39)

The comparison is particularly touching, being again drawn from real life, as opposed to myth, and may possibly result from Ausonius having seen such a picture in plastic art, for the picture is common in Gallic sculpture.³³ He adds a touch of realism, and perhaps sadness by pointing out that the girl's kisses cannot be returned by the metal mirror. In the concluding couplet, which brings to an end the play with reflections, Ausonius once again stresses both their realism and their falsity, so close one to the other, by his juxtaposition of "veri falsique" in the last line.

The image of the girl with her first mirror forms an interesting psychological contrast with Ausonius' epigram about Lais, who is dedicating her own mirror to Venus, as something which she is no longer willing to use, because of the all too real reflection of herself which she sees in it:

"Lais anus Veneri speculum dico: dignum habeat se
aeterna aeternum forma ministerium.
at mihi nullus in hoc usus, quia cernere talem,
qualis sum, nolo, qualis eram, nequeo"

(Epig. LXV)

For the girl, the mirror was an aid to play, and the image a pleasant one, to

be altered at will by a change of expression or hairstyle; for Lais the mirror was an only too accurate record of her changed appearance. It says something for Ausonius' skills as a human psychologist that he could do justice to both moods.

The idyllic scene which Ausonius had carefully built up of people harmlessly enjoying themselves on the river is shattered³⁴ in an instant by the description of fishing which follows. That Ausonius is on the side of the fish is obvious from the very start, and the horrors of the sport, from the fishes' point of view, are made to seem all the more terrible by the charm and tranquillity of the scene which went before. There, man was seen within an idyllic framework, in stark contrast to the enumeration of his machinations against the unprotected fish. The pleasant river banks too are perhaps in some way to blame, for they afford the predator an easy place from which to work:

"Iam vero accessus faciles qua ripa ministrat,
scrutatur toto populatrix turba profundo
heu male defensos penetrali flumine pisces."

(Mos. 240-42)

This last line is notable, with its sigh of regret for the lack of protection afforded the fish, while the use of the word *penetralis* conjures up the idea not only of the depths of the river but also that of a sanctuary, a place where fish ought to be safe.³⁵ The innocence of the fish and the cruelty of man are also stressed in what follows:

"quos (hamos) ignara doli postquam vaga turba natantum
rictibus invasit patulaeque per intima fauces
sera occultati senserunt vulnera ferri,
dum trepidant, subit indicium crispoque tremori
vibrantis saetae nutans consentit harundo,
nec mora et excussam stridenti verbere praedam
dexter in obliquum raptat puer; excipit ictum
spiritus, ut raptis quondam per inane flagellis
aura crepat motoque adsibilat aere ventus."

(Mos. 250-58)

The fish are depicted as unaware of man's trickery, "ignara doli". Furthermore the vocabulary of the entire passage is very suggestive of violence, with *verber* and *flagellum* both normally associated with torture, and both *rpto* and *rapio* containing overtones of violence. The fish themselves, described as *praeda* and *rapinae*, seem to be the victims of a sack or pillage in war. And once on dry land, the fishes' suffering does not end. Ausonius continues to build up the pathos by his use of contrast and paradox:

"exultant udae super arida saxa rapinae
luciferique pavent letalia tela diei.

"cuique sub amne suo mansit vigor, aere nostro
segnis anhelatis vitam consumit in auris."

(Mos. 259-62)

Just as the fish come from a wet environment, so man comes from a dry one, and the wet fish on dry land could not be less at home. The irony of the fishes' predicament is further stressed by the following line for daylight is normally associated with life rather than death.³⁶ The approach of death is perhaps also signified in the metre of the last two lines, with the largely dactylic line of the fish in the water being succeeded by a run of spondees in the following one, suggestive of the growing sluggishness of the fish.

It is typical of Ausonius' concern for the weaker party in the confrontation between man and fish that he provides at least one example of a happy ending:

"vidi egomet quosdam leti sub fine trementes
collegisse animas, mox in sublime citatos
cernua subiectum praeceps dare corpora in arnem,
desperaturum potientes rursus aquarum."

(Mos. 270-73)

Once again the metre seems to suit the context as the fish's body disappears by elision into the river. The following passage, with the boy attempting to retrieve his escaping catch, forms a fitting pendant as the lad is utterly inept once he is in the alien environment of the river, and the fish have the advantage over him, thus ensuring their escape. The story of Glaucus seems to be inserted as the nearest possible example of a total revenge for the fish, and as a playful warning to the fisherman of Ausonius' own time, but is perhaps not so successful today.

The remainder of the poem is in many ways less attractive to the modern reader, for Ausonius devotes considerably more time to rhetorical effect and hardly any to nature. Nor do the remaining "catalogue" passages have the charm of the earlier list of fish, for Ausonius does not employ such interesting detail in his remarks about villas, architects, or even rivers.

Ausonius briefly mentions the villas of the Moselle valley as looking down on events such as Glaucus' transformation (!), but, before going into further detail, he indulges in rather a fanciful comparison between the Moselle and various seas and straits, including the Euripus dividing Europe and Asia:

"..... licet hic commercia linguae
iungere et alterno sermonem texere pulsu.
blanda salutiferas permiscet litora voces,
et voces et paene manus."

(Mos. 293-96)

The use of *salutifer* here is unusual and attractive, for the meaning "bringing greetings" is apparently not attested elsewhere before the early sixth century.³⁷

The passage devoted to famous architects which follows, is one of those which best demonstrates Ausonius' strengths as a teacher with its combination, in modern eyes, of "erudition pedantesque" and "amplification banale".³⁸ There is an allusion to Daedalus, the winged Gortynian,³⁹ linked quite specifically to his appearance in the *Aeneid*, vainly trying to include his son's fall from the sky in his sculptures at Cumae,⁴⁰ but overcome each time with grief. The remaining details may well be drawn from Varro's lost *Hebdomades* (*Mos.* 306), or possibly from Pliny's *Natural History*, which Ausonius did know, although may not have had in his possession at this period.⁴¹

Having celebrated thus the profession of architect, Ausonius evidently feels that the correct mood has been established to continue his description of the villas of the Moselle valley:

"haec (villa) est natura sublimis in aggere saxi,
haec procurrentis fundata crepidine ripae,
haec refugit captumque sinu sibi vindicat amnem.
illa tenens collem, qui plurimus imminet amni,
usurpat faciles per culta, per aspera visus
utque suis fruitur dives speculatio terris."

(*Mos.* 321-26)

The use of anaphora in these first three lines emphasizes the swift transition from one thumbnail sketch to the next. As we slowly move our eyes along the different edifices, so Ausonius begins to pick out more individual details, other than just the site:

"huic proprium clausos consaepto gurgite pisces
apricas scopulorum inter captare nouales.
haec summis innixa iugis labentia subter
flumina despectu iam caligante tuetur."

(*Mos.* 331-34)

The idea of the river haze is a particularly nice touch of realism, as this is a phenomenon particularly frequent in the climate of an area such as Northern Gaul, and the remark may well be occasioned by a genuine memory of Ausonius' time there. It is also noteworthy that Ausonius sees fit to mention yet a further means of fishing, this time by means of a weir arrangement, which left fish imprisoned for man's taking.⁴²

It is possibly indicative of Ausonius' own comparative lack of real interest in these scenes that he parades his rhetorical tricks rather than simply recording the sights. Therefore, perhaps fearful of losing his ancient audience's attention, he tries out rhetorical questions followed by an allusive reference to Vulcan (*Mos.* 338), a metonymy of the fires necessary

for the hypocaust systems of the villas. Perhaps the heat generated by the god was too much for some, for Ausonius insists that many find refreshing coolness and relief from the baths in the river, even in preference to the indoor cold plunges:

"vidi egomet defessos multo sudore lavacri
fastidisse lacus et frigora piscinarum,
ut vivis fruerentur aquis, mox amne refotos
plaudenti gelidum flumen pepulisse natatu."

(Mos. 341-44)

The following comparison with the bay of Naples, although typical of the elevated praises of rhetoric, is another which it is hard to take seriously, and one might well be correct not to do so, for, as with the "mitis ballena" mentioned earlier, Ausonius drops a substantial hint that the comparison is not to be taken at completely face value, by insisting on the reduced size of this image of Baiae:

"quod si Cumanis huc adforet hospes ab oris,
crederet Euboicas simulacra exilia Baias
his donasse locis: tantus cultusque nitorque
adlicit et nullum parit oblectatio luxum."

(Mos. 345-48)

There follows an abrupt transition (unusual in this poem) to the last of the catalogue sections, that of the various tributaries of the river, which flow eagerly to swell the Moselle with their waters. Thus the Sura (Sauer), already swollen by the Promea (Prüm) and Nemea (Nims), hurries to plunge into the Moselle (Mos. 355). Perhaps Ausonius knew the Celbis (Kyll) and Erubris (Ruwer) better than the others (of the streams mentioned these two join the Moselle nearest to Trier), for he grants them rather more individuality:

"te rapidus Celbis, te marmore clarus Erubris
festinant famulis quam primum adlambere lymphis:
nobilibus Celbis celebratus piscibus, ille
praecipiti torquens cerealia saxa rotatu
stridentesque trahens per levia marmora serras
audit perpetuos ripa ex utraque tumultus."

(Mos. 359-64)

Later the Saravus (Saar), which is a river of genuine importance is also granted a little more attention:

"naviger undisona dudum me mole Saravus
tota veste vocat, longum qui distulit amnem,
fessa sub Augustis ut volveret ostia muris"

(Mos. 367-69)⁴³

Finally the Alisontia⁴⁴ glides through peaceful agricultural areas on its way to meet the greater river.

Mention of so many rivers seems to trigger off in Ausonius' mind the names of two of the most famous in ancient literature, the Simois and the Tiber. In a peculiar way, the fact that Ausonius was trying to do for the Moselle what Homer and Vergil had done for the aforementioned streams, is rather appropriate, for the Moselle stands, in terms of importance, in relation to these other rivers roughly as Ausonius stands to Homer and Vergil. It is almost as if he realises this, for he states that the Simois and Tiber would yield their place, had Homer or Vergil celebrated the Moselle (*Mos.* 375). Any modesty is of course purely literary, and Ausonius' major concern is apparently to introduce Rome, in its capacity of *Roma aeterna*, an ideal rather than as the actual political capital of the Empire, and thus glorify Trier and its river.

This passage brings to an end the main section of the poem, that which deals with the river itself. The invocation to the stream which follows balances the one which greeted Ausonius' first sight of the river:⁴⁵

"Salve, magne parens frugumque virumque, Mosella!
te clari proceres, te bello exercita pubes,
aemula te Latiae decorat facundia linguae.
quin etiam mores et laetum fronte serena
ingenium natura tuis concessit alumni.
nec sola antiquos ostentat Roma Catones,
aut unus tantum iusti spectator et aequi
pollet Aristides veteresque inlustrat Athenas."

(*Mos.* 381-88)

The river and its surrounding area are again expressed as the equals of Rome and Athens, the earlier capitals of civilised thought. Ausonius' stress on *facundia*⁴⁶ is perhaps inevitable in a man both a schoolmaster and *littérateur*, who considered the attribute as one of the essentials in the world in which he lived. So too Trier must have the wisdom of Rome and Athens, in the shape of its own Catos and Aristides, in order to build it up as a viable centre of the Empire, one where the emperor could regard it as an honour rather than a necessity to reside. After all, Trier was the *de facto* capital of the Roman world, so Ausonius' glorification of the area is not just a literary exercise in a vacuum, he may feel that it ought to have some glory attached to it, the ideal of *Roma aeterna* in a different setting. Capital cities of empires do have auras attached to them from the presence of the chief men of state, and it is not Ausonius' fault if the transience of Trier's promotion to this position, and the fact of this promotion being caused by temporary military necessity, leave the area devoid

in our eyes of even the ephemeral glory which our poet saw there. There is a certain irony too for us at the conclusion of the poem, for Ausonius, while speaking of all the rivers of Gaul which pay their tribute to the Moselle, lights upon the Rhone, and more particularly its major city, Arles:

"te (Mosellam) Druna, te sparsis incerta Druentia ripis
Alpinique colent fluvii duplicemque per urbem
qui meat et Dextrae Rhodanus dat nomina ripae."

(Mos. 479-81)

It was of course Arles which was to supplant Trier as the seat of the Gallic Prefecture in about 395,⁴⁷ when the attempts at reinforcing the Rhine frontier had been abandoned.

It seems to me that this last section of the poem⁴⁸ is devoted to the Moselle and Trier as the imperial river and city (which of course they were at the time of writing), with the intention of attributing to them some of the lustre of Rome and Greco-Roman civilization. Just as Constantine had felt the need to beautify his new city with older works of art, and give it a senate to perpetuate the traditions of the Roman state, so Ausonius is trying to do the same in verbal and literary terms for the current centre of the Roman world.

It is within these terms of reference that one should approach this section of the work, the one which is without doubt superficially the least attractive to anyone not schooled in rhetoric and panegyric, as most of Ausonius' contemporary audience would have been. Therefore his promise to sing of the great men of Trier at another time, some years in the future, is not necessarily a light one:⁴⁹

"quis mihi tum non dictus erit? memorabo quietos
agricolas legumque catos fandique potentes,
praesidium sublime reis; quos curia summos
municipium vidit procures propriumque senatum,
quos praetextati celebris facundia ludi
contulit ad veteris praeconis Quintiliani,
quique suas rexere urbes purumque tribunal
sanguine et innocuas inlustravere secures."

(Mos. 399-406)

These typically Roman and Italian virtues will, in Ausonius' view, become equally typical of Northern Gaul, now it is at the centre of affairs. We may note in passing the emphasis once again on *facundia*, that attribute of any civilized society.

Having thus attributed to the Moselle the necessary Roman virtues, Ausonius can now allow it to perform its junction with the Rhine, the Germanic river, bringing to the frontier not just its waters, but also a stream of

Roman virtues and victories (*Mos.* 423), and will eventually bear its influence right up to the Rhine's mouth (*Mos.* 473). It is as if the Rhine can gain strength as the frontier of the Roman Empire because of the many advantages which it gains from the Moselle:

"dives aquis, dives Nymphis, largitor utrique
alveus extendet geminis divortia ripis
communesque vias diversa per ostia pandet.
accedunt vires, quas Francia quasque Chamaves
Germanique tremant: tunc verus habebere limes."

(*Mos.* 431-35)

In some ways, the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine marks the end of the poem, for, although there still remains some forty-five lines, these are not really linked to what goes before, being largely a homage to the Moselle by the remainder of the Gallic rivers, and written entirely in the context of Gaul rather than that of the Roman Empire as a whole. The change of tone is marked by Ausonius' intrusion into the poem and presentation of himself as a Gaul:

"Haec ego, Vivisca ducens ab origine gentem,
Belgarum hospitiiis non per nova foedera notus,
Autonius, nomen Latium, patriaque domoque
Gallorum extremos inter celsamque Pyrenen,
temperat ingenuos qua laeta Aquitanica mores.
audax exigua fide concino." (*Mos.* 438-43)

This recentring of the focus of the poem foreshadows its very end, when Ausonius concludes, not with the name of the river whose praises he has been celebrating, but with that of his native stream:

"te (Mosellam) stagnis ego caeruleis magnumque sonoris
amnibus, aequoreae te commendabo Garumnae."

(*Mos.* 482-83)

It is from his Aquitanian home that Ausonius will look back to the Moselle as the centre of Roman affairs from which he has retired equipped with consular honours (*Mos.* 451)⁵⁰ and celebrate further its contribution to the *Pax Romana*:

"addam urbes, tacito quas subterlaberis alveo,
moeniaque antiquis te prospectantia muris;
addam praesidiis dubiarum condita rerum,
sed modo securis non castra, sed horrea Belgis;
addam felices ripa ex utraque colonos
teque inter medios hominumque boumque labores
stringentem ripas et pingua culta secantem."

(*Mos.* 454-60)

Ausonius' admission of the existence of the fortresses within the idyll is balanced by his insistence on their conversion to peaceful purposes, one which is clearly a hope for the future, after the "Roman" influence of the Moselle has been felt, rather than being any sort of reflection of the current situation. So too must be the picture of man and beast placidly ploughing the fields beside the river, although the strong Vergilian echo here is probably a deliberate attempt to conjure up an image of a Golden Age.⁵¹

Because of the civilizing achievements of the Moselle, it will gain the homage of the other rivers of Gaul; this neat touch is most appropriate, for the Moselle has been raised to supernatural, if not divine, status, and as men praise their rulers, so rivers must praise their own superior:

"non tibi se Liger anteferet, non Axona praeceps,
Matrona non, Gallis Belgisque intersita finis,
Santonico refluus non ipse Carantonus aestu.
concedes gelido, Durani, de monte volutus
amnis, et auriferum postponet Gallia Tarnen."

(Mos. 461-65)

The size of the river is clearly not as important as its position in affairs, for the Loire and the Rhone (Mos. 481) are both considerably longer and of greater geographical importance than the Moselle. Ausonius' treatment of the Rhone is interesting in this respect, for this river, having gathered in most of the Alpine streams, is in fact the main artery of drainage for most of South-Eastern Gaul, and yet, by means of compression, Ausonius makes it out to be a far lesser stream than it actually is:

"te Druna, te sparsis incerta Druentia ripis
Alpinique colent fluvii duplicemque per urbem
qui meat et Dextrae Rhodanus dat nomina ripae."

(Mos. 479-81)

Ausonius does not in fact even make it plain that the Drome, Durance and other Alpine streams are affluents of the Rhone, and it has at least as many tributaries as the Moselle, and certainly more important ones.

What then is the *Mosella's* *raison d'être*? Ausonius has written a poem which elevates a river of secondary importance to a position as the most important waterway at least in Gaul. As indicated earlier, I do not accept Ternes' explanation that the poem was written at Valentinian's behest, as propaganda for his attempts at achieving a solution to the problems on the Rhine frontier. However it does have a political significance, in as much as it is possible to trace certain of the author's views from his poem.

Although Marx⁵² is not correct in seeing the poem as principally aimed at the inhabitants of Gaul, he is correct to stress the Gallic flavour of the poem. For Ausonius was a believer in a Gallic Empire, even though he

would not have used these terms; his patriotism was multi-layered. He was a Roman, but more than this he was a Romanised Gaul, and most of all an Aquitanian or Bordelais. In this respect his attitude is parallel to that of Sidonius Apollinaris, leader of the last desperate effort to preserve the Romanity of the Auvergne.

As for the *Mosella*'s form, it does not really conform to any previous genre of literature, for it contains aspects of several other genres. The beginning of the poem is suggestive of a journey-description, such as Horace's trip to Brundisium or Rutilius Namatianus' *De redito suo*, but the remainder of the piece certainly does not fit into this category. Nor is it a hymn,⁵³ although the salutations to the river are typical of this genre, and, although much of the poem resembles a panegyric, it does not fit this description easily either.

In short then, the *Mosella* should be regarded as unique in Latin literature, with its mixture of what we may term ancient and modern elements. Of course it is the "modern", natural elements which make the *Mosella* impossible to categorise, and it is these which give the poem its charm. It is when Ausonius is "off-duty", not implementing the skills of his rhetorical trade, but allowing his personal thoughts to intervene, that his poem merits the description as "the lone poetic beacon of the decadent centuries".⁵⁴

Notes

1. H. Parry: Transactions of the American Philological Association 95 (1964) p. 268.
2. e.g. in Schenkl 's edition of Ausonius' works. cf also Fletcher *Mnemosyne* ser III, I (1933-34), p. 194-95; Green, *Classical Quarterly* N.S. 27 (1977) p. 441-52.
3. cf. Marx: "Ausonius' Lied von der Mosel", in *Rhenisches Museum* 1931, esp. p. 375-76.
4. Posani: *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 34 (1962) p. 51.
5. Ch-M. Ternes: "Paysage réel et coulisse idyllique dans la Mosella d'Ausone", in *Revue des Études Latines* XLVIII (1970) p. 377. This article will henceforth be referred to as "Ternes, *Paysage*", to distinguish it from the same scholar's edition of the poem (= Ternes, *Mosella*).
6. Johnson; *History Today* 25 (1975) p. 397.
7. Though it will be so described later, *Mos.* 374.
8. *Mos.* 381.
9. Ternes, *Paysage*, *passim*.
10. Ternes, *Mosella* p. 37.
11. Ternes, *ibid.*
12. cf Ternes, *Paysage*, p. 390. It should be borne in mind that most of Ausonius' historical references are to events even older than the Battle of Bingen, such as the naval campaigns against Sextus Pompey and Antony and Cleopatra, *Mos.* 209-18; the reason for this is not merely that Ausonius could only find references of this vintage in his cultural background of the late Republic and Early Empire, but also that the use of these was without any modern political overtones. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVI, I, 1) had been loathe to bring his history too up to date for fear of offending by telling the truth).
13. Ternes, *Paysage*, p. 387.
14. Ternes, *Paysage*, p. 388.
15. *Mos.* 300 ff.
16. Ternes, *Paysage*, p. 393.
17. e.g. Ammianus Marcellinus XXVII, 7; XXIX, 3, 9; XXX, 8.
18. Ternes, *Mosella*, p. 52.
19. Symmachus, *Ep.* I, xiv, 4.
20. The alliteration in the last line seems to be purely for purposes of show, the sound not adding obviously to the effect. Ausonius clearly enjoyed playing with language, as the oxymoronic "luxuriaturegestas" (*Mos.* 52) shows. cf. Posani *op cit* p. 34.
21. Ternes, *Mosella*, p. 43.

22. Hosius: "*Die Moselgedichte des Decimus Magnus Ausonius und des Venantius Fortunatus*", p. 39.
23. Posani: *op. cit.* p. 56.
24. *Mos.* 87.
25. *Phormio* 342-43. The phrase is however sufficiently striking to have become a commonplace, at least in literary circles.
26. Hosius. *op. cit.* p. 44; Ternes, *Mosella* p. 52, citing three examples of the use of "propexa barba", a beard combed down (on to the chest). e.g. Vergil *Aen.* X, 838: "fusus propexam in pectore barbam".
27. *Mos.* 200. It is noticeable that both passages so introduced are full of rhetoric and learning, showcases for Ausonius' talents.
28. Although Pangaea may well be a mistake. Its association with Rhodope in Vergil (*Georgics* IV, 461-62) was for other reasons; cf Ternes, *Mosella* p. 55. I do not know why Ternes questions whether Ausonius possessed any vineyards of his own, cf. *Dom.* I, 21 ff.
29. *Mos.* 178; Ternes, *Mosella* p. 58.
30. *Mos.* 186-87.
31. Ovid: *Met.* III, 164 ff.
32. Statius, *Silvae* I, iii, 17 ff; II, ii, 48-49. Pliny, *Ep.* VIII, 8, 4.
33. Ternes, *Mosella*, p. 66.
34. Ternes, *Mosella*, p. 67.
35. The phrase "penetralia magni amnis" occurs in Ovid, *Met.* I, 574, but apparently without any particularly religious significance.
36. The phrase "letalita tela diei" is probably intended to be reminiscent of the frequent Lucretian phrase "lucida tela dici" (e.g. *De Rerum Natura* I, 147; II, 60, etc.).
37. Alcimus Avitus, *Carm.* IV, 225. Hosius *op. cit.* p. 62.
38. Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 152.
39. *Mos.* 300 ff.
40. Vergil: *Aen.* VI, 31-33.
41. Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 156 n. 2 is presumably unaware that Symmachus lent Ausonius a copy of this book: Symmachus, *Ep.* I, 24.
42. The phrase "apricas scopulorum novales" is rather strange and rather than being understood as literally referring to "sunny, grassy (?) rocks", should perhaps be interpreted as signifying a rocky pool backed by fallow land. Certainty is not possible, however.
43. The phrase "tota veste vocat" borrowed from *Aeneid* VIII, 712 (where it is used of the Nile; cf Evelyn-White I, p. 253) seems to me to be only comprehensible with the Vergilian passage in the reader's mind. Ausonius is building up the Saar by linking it to the Nile. Posani's comment (*op.*

cit. p. 47) that the image "*è molto più ardita*" is perhaps correct. A similar, but more explicit image occurs at line 418.

44. Although Ternes (*Paysage* p. 381-82) identifies this river with the Alzette rather than the Eltz, I do not think that certainty in the matter is possible; the description may suit the river (though Ternes himself claims that much of the landscape of the poem is false, *ibid* p. 387), but it is a fact that the Alzette does not flow into the Moselle but into the Sauer, itself an affluent of the Moselle. In this respect it is true that it resembles the Nims and Prüm, which Ausonius does admit into the poem (Ternes, *ibid* p. 382), but he does say that their route into the Moselle is indirect (*Mos.* 334), while the impression given of the Alisontia is that of a direct tributary.
45. *Mos.* 23.
46. There must be a strong suspicion that Ausonius is thinking in future terms here, for the fact that the salaries offered to teachers in Trier were high (*Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 11) suggests that the current situation was not good.
47. Palanque: *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 36 (1934) p. 365.
48. *Mos.* 381-483.
49. cf Ternes, *Paysage* p. 386.
50. The explanation of this remark is difficult. Whether he knew of his consulship this early (Hosius, *op. cit.* p. 23; cf *Act. Grat.* V), or had been adlected *inter consulares* (Ternes, *Mosella* p. 97) is hard to say.
51. The phrase "*hominumque boumque labores*" is taken from *Georgics* I, 118. Posani, *op. cit.* p. 38 seems to regard the reminiscence as mechanical, but it is surely included to reinforce the idea of peace typified by the age of Augustus and Vergil.
52. Marx: *op. cit.* p. 368.
53. Marx: *op. cit.* p. 389.
54. Wild: *Classical Journal* 46 (1951) p. 381.

Chapter 7

The man and his times

If Ausonius has not always received the attention which is his due on purely literary grounds, he has never lacked readers intent on plundering his work for what we may broadly term historical material. The information, which Ausonius provides, is particularly important in a certain number of areas, especially that of the history of education, not surprisingly in the works of a man who was himself a schoolmaster. His works also provide us with information about some aspects of the daily life of the well-to-do (e.g. the *Ephemeris* and some of the *Epistulae*), a far more limited amount about the political situation in Gaul at this period¹ and, not least, some interesting linguistic sidelights on the development (or decay, as some might say) of the Latin language into Gallo-Roman and thence to French. Of these, the last is not an intentional legacy by Ausonius to us, but rather information gleaned from Ausonius' use of Latin, when it strays, albeit infrequently, from the purest Classical norm.

Apart from the *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, Ausonius' main work to deal with schooling in the fourth century is the letter which he wrote to his grandson², treating a number of matters which bear upon his forthcoming education. In this poem, Ausonius writes not only about the various works which he expects the boy to study, but also tells the youngster not to be afraid of the discipline of the school, nor of the master's fierce expression:

"ille licet tristis senio nec voce serenus
aspera contractae minitetur iurgia frontis,
numquam inmanis erit, placida suetudine vultus
qui semel inbuerit." (*Ep* XXII, 14-17)

Nor should the boy be frightened of the sounds of beatings being administered, which is all merely a part of the school scenery and something which his mother and father had both gone through^{2a}:

"... at tibi consta
intrepidus, nec te clamor plagaeque sonantes,
nec matutinis agitet formido sub horis.
quod sceptrum vibrat ferulae, quod multa supellex
virgea, quod fallax scuticam praetexit aluta,
quod fervent trepido subsellia vestra tumultu,
pompa loci et vani fucatur scaena timoris.
haec olim genitorque tuus genetrixque secuti
securam placido mihi permulsero senectam." (*Ep* XXII, 26-34)

The question of the level of education available to girls, which this remark raises, is something to which we shall return later.

The school is not however an entirely fearsome place, for time is also

devoted there to leisure, this being the meaning of the word itself in Greek, as Ausonius explains:

"Graio schola nomina dicta est,
iusta laboriferis tribuantur et otia musis.
quo magis alternum certus succedere ludum
disce libens: longum delinitura laborem
intervalla damus." (*Ep* XXII 6-10)

This piece of didacticism is not, I think, inserted just for show but as a harmless piece of information intended to help allay the boy's fears about the environment which he is about to enter. Ausonius also plays down the possible savagery of the discipline³ by reference to his own methods and achievements as a schoolmaster:

"nec rudis haec avus admoneo, set mille docendo
ingenia expertus multos lactantibus annis
ipse alui gremioque fovens et murmura solvens
eripui tenerum blandis nutricibus aevum.
mox pueros molli monitu et formidine leni
pellexi, ut mites peterent per acerba profectus,
carpturi dulcem fructum radicis amarae." (*Ep* XXII, 66-72)

It is reasonable to assume that the boy will have fewer terrors of the unknown master when he remembers that his no doubt beloved grandfather had once exercised the same profession. Mention is also made of some of the books which are to be studied, Homer and Menander being particularly picked out:

"Perlege, quodcumque est memorabile, prima monebo.
conditor Iliados et amabilis orsa Menandri
evolvenda tibi." (*Ep*.XXII, 45-47)

In view of Ausonius' remarks about the difficulty which he himself experienced in learning Greek⁴ and the note of doubt even as to the availability of a suitable candidate to fill the post of Greek grammarian at the then de facto capital of the Empire, Trier⁵, one should perhaps be surprised that even this much Greek culture survived in Bordeaux, and even more so that Sidonius Apollinaris was reading Menander's *Epitrepontes* well into the next century⁶.

As regards the Latin literature to be studied, this presents few surprises. Apart from Sallust's historical works⁷, Ausonius expects his grandson to study Horace, Vergil and Terence, and thereby whet again his own dulled memory of these writers:

"te praeunte, nepos, modulata poemata Flacci
altisonumque iterum fas est didicisse Maronem.
tu quoque, qui Latium lecto sermone Terenti,

comis et adstricto percurris pulpitasocco,

ad nova vix memorem diverbia coge senectam." (*Ep* XXII, 56-60)

The thought of Ausonius ever being able to forget any of his beloved poets, and Vergil in particular, is of course laughable for us, but, once again, the conceit is introduced so that the lad may look forward with pleasure to his schooling (and to re-educating his grandfather!) rather than regarding the forthcoming experiences with distaste or even terror. Ausonius himself does not appear to have been a very strict disciplinarian and indeed remarks on brutality⁸, which perhaps suggests disapproval of extreme harshness.

Such are some of the more minute details of the curriculum and atmosphere of the schools, and indeed of Ausonius' views of teaching and learning. On a broader canvas, the position of Bordeaux as a centre of education in the Roman world is also illustrated by Ausonius' work and the poems dedicated to his former colleagues at Bordeaux in particular. Although no trace of any school buildings has yet been found in Bordeaux, it is clear that there must have been some such site, possibly in the area of the fourth century forum⁹ (the site of which is equally a mystery), to accommodate what must have been a large number of pupils. Opinions are divided as to the number of teachers employed at any one time, but the estimate given by Etienne¹⁰ of thirteen chairs, eight of grammar and five of rhetoric, would certainly provide an establishment of impressive size, which presumably drew its pupils from a fairly wide area¹¹, if we consider that very few of the urban or country poor are likely to have benefited from any sort of education at all.

As for Bordeaux's importance as a centre of learning, this can best be seen through the achievements of its teachers outside the area of south-western Gaul. Apart from the obvious examples of Ausonius and Arborius (although the latter was a teacher at Toulouse¹², he was probably educated at Bordeaux), we may add Exuperius¹³, a native of Bordeaux although he taught at Toulouse, who later became tutor to the princes Dalmatius and Hannabalianus at Narbonne, which brought him a governorship in Spain. Another to achieve a governorship at the end of a long academic career was Nepotianus¹⁴, while most of those commemorated in the *Professores*, and particularly those who reached the rank of rhetor, achieved financial success. Nor is Ausonius the sole witness for the success of these men from Bordeaux, for Jerome mentions a number of them who rose to prominence: Nazarius, his daughter Eunomia who was his equal in eloquence, Patera at Rome, Minervius at Rome and Alcimus and Delfidius (sic) in Aquitaine¹⁵. It is interesting to note that, of the teachers mentioned by Jerome, about one half are connected in some way with Bordeaux, a fact which is probably most indicative of all of Bordeaux's importance as a centre of education at this time. Even after Ausonius' time, the supply of orators and teachers from

Bordeaux does not dry up for Latinus Pacatus Drepanius, the panegyrist of Theodosius, and then proconsul of Africa, probably also originated there; certainly Ausonius knew him, for he dedicated three of his works to him.¹⁶

With Nazarius' daughter, mentioned above, we return to the question of the level to which women could be educated at this period. The apparently large number of well-educated Aquitanian ladies at this time has been noted by Chadwick¹⁷, and her list is not exhaustive. Several of her ladies have left literary remains, particularly in the form of letters pertaining to theological matters. She also cites two who have an Ausonian connection, the wife and daughter of the deceased Delphidius¹⁸, Euchrotia and Procula by name, who were involved in the ascetic heresy of Priscillian, which seems to have been attractive to the literary intelligentsia of Aquitaine and Spain.¹⁹

Let us first examine the case of Ausonius' daughter, the mother of young Ausonius, to whom the advice about schools mentioned above was addressed. It seems to me to be likely that both she and Nazarius' daughter Eunomia would have received their education because of their fathers' profession, and the same was probably equally true for the medically minded Aemilia Hilaria²⁰, for medicine, as well as grammar and rhetoric, seems to have been prominent on both sides of Ausonius' family. Generally speaking, Roman girls had traditionally been educated at home, often by a private tutor, and, at least in the late Republic, a number of women had been well-known for their wide learning, such as Pompey's daughter Pompeia and his third wife Cornelia²¹. As for girls' attendance at school, it has been suggested that they may have finished their education under a grammarian, at a rather later age than boys at the same level.²² As for the means by which ladies of the fourth and fifth century gained their literary education, we simply cannot be certain, but it is reasonable to assume that it will have been similar to preceding ages. We may therefore conclude that girls of good birth might aspire to at least a competence in literary education, as might those whose fathers were themselves involved in teaching.

As mentioned earlier, Ausonius' works are very disappointing in terms of their contribution to our knowledge of fourth century political history. However, in amongst the vague impressions of life at this period, one or two facts of significance for the events of the period do emerge. Thus we know that Bordeaux, far from being the spacious town of the earlier Empire, had retreated into a reduced area behind fortified walls:

"quadrupla murorum species, sic turribus altis
ardua, ut aërias intrent fastigia nubes.
distinctas interne vias mirere, domorum
dispositum et latas nomen servare plateas,
tum respondentem directa in compita portas." (Ord. Urb XX, 13-17)

The erection of walls, behind which the much compressed town continued to thrive, required much of the masonry from the abandoned part of the town so the remaining desolate vestiges of the more spacious city of the earlier period must have provided a constant reminder of the threats posed by invasions for those comparatively safe within their walls. Apart from the external remains, Jullian's comparison of the exterior prospect of the city with that of Aigues-Mortes today, with its walls rising starkly from the surrounding countryside is extremely apposite. Unlike other otherwise similar walled towns, Bordeaux also seems to have included a fortified port within its enceinte:

"per mediumque urbis fontani fluminis alveum,
quem pater Oceanus refluo cum impleverit aestu,
adlabi totum spectabis classibus aequor." (Ord. Urb. XX, 18-20)

Paulinus Pellaeus, one of Ausonius' grandsons, gives a more detailed description in his *Eucharisticon*, written in the middle of the fifth century but looking back on his childhood:

"Burdigalam veni, cuius speciosa Garumna
moenibus Oceani refluas maris invehit undas
navigeram per portam, quae portum spatiosum
nunc etiam muris spatiosa includit in urbe." (*Euch.* 44-47)

Bordeaux's fortifications were not of course unusual at this period, as Ausonius shows with his description of Toulouse:

"Non umquam altricem nostri reticebo Tolosam,
coctilibus muris quam circuit ambitus ingens." (Ord. Urb. XVIII, 1-2)

In this case, however, it appears that more settled times had led to the re-establishment of suburbs:

"quae modo quadruplices ex se cum effuderit urbes,
non ulla exhaustae sentit dispendia plebis,
quos genuit cunctos gremio complexa colonos." (Ord. Urb. XVIII, 7-9)

The withdrawal of the populations (albeit probably reduced) of the great towns behind constricting defensive walls meant an end to the spacious streets and squares of old, as is evident from Ausonius' description of the crowded streets of Bordeaux around Easter, which tends to give the lie to the optimistic passage from the *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* quoted above:

"Nam populi coetus et compita sordida rixis
fastidientes cernimus
angustas fervere vias et congrege volgo
nomen plateas perdere." (*Ep* VI, 19-22)

We may perhaps place greater reliance on this description, in a more personal work, than that which occurs in the more "public" celebration of Bordeaux.

Because of the growing inconveniences of city life at this period, the nobility tended to develop their country estates and establish themselves in them for more and more of the time. Thus it is that, after the Easter celebrations are over, Ausonius cannot wait to be away from the noise and bustle:

"nos etenim primis sanctum post Pascha diebus
avenus agrum visere." (*Ep* VI, 17-18)²⁴

The significance of this drift to the countryside can hardly be overstressed, for it marks the beginning of a way of life typical of the Middle Ages, when the lords of a region were ensconced behind the fortified walls of their homes deep in the country and became centres of relative stability and thus of economic importance. As a result the towns tended even further to decline as more wealth deserted them.

One of the earliest of such fortified country homes was Bourg-en-Gironde, which belonged to the family of Paulinus of Nola, and which seems to have been built up under Constantine.²⁵ We can also see the onset of this isolationist, one might say siege, mentality, in Ausonius' early letters to Paulinus, before the latter's conversion to asceticism, which concern Ausonius' efforts at stocking up his villa of Lucaniacus:

"quod nisi indulseris rogante me, ut et mora habitandi ad commodum
suum utatur et nauso aliave qua navi usque ad oppidum praebita frugis
aliquantum nostrae advehi possit, Lucaniacus ut inopia liberetur mature:
tota illa familia hominis litterati non ad Tulli frumentariam, sed ad
Curculionem Plauti pertinebit." (*Ep* XXVI, Praef)

As, however, Ausonius was in the habit of keeping two years' supply of food by him²⁶, we may wonder if he really was in any serious danger of imminent starvation. But the very fact that Ausonius could contemplate such careful measures is significant, for it suggests the expectation or at least an awareness of the possibility of famine, to be caused perhaps by incursions rather than by crop failure. Nor were some areas of the countryside completely safe, as the history of the Bacaudae and even the letters to Theon show²⁷.

Fortunately for Ausonius, he seems unlikely to have starved for his bailiff Philo, although apparently a failure at his own job, more than compensated by his skills in trading:

"hic saepe falsus messibus vegrandibus
nomen perosus vilici,
semente sera sive multum praecoqua
et siderali inscitia
caelum laccessens seque culpae subtrahens

reos peregit caelites.
 non cultor instans, non arator gnaruris
 promusque quam condus magis,
 terram infidelem nec feracem criminans
 negotiari maluit
 mercator quo <libet> foro venalium,
 mutator ad Graecam fidem,
 sapiensque supra Graeciae septem viros
 octavus accessit sophos." (*Ep* XXVI, 13-26)

The portrait of Philo, rather like those of Theon, is an amusing thumb-nail sketch, summing the man up in a few humorous yet tolerant words. Ausonius seems to be willing to overlook even Theon's apparent dishonesty, perhaps valuing the man for his undoubted individuality and lively character. Obviously too, Ausonius required someone to run his estate's affairs on a day-to-day basis, for with all his commitments to entertaining, to say nothing of the sheer volume of his possessions, he could never have undertaken their management himself on a full-time basis. If he had even as much knowledge of his bailiff's affairs as appears from this letter, he is probably better informed than many of the great landlords of this period, whose absenteeism, and the abuses which resulted, were notorious.

Ausonius gives us an insight into his own daily life in the *Ephemeris*, which is clearly a description of his life in town rather than in the country, although it is uncertain whether the setting is Bordeaux or Trier. This collection of poems is incomplete, breaking off at the point where Ausonius is instructing his cook as to the preparations for lunch. The succeeding poem in the manuscripts is concerned with dreams at night, and may therefore belong to the *Ephemeris*, being the conclusion of the poet's day. The *Ephemeris* does begin with Ausonius getting up in the morning so the dream poem may represent the end of a twenty-four hour cycle, but may equally represent a fragment of a totally unrelated work. The poem to Ausonius' secretary, included in the *Ephemeris* by some editors in order partially to fill the lacuna is probably not to be inserted here, being almost certainly one of Ausonius' many occasional epigrams.

The various poems which make up this collection are composed in different metres, once again displaying Ausonius' virtuosity, although the individual metres do seem to be selected to fit the content of each poem. In this respect of course the poem is very literary, although much of the content is personal; because of this, it is not surprising that this is one of the works in the corpus which Ausonius did not dedicate to a friend or fellow imperial servant. The tone throughout the poem is such as to suggest an environment free from any political care, so it may well be correct to date it to the time before Ausonius' summons to court.²⁸

The first two poems, addressed to Parmeno, display once again Ausonius' amused toleration of his servants' failings. The paradox of the master having to wake up his servant is one which would hardly have been lost on him:

"surge, nugator, lacerande virgis:
surge, ne longus tibi somnus, unde
non times, detur: rape membra molli,
Parmeno, lecto." (*Eph.*I, 17-20)

Parmeno may well deserve to be beaten for his laziness, but there is no sign that he is actually likely to receive such punishment. Given this amused toleration, seen again in the poem to Sosias, it does not appear probable that Ausonius was a harsh master.

Having once broken through Parmeno's drowsiness, Ausonius asks for clothes for going out:

"Puer, eia, surge et calceos
et lintheam da sindonem.
da, quidquid est, amictui
quod iam parasti, ut prodeam." (*Eph.*II, 1-4)

And indeed he does go out, having once delivered a prayer, this a majestic poem in hexameters, inserted between two sets of iambs. Mention has already been made of Ausonius' views of good entertaining and, in order to ensure that everything is correctly prepared, he visits his cook, whose methods do not always seem to have met with total success:

"an vegeto madeant condita opsonia gustu
(fallere namque solent), experiundo proba." (*Eph.* VI, 3-4)

The description of Sosias' cooking is interrupted by the lacuna in the text at this point, perhaps fortunately, considering what we may be about to learn about ancient hygiene:

"concute ferventes palmis volventibus ollas,
tingue celer digitos iure calente tuos,
vibranti lambat quos umida lingua recursu." (*Eph.* VI, 5-7)

The final poem, which deals with dreams, is totally different in tone and, as already stated, illustrates Ausonius' abilities for brief description and cinematic flow of images. The main importance of this piece, apart from the artistic, is in the passage devoted to the guilt, if any, attached to one's imagined actions while asleep:

"infandas etiam veneres incestaque noctis
dedecora et tragicos patimur per somnia coetus.

perfugium tamen est, quotiens portenta soporum
 solvit rupta pudore quies et imagine foeda
 libera mens vigilat: totum bene conscia lectum
 pertractat secura manus: probrosa recedit
 culpa tori et profugi manascunt crimina somni." (*Eph VIII*, 10-16)

The view that we are innocent of actions performed in our dreams is a Christian one, so it is perhaps surprising to find it shared by Ausonius. Augustine put the case thus:

"Porro ipsa phantasia quae fit in cogitatione sermocinantis, cum ita expressa fuerit in visione somniantis, ut inter illam et veram commixtionem corporum non discernatur, continuo movetur caro et sequitur quod eum motum sequi solet, cum hoc tam sine peccato fiat, quam sine peccato a vigilante dicitur, quod ut diceretur sine dubio cogitatum est." (*De Genesi ad Litteram XII*, 15)²⁹

It is of course unusual to find Ausonius in agreement with Christian writers and in opposition to the traditional view, which held all bad acts in dreams to be blameworthy, but no ready explanation is to hand. Ausonius was not so immersed in Christian theology as to have consciously adopted that religion's line on this point, and so the agreement should perhaps be seen as a quirk of coincidence, unless there had been a general shift of view on the subject.

It might be thought that, at a time when the Roman Empire in Gaul was on the very verge of breaking up, having long suffered from the incursions by Germanic raiders, some of whom had become settlers, the language there might have begun to show signs of change or decay. In this respect Ausonius, as all the authors in this study, presents a surprise for, except in a small number of points, he hardly ever departs from the Classical norm.³⁰

Bearing this fact in mind, we may consider one or two of the peculiarities of vocabulary and grammar which do occur. In the matter of vocabulary, we may consider Ausonius' use of apparent neologisms in two areas, those words which are native to Gaul and those which, although previously unattested, are clearly Latin- or Greek-based. One of the largest groups of words of this latter type is that consisting of compound nouns and adjectives, some of which may cause the reader surprise by their inclusion (e.g. "*auricomus*" and "*falciger*")³¹ for very similar compounds were frequent in the works of Statius and Valerius Flaccus, some three hundred years earlier, the literature of which period Ausonius clearly found to be attractive. It is of course possible that a number of these apparent neologisms are no such thing and that they were to be found in texts no longer available to us.

At any rate, Ausonius' use of such formations is illustrative of two points; first these forms had been inculcated in him by his professional studies and secondly, he enjoyed using them. We have already noticed Ausonius' penchant for playing with

numbers and words, and it is not surprising that this aspect of his humour comes to the fore in his dealings with Theon, whom he obviously intends to befuddle with the following:

"fac campum replicas, Musa, *papyrium*
nec iam *fissipedis* per calami vias
grassetur Gnidiae sulcus harundinis,
pingens aridulae subdita paginae
Cadmi filioli *atricoloribus*.
aut cunctis pariter versibus oblinat
furvam *lacticolor* sphongia sepiam." (*Ep XV*, 48-54)

The italicized words are not found in any earlier author and such a concentration of peculiarities in a short passage can be nothing but deliberate, an attempt to confuse further the rather abstruse subject matter and clothe the puzzle in yet another layer of obfuscation.

One or two of Ausonius' other coinages must, I think, be regarded as jocular, such as *Grammaticomastix* (*Tech XIV*) and *logodaedalia* which follows it in the same piece. The same is probably true of the Greek neologisms *Διονυσιοποιήτης* and the almost self-defining barbarism *μεμυγμενοβάρβαρον*. This talent for manipulating language is reminiscent of that possessed by Rabelais both in terms of linguistic talent and sheer invention. One feels that Rabelais would also have appreciated the *Cento Nuptialis*, as much for its brilliant use of Vergil as for its content.

Returning to Ausonius' neologisms, among abstract nouns we may mention *manamen*, *procacia* and *puerities*³³ for the more usual *pueritia*, the more striking because there had been an historical tendency for these dual declension words to settle in their (commoner) -a declension form. A number of substantives which appear in Latin only in Ausonius are taken from Greek, a procedure which does tell us something about the depth of his knowledge of the latter language. Among these are *cora* (*κορη*), *dyseros* (*δυσερως*) and *menis* (*μενις*), although with a change of meaning, unattested in Greek).³⁴

Finally there are a small number of other words, which are mostly of Celtic, or at least of Gallic, origin which are perhaps of the greatest linguistic importance for this study. The majority of these are words pertaining to fish and most of these of course from the *Mosella*, and their previous non-appearance in Latin may be as much attributed to their being species of Northern Gaul, and thus outside the cognizance of earlier Latin authors, than to any linguistic reason. Only one of these species appears definitely to have been known by another name in Italy, *lucius*,³⁵ the pike, otherwise known as *lupus*. As, however, even in modern Italian,

the pike is called *luccio*,³⁶ it is likely that *lucius* had come into use in Italy too. As for the derivation of the word, it may be a jocular formation, as Ausonius himself suggests, for the process is not impossible. A similar phenomenon occurred in respect of the eponymous hero of *Le Roman de Renart*, who gave his name to all of his breed in France, replacing the previous, Latin-based word *goupil* (< *Vulpiculus*, itself derived from the Classical Latin *vulpecula*). *Lucius* may equally well be Celtic,³⁷ although another Celtic word for what is possibly the same fish is also known, *esox* or *isox*.³⁸

The other suggested identification of *esox* is with the salmon, known generally in Latin as *salmo*. Clearly related to this, both physically and linguistically, is the *salar*³⁹ and to these two words the river name *Salmona* and the puzzling *sario* or *fario*.⁴⁰ The manuscripts read the former, as do most editors and there is certainly a superficial attraction in the similarity between this form and *salmo* and *salar*. Certainty is not possible, but, in either case, as with the words for salmon and trout, the word is probably Celtic.

Among other fish names, *tinca*, *rhedo*, *barbus* and *alburnus*, among freshwater varieties, and *corroco* and *platessa* among salt water species are found in Ausonius for the first time.⁴¹ Of these, *barbus* and *alburnus* have obvious affinities in Latin and *platessa* must be in some way related to the Greek *πλατυς*⁴², a usage confined apparently to the Gallic prefecture, as no modern Italian equivalent exists.⁴³ *Tinca*, the tench, although first appearing in Ausonius, was probably known outside Gaul as the word comes through into the modern languages of Northern Italy and the Iberian Peninsula. The word itself may nevertheless be Celtic, and is accepted as such by Whatmough⁴⁴.

Finally we may examine the two words for species whose very identity is mysterious. The *rhedo* described by Ausonius as "nullo spinae nociturus acumine"⁴⁵ has been variously identified with the roach, the loach and the lamprey⁴⁶, which is perhaps the most likely from Ausonius' description. A Celtic origin for this word is certainly likely, as it is for the *corroco*, which is possibly to be identified with the sturgeon, for which the Bordeaux and Toulouse dialects preserve *creac*.⁴⁷

Outside the animal kingdom, we may mention *nausum*⁴⁸, a kind of boat, and *parada*, which Whatmough doubts to be Celtic, but which seems to be found only in the works of writers from Gaul, which suggests it to be a local coinage.⁴⁹

Similarly some other words also show a development peculiar to Gaul in their usage. *Arista* is used by Ausonius for the first time in the sense of 'fish-bone',⁵⁰ and its derivative in French, *arête*, is the only such in Romance. Another oddity which apparently prefigures the development of Latin into French is the spelling *frigdopoeta* in Ausonius' macaronic letter to Paulus.⁵¹ The fall of interconsonantal *i* gives a median form between *frigidus* and Old French *freit*.⁵²

A similar instance of Ausonius showing the way in which Latin was developing into French is his use of the contracted forms of the perfect tense (which became the French Past Historic), e.g. *parasti* (*Ep* II, 4), *dictasti* (*Par* III, 22), *mutastis* (*Ord. Urb.* II/III, 12). In the case of the second person singular form of the first conjugation, Ausonius does not use the uncontracted form at all.⁵³

Ausonius' use of prepositions also diverges from the most strict Classical norms, as some examples of his use of the word *de* will show. On a number of occasions the preposition is used instead of a simple genitive, e.g. "*exemplum de fratre time*" or "*ut rursum nomen de rhetore reddas*"⁵⁴ During the Gallo-Roman period there was a gradual weakening of the case system and hence a strengthening of the use of prepositions. The precise value of each preposition also became less clear, and once again Ausonius shows some overlap to have taken place already, as for example, his use of *de* instead of *ex*: "*ne fortasse mores meos spectent de carmine*"; and again: "*in oris, ad quas de Siculo litore transieras*".⁵⁵ In all these cases Modern French would use '*de*', so Ausonius may be said here at least to be pointing the way forward, albeit unwittingly, to times to come.⁵⁶

As suggested earlier, the quantity of linguistic material illustrative of the change from Latin into French is small, consisting largely in the use of certain words and forms, which were later adopted into the Romance language, in preference to others which were not. In his use of language, Ausonius was a conservative, inevitably perhaps, for there was no other way in which he could express himself, other than in those terms which were hallowed by age. The same was just as true for Sidonius Apollinaris, writing a century later, but still in the same tradition. Even the Celtic words in Ausonius' vocabulary are not really significant of any breakdown of Latin, for the majority are terms for which there was no equivalent, as for example species of fish native to northern rather than southern Europe. The fact that Ausonius may need the words because of his rather peculiar subject matter, in Roman terms, is another point, which will be considered elsewhere.

But overall, from the linguistic as well as the historical evidence of his work, we get the distinct impression that Ausonius was not in touch with the momentous times in which he lived. That is not to say that he consciously falsifies the information which he gives us; on the contrary he is sometimes very open in describing what he sees, but his interpretations do not have the benefit of our hindsight. In harking back, and even trying to recreate, the Golden Augustan age, he could not see how far his own times had slipped from the ideal and how close to extinction the Empire had come. Of course, the worship of the past was an unhealthy symptom of the Empire's decline, and proof that it had lost its way, but, for a man living so much within these traditions, it was impossible not to look to preserve them, however hollow they may now seem to have been to us.

Notes

1. It should be borne in mind that the last thing which Ausonius was claiming to write was history. As to any disappointment which may be felt that he does not reflect more of the momentous events of his own lifetime, the one thing which it is impossible to have in respect of one's own times is hindsight.
2. *Ep* XXII.
- 2a. Quintilian had spoken out against beatings (*Inst. Or.* I, iii, 13) but his words seem to have had little effect.
3. Discipline could be fiercely enforced; cf. Bonner: *Education in Ancient Rome*, pp. 143 ff.
4. *Pref* VIII, 13-16.
5. *Cod. Th.* XIII, 3, 11.
6. *Sid. Ap. Ep* IV, 12, 1. It is possible that Sidonius may have been using a Latin translation, as his purpose was a comparison of Menander's play with Terence's *Hecyra*. cf. Loyen: *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaul^e aux derniers jours de l'Empire*, p. 27.
7. *Ep* XXII, 61 ff.
8. e.g. *Prof* X, 35 ff (Ammonius)
9. Etienne: *Bordeaux Antique*, p. 237.
10. Etienne, *op. cit.* pp. 239-40. Jullian, *Ausone et Bordeaux*, pp. 66-7 is more conservative, suggesting six chairs of grammar and four of rhetoric.
11. Etienne, *op. cit.* p. 244 n. 73 quotes the example of Anastasius (*Prof* X, 42 ff) who was unable to get a living at Poitiers - but perhaps he was just a poor teacher.
12. *Prof.* XVI.
13. *Prof.* XVII.
14. *Prof.* XV, 18.
15. *Eusebii Chronicorum Lib. II Interprete S. Hieronymo* (ed. Migne. Vol. XXVII) Nazarius col. 497; his daughter, col. 499; Patera, col. 500; Alcimus and Delphidius, col. 501; Minervius, col. 502. cf. Etienne, *op. cit.* pp. 250-51.
16. The *Technopaegnon* (second edition), the *Eclogae* and the *Ludus Septem Sapientium* cf. Etienne, *op. cit.* p. 250.
17. Chadwick, ed. *Studies in Early British History*, p. 205-6; Hedibia and Algasia both corresponded with St. Jerome. Bassula was an important intellectual influence on her son Sulpicius Severus. St. Paula, Palladia (the wife of Salvian) and Therasia (wife of Paulinus of Nola) were all involved in letter-writing.
18. *Prof.* V, esp. lines 35 ff, where mention is made of his wife and daughter's fate. Details of their fate are given by Sulpicius Severus, *Sacr. Hist.* ii, 45-51.

19. Matthews: *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*, pp. 168-69.
20. *Par.* VI.
21. Bonner: *Education in Ancient Rome*, p. 27.
22. Bonner: *op. cit.* p. 136.
23. Jullian: *Revue Historique* XLVIII (1892), p. 6.
24. cf. *Ep* IV, 1-3 for a kinder view of what the town had to offer.
25. For the history of Bourg, see Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, Vol. VIII, 128 ff.
26. *Dom* I, 27-28.
27. On the Bacaudae, see Thompson, *Past and Present* II (1952-53), pp. 11-23; cf also Ausonius *Ep* XIV, 22 ff.
28. Galdi: *Atti della R. Accademia Archeologia, Lettere ei Belle Arti di Napoli* 12 (1931) pp. 80-81.
29. cf. Weidhorn, *op. cit.* p. 76, who also points out that Tertullian "declares that good acts in dreams are without merit, bad ones - such as rape - are blameless, as acts in a dream are involuntary.
30. Delachaux: *La latinité d'Ausone*, p. 113. Many of the following remarks are based on the word-lists in this work.
31. auricomans, *Cup. Cruc.* 11; falciger, *Ecl.* XXIII, 36.
32. *Ep* VIII, 17-18, the macaronic letter, provides these interesting specimens of Greek.
33. manamen, *Mos* 32; procacia, *Ep* XXVI, Praef; puerities, *Prof* X, 13.
34. cora, *Ep* XII, 60; dyseros, *Epig* XXIII, 1; menis, *Prof* XXV, 1.
35. *Mos.* 122.
36. lucius also produced Old French luz, which came into Shakespearean English as luce.
37. Whatmough; *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul*, p. 725.
38. Pliny: *NH* IX, 44; Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 895.
39. *Mos.* 88; Sid. Ap. *Ep* II, 2, 12.
40. Salmona, *Mos.* 366; sario (fario), *Mos.* 130; Whatmough *op. cit.* p. 896 prefers fario, citing Old High German vorhe, forhana, Swiss fore and French forelle.
41. tinca, *Mos.* 125; rhedo, *Mos.* 89; barbus, *Mos.* 94; alburnus, *Mos.* 126; corroco and platessa, *Ep.* XIV, 60.
42. cf. *Ep* VI, 22, platea > Fr. place.
43. platessa > O.F. plaiz > Eng. plaice; cf. Sp. platija.
44. Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 730.

45. *Mos.* 89.
46. roach, Evelyn-White, *op. cit.* I, 231; loach, Delachaux, *op. cit.* p. 75; lamprey, Ternes, *Mosella*, p. 46. The dialect word for the eel in the Languedoc is *resso*, but this is hardly conclusive.
47. Holder, *op. cit.* I, col. 1135; Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 454. The word *creac* is given as Basque in origin by Roule, *Les poissons des eaux douces de la France*, p. 11. cf. also Galician *corrujo* - turbot.
48. *Ep* XXVI, 37; Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 726, who quotes the description by Adamnan of Columba's grandfather's name "*latine filius navis, Scottica vero lingua mac naue*" (*Vit. Columban. Praef. II*).
49. *Ep* XVI, 29; *Sid. Ap. Ep* VIII, 12, 5; cf. Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 1337.
50. *Mos.* 86.
51. *Ep.* VI, 6.
52. Delachaux, *op. cit.* p. 71.
53. Delachaux, *op. cit.* p. 94.
54. *Ep* XIV, 33; *Prof.* XVII, 17.
55. *Cent.* VIII ad fin; *Prof.* XXII, 19-20.
56. For other examples of the changing use of prepositions in Ausonius' work, including *ad* > *Fr. à*; see Delachaux, *op. cit.* pp. 101-106.

Rutilius Namatianus - His Life and Career

Rutilius Namatianus has been aptly and succinctly described by Pichon¹ as "un grand fonctionnaire gallo-romain", for he filled some of the highest offices in the Empire, albeit for short periods, as had become customary for the majority of his fellow aristocrats. He did however differ from many of these men by his Gallic origins, which are made clear to us by the poem containing the description of his journey home to Gaul, and which is generally known as the *De reditu suo*.² It has been observed³ that, for a highly placed civil servant, he shows remarkably little realism in his remarks about the political situation of the times, but there is no evidence that such a subject was considered fit material for poetry at this period, especially among the members of the pagan aristocracy, and the *De reditu suo* is in any case far too personal a work to contain successfully any broadly thought out view of the political situation. In fact it is clear that one of the dominant features of Rutilius' mind is a conflict of loyalties between Rome and Gaul; in fact, as the poem stands, one might well believe that Rome was the object of greater allegiance, an impression belied by the journey itself.

The details of his life can briefly be traced. The family's origins are not certain, although epigraphic evidence tends to place Rutilii in three areas: Annecy/Grenoble; Nîmes/Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux; Carcassonne/Narbonne, and it has been customary to link him with the area of the south-west.⁴ If this is correct, his journey may be connected with the Visigothic settlement under Wallia in this area. Rutilius was the son of Claudius Lachanius, who had preceded him in the imperial service. Despite the fact that Rutilius appears to have been a convinced pagan, he held office under the Christian emperor Honorius, being Magister officiorum in 412 and then praefectus urbi in 414. His return to Gaul will have taken place between 415 and 417, with the latter date being the most probable. Of his life after what was presumably a safe return to Gaul, nothing is known, unless one is to identify him with the Rutilius to whom the *Querolus* is dedicated, and, furthermore, date the play to the period after his time in office, rather than to the previous decade, and see him as maintaining the veneer of Roman culture at a time of continually declining Roman power and influence in south-west Gaul.

Firstly, however, it is necessary to discuss the career of his father, which was examined by Matthews in his article on the Gallic supporters of Theodosius.⁶ Lachanius was only one of a number of Gauls who came to prominence in politics at about this time, others being Marcellus, the author of a treatise on medicine, and Latinus Drepanius Pacatus, the author of a

panegyric upon Theodosius' victory over the usurper Maximus, which was delivered in the summer of 389. The rise of these men is tentatively attributed by Matthews⁷ to the influence of Flavius Rufinus, Theodosius' *magister officiorum*, and a fellow Gaul.

It seems to be equally possible, however, that the rise of such men can be attributed to the period of Ausonius' ascendancy, and its legacy. Although Ausonius himself apparently withdrew from the centre of the political stage with his consulship in 379, he was apparently still at Trèves in 383,⁸ at the time of Maximus' usurpation, and, perhaps more importantly, receives a warm letter from Theodosius,⁹ which is perhaps to be dated to the time of Theodosius' visit to the west. Finally it is clear that Ausonius is well-acquainted with at least some of the men in power during the 380s, as he dedicates his works in one poem to Syagrius.¹⁰ Furthermore it should be borne in mind that he does seem to have a genuine affection for Drepanius Pacatus, to whom he dedicates the *Ludus Septem Sapientium*, the second version of the *Technopaegnion*, both during the period in which he was proconsul of Africa,¹¹ and also the book of Eclogues, at some time after 383.¹² Such a number of dedications to one man is rather unusual in a short time, and, as Ausonius presumably had nothing further to gain for himself in the sphere of politics by cultivating Pacatus at the time of his proconsulship, it is perhaps arguable that Pacatus may in some sense have been a protégé of Ausonius, to whom he had become genuinely attached.

It has also been suggested that the Claudius who takes a letter from Symmachus to Ausonius should be identified with Claudius Lachanius.¹³ If the identification is upheld, this would at least provide some concrete evidence of his acquaintanceship with Ausonius, although certainty over the identification cannot be possible.

Therefore it would not appear to be impossible that both Pacatus and Lachanius, and possibly also Marcellus, may have come into prominence with the help of his influence; a further minor detail is that they apparently all come from the south-western part of Gaul (although Flavius Rufinus himself was a native of Elusa,¹⁴ the modern Eauze in the département of Gers, and cannot be excluded because of this point). Even if the possibility of Ausonius' continued involvement in affairs, albeit in a fairly passive manner, is not pressed, it should be noted that the fall of Gratian did not in any way mark the end of the flow of men from the south-west of Gaul into the imperial service.

Lachanius' career is outlined by his son:

Namque pater quondam Tyrrhenis praefuit arvis
Fascibus et senis credita iura dedit.

Narrabat, memini, multos emensus honores,
 Tuscorum regimen plus placuisse sibi.
 Nam neque opum curam, quamvis sit magna, sacrarum
 Nec ius quaesturae grata fuisse magis;
 Ipsam si fas est, postponere praefecturam
 Pronior in Tuscos non dubitabat amor.

(I 579-86)

If he is to be identified with a Claudius known to have held office, this would make him the consularis of Tuscany in 389, although the records of the holders of this post are by no means complete.¹⁵ As for the remaining posts in his career, it seems that they can most easily be accommodated in the eastern half of the empire,¹⁶ the offices of comes sacrarum largitionum and quaestor sacri palatii at unknown dates, and the prefecture most probably that of the city of Constantinople, held by a Claudius in 396.¹⁷ Such a career, combining posts in both west and east, would not be in any way unique at this period (another example is provided by Drepanius Pacatus who went on from his proconsulship to become comes rei privatae in the east in 393),¹⁸ and seems to be the simplest solution to the problem of accommodating such a list of posts among the already crowded fasti of the west. The prefecture held by Lachanius in 396, subsequent to the downfall of his fellow Gaul Rufinus in 395, in which other westerners seem to have been purged from office, is thus all the more remarkable, and may possibly be a sign that Lachanius was not considered to have been closely linked with Rufinus. Nothing, however, seems to be known of him after his tenure of this post, so it may be presumed that he went into retirement on his estates in Gaul, and brought up his son there. He died at some date before the composition of the *De reditu suo*.¹⁹

Little can be said about the early life and career of Rutilius Namatianus himself. He is known to have held the posts of magister officiorum (412) and praefectus urbi at Rome (414), and presumably remained there, with his friends, until his return to Gaul a few years later. His poetry displays, or perhaps rather betrays, the fact that he underwent the standard education of the time, but whether this took place in Gaul or elsewhere cannot be ascertained, although the former is more likely, as the schools of Gaul retained their pre-eminence at least until the end of the fourth century. For his father he appears to have had a deep respect and sincere affection, proof of which is provided by the effect which the sight of the statue of Lachanius at Pisa had upon him:

"Hic oblata mihi sancti genitoris imago
 Pisani proprio quam posuere foro.
 Laudibus amissi cogor lacrimare parentis;
 Fluxerunt madidis gaudia maesta genis."

(I 575-78)

Thus Rutilius was at least a second generation aristocrat, his father having apparently made the family name, and thereby providing the son with the means to be accepted more readily in lineage-conscious, aristocratic Rome. By the fourth century, pedigree, real or imagined, was of high importance, yet another manifestation of the preoccupation with the past and the glories of Rome. In order to stress the links of one's family with the past, the fashion emerged during the fourth century of demonstrating one's lineage, on both the paternal and maternal side, by means of one's name, which, as a consequence, tended to be extremely long.²⁰

However, because of the hereditariness of the clarissime, it was possible for new families to become quite readily absorbed into the senate, if wealthy enough to pay the expenses attendant upon one of the old republican magistracies, the holding of which was the normal qualification for entry for a young man.²¹ Perhaps, therefore, it was in this manner that Rutilius came to be accepted by, and even to become an intimate friend of, such a man as Rufinus Antonius Agrypnus Volusianus, a member of the noble family of the Ceionii.²²

Such an upbringing, into a family on the fringes of the aristocracy, if not yet established as a part of it, was bound to form Rutilius into a different type of author from a man such as Ausonius. The latter was in some sense a professional writer, most of whose life had been centred around literature, and who only came to honour and office when most would have been thinking only of retirement. Rutilius, on the other hand, was a confirmed amateur in literary affairs, being first and foremost the aristocrat and imperial servant, whose duty was fulfilled by holding office. And yet, because he lacks the training and practice of the professional rhetorician, we are spared some of the rhetorician's tricks and the striving after tours de force, even though we may have to look harder also for the occasional freshness of approach, especially with regard to nature, which is to be found in Ausonius. It is also worth while comparing Rutilius' work to that of Sidonius Apollinaris, once again rather more than a generation removed in time, and in whom we see the ending of the literary revival in Gaul, and among its aristocracy.

Notes

1. Pichon, *op.cit.* p. 243.
2. The original title of the work is not known, and this title, found in several manuscripts, has no ancient authority. cf Keene, *Rutilius Claudius Namatianus*, pp. 16-17.
3. Lana, *Rutilio Namaziano*, p. 183; cf. Pichon, *op.cit.* p. 253, who thinks that some passages of the poem reflect the mentality of a practical administrator, and Pelet, *Revue des Etudes Latines* XLVIII (1970), p. 398 ff, who shows the wide extent of Rutilius' knowledge of iron-mining.
4. *De Reditu Suo* (henceforth *DRS*), I 496; 510 may suggest origins in the region of Toulouse, but the notion of *patria* was capable of much stretching. For the epigraphic evidence, see Plessis: *La poésie latine*, p. 692.
5. The date traditionally assigned to the voyage was 416, but Carcopino, followed most recently by Cameron, takes 417 as the date, while Lana opts for 415.
6. *Latomus* 30 (1971) pp. 1073-98.
7. *op.cit.* p. 1078.
8. *Aus. Ep.* XX.
9. *Aus. Praef.* III.
10. *PLRE* Syagrius 3, praetorian prefect 380-82; he receives *Aus. Praef.* II. Siburius, another prefect of this period, also had Gallic origins coming, according to Marcellus *De Medicamentis*, praef, from Bordeaux.
11. 390 A.D.
12. These only appear in the manuscript known as V and hence are to be regarded as having been published after this date. cf Evelyn White *op.cit.* p. XXXVII-XXXVIII.
13. *PLRE* Claudius 5; *Symm.* I. 28, ed. Callu: "Si quid de me scito opus erit, frater meus Claudius et cultui tuo deditus et studiū mei gnarus expediet".
14. Claudian, *In Rufinum* I, 137.
15. *Cod. Th.* II, 4, 5; *PLRE* Claudius 6. For the fasti of this post, *PLRE* p. 1094.
16. Matthews *op.cit.* p. 1082.
17. *Cod. Th.* VI, 26, 8; XV, 13, 1.
18. Matthews *op.cit.* p. 1074 ff, esp. (on Drepanius) p. 1078-79.
19. *DRS* I, 577.
20. e.g. M. Maecius Memmius Furius Baburius Caecilianus Placidus cos 343.

21. The other methods of entry into the senate were by adlection, which had become very infrequent by the fourth century, and by the holding of the ordinary consulate, which had re-emerged as the pinnacle of the careers structure.
22. *DRS* I 167 ff. cf *PLRE* (Ceionius Rufius) Albinus 15.

Chapter 9

The *De reditu suo*

First we must consider the *De reditu suo* itself, its contents, aims and importance in its period. Its form is that of a description of a journey, beginning, at least in its present state, with an encomium upon Rome, and continuing with a description of a sea journey, breaking off at Luna, only a little way into the second book. Two further fragments survive, having been discovered by Ferrari on a scrap of parchment used to repair another manuscript in the fifteenth century,¹ but these give us little information on how the poem ended, their chief features being mention of Liguria, and of the foundation of Milan in the first fragment, and then a panegyric on the general Constantius in the second. These therefore mark the continuation of the journey towards Gaul. If the form is superficially similar to a poem such as Horace's description of his journey to Brundisium,² it is however written on a very different scale, and also displays a certain originality in the actual content of the poem "il quale consta delle impressioni di viaggio di un uomo i cui occhi sono sempre aperti alla realtà che lo circonda".³

The poem cannot be said to consist solely of one theme, as the voyage, as it progresses in the narrative, is subject to digressions, both in the actual and the artistic sense. However, such digressions are by no means a sign of careless or hasty composition, as the majority of these short pieces of description of people and places are of around a dozen lines in length,⁴ which, together with the metrical purity of the work, suggests rather that much thought went into the composition of the poem, and into balancing its various aspects, something which tells heavily against the view that the journal was composed from day to day during the voyage.⁵ Furthermore, now that the mystery of the abrupt ending of the *De reditu suo* in the manuscripts has been resolved, by the discovery of fragments from a later part of the poem, as being due to a defective archetype, there is no need to presume that Rutilius did other than compose his poem in the comfort of his own home, after his safe return to Gaul.

The poem can be examined from three, partly related, aspects. Firstly, Rutilius' view of the state of the Roman Empire, what there was wrong with it, and what should be done. Secondly, the philosophical and religious beliefs of the poet, as they appear in his work. Finally, the artistic merits of the poem, with particular examination of Rutilius' treatment of nature, which forms an important part of a work consisting largely of the description of his journey.

At the time that the *De reditu suo* was written, the sack of Rome, Roma

Aeterna, by Alaric, must have been fresh in the memory. The most surprising aspect of the work therefore, in many ways, is the manner in which Rutilius was able to compose an encomium upon the city almost as if nothing untoward had occurred:

"Obruerint citius scelerata oblivia solem
Quam tuus ex nostro corde recedat honos
Nam solis radiis aequalia munera tendis,
Qua circumfusus fluctuat Oceanus."

(I 53-6)

Nor does there seem to be any material damage at Rome, although Rutilius is rather vague on this point, and there had certainly been time for some repairs:

"Percensere labor densis decora alta tropheis
Ut si quis stellas pernumerare velit
Confunduntque vagos delubra micantia visus:
Ipsos crediderim sic habitare deos.
Quid loquar aerio pendentes fornice rivos,
Qua vix imbriferas tolleret Iris aquas."

(I 93-98)

Rome is still the capital of the world, and she alone has nothing to fear from the fates:

"Porridge victuras Romana in saecula leges
Solaque fatales non vereare colos,
Quamvis sedecies denis et mille peractis
Annus praeterea ian tibi nonus eat."

(I 133-36)

All this is in stark contrast to the scenes of desolation which he presents while on his way up the coast, such as those at Castrum or Cosa:

"Stringimus†hinc effractum†⁶ et fluctu et tempore Castrum
Index semirutu porta vetusta loci."

(I 227-28)

"Cernimus antiquas nullo custode ruinas
Et desolatae moenia foeda Cosae."

(I 285-86)

The more recent damage which had been brought about by the Goths during their invasion of Italy is also freely admitted by Rutilius, when he explains his reasons for travelling by sea rather than by land:

"Electum pelagus, quoniam terrena viarum
Plana madent fluviis, cautibus alta rigent.
Postquam Tuscus ager postquamque Aurelius agger
Perpessus Geticas ense vel igne manus,

Non silvas domibus, non flumina ponte cohercet,
 Incerto satius credere vela mari."

(I 37-42)

An idea of how bad conditions must have been on land can be gained by recalling just how reluctant a sailor Rutilius proves himself to be, putting in to shore every night, and looking for every opportunity to halt.⁷ It is hard to imagine that he would have taken this route had there been any real alternative. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the avowed reason for Rutilius' return to Gaul is to aid the reconstruction there.⁸

The question therefore arises as to whether Rutilius is deliberately ignoring the depredations done to the buildings of Rome, or whether the recovery, in the capital at any rate, had been sufficiently swift for the scars of Alaric's victory to be healed. Indeed the closest that Rutilius comes to mentioning the sack of 410 is his remark about how Igilium had proved a safe sanctuary for fleeing citizens.^{8a} Superficially there does not appear to be any good reason for Rutilius to be other than honest about the situation in Rome, so perhaps one should presume that the recovery was genuinely swift. But perhaps the memory of Rome was rosier than the reality, and it is noticeable that the concept of Rome as inviolable and eternal seems to have become even more powerful in the fourth and fifth centuries among the writers of Gaul than among those of Italy.⁹

Further to this point, one may add that Rutilius is apparently unique in suggesting as a general point that Rome grew even more mighty as a result of the disasters which it suffered, and that the Goths will be defeated in the end, as Hannibal and others had been in the past:

"Victoris Brenni non distulit Allia poenam;
 Samnis servitio foedera saeva luit.
 Post multas Pyrrhum clades superata fugasti;
 Flevit successus Hannibal ipse suos ...
 Ergo age, sacrilegae tandem cadat hostia gentis:
 Summittant trepidi perfida colla Getae."

(I 125-28; 141-42)

Such a catalogue of Roman successes gained after periods of adversity is in itself suggestive of an argument being brought forward to counter an opposing view, and, as Cameron points out,¹⁰ it has been generally acknowledged that Rutilius Namatianus knew of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, in which one of the major points brought forward was that the series of disasters currently befalling Rome was by no means unparalleled in the pre-Christian era, at a time when the pagan gods should have had no reason to withhold their support from the Roman state.¹¹ If this is in some way intended as a reply, then it is at best an indirect one, for the catalogue of disasters is not deniable,

and the fact that Rome subsequently recovered from them in no way negates the original point.

Because of the need to present Rome as still being in a position to recover, it is arguable that Rutilius must therefore portray the city as unbowed by its trials, but even this would not completely rule out the admission of at least some damage. Possibly, however, he may feel that it is only by ignoring this that he can save the argument as a whole, for a description which fell short of the truth might be worse than no comment at all.

Nevertheless it should be pointed out that the situation within the Empire was more desperate than that which existed in even the blackest days of the Punic war, and there was by now no means of recovery for the Empire as a whole. To what extent the aristocracy realised this in their hearts is difficult to determine, for blind optimism, based on no solid resource, seems to lay behind Rutilius' plea for a return to normality:

"Ditia pacatae dent vectigalia terrae;
Impleat augustas barbara praeda sinus.
Aeternum tibi Rhenus aret, tibi Nilus inundet,
Altricemque suam fertilis orbis alat."

(I 143-46)

Fine sentiments indeed, but, regrettably, Rutilius offers no explanation of how this desirable state of affairs is to be brought about. When it comes down to the hard question of policy, all he offers is a scathing polemic against Stilicho over his unwillingness to prevent the invasion of Italy, and the progressive germanisation of the Empire which took place under his regime, as indeed under the whole Theodosian dynasty, at whom some of the criticism may be aimed.

As it seems probable that Stilicho could do little else apart from contain Alaric, because of trouble among his soldiers, the criticisms do appear rather harsh, the more so as the settlement and compulsory recruitment of barbarians into the army had been in existence since the reign of Marcus Aurelius.¹² In fact, as Paschoud so graphically sums it up, Rutilius' ideology is bankrupt: "Les nuances, les compromis de la politique, art du possible, en ce temps-là du moindre mal, lui échappent. Il résiste, mais comme le chêne de la fable, il est condamné à être bientôt brisé ... (son idéologie) n'a plus aucun contact avec la situation historique concrète après 410".¹³ It is not that he is unaware of the situation around him, for his descriptions of Cosa and Castrum prove that he is, and it is clear that ruin and devastation do profoundly affect him.¹⁴ Rather, he will not admit to himself that what he sees does in fact mark the end of an era.

In a sense he was right in arguing that Rome would survive, despite the catastrophes which had befallen it, for it was by this time becoming the acknowledged centre of the Christian church, and, ironically for Rutilius and his class, the eternal city thus obtained its new lease of life from one of the forces which they considered to be destroying it.

Despite the fact that his view of Rome and the Empire is a very narrow and unbending one, his encomium of Rome, and his various polemics, against the Lepidi, the love of gold, Jews, monks, corrupt treasury officials, and finally the arch-traitor Stilicho, are worthy of closer examination for what they tell us about his philosophy of life, even apart from their more obvious historical significance.

It has justly been remarked¹⁵ that two verses of the encomium stand out as particularly worthy of notice:

"fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam ...
... urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat."

(I 63, 66)

These concepts of the unity of the empire are to be found on many occasions in the Gallic poetry of this period, and apparently existed as far back as the third century, to judge from some aspects of the behaviour of the Gallic emperors.¹⁶ Balmus sums up the apparent paradox: "i Galloromani riuniscono in sè due principi in apparenza contraddittorî: il patriottismo romano e l'amor proprio nazionale, il culto per la grande capitale e l'affetto per la piccola città natale".¹⁷ Ausonius of course expresses a famous example of this same sentiment:

"haec (sc. Burdigala) patria est: patrias sed Roma supervenit omnes.
diligō Burdigalam, Romam colo; civis in hac sum,
consul in ambabus; cunae hic, ibi sella curulis."

(*Ord. Urb.* XX, 39-41)

There is no evidence that Ausonius ever visited Rome, yet, so powerful was the myth, that he can reflect it. Rutilius also keenly felt a pull between his loyalties to his homeland and to Rome, and the call of the former proves too strong, at least when the inevitable was upon him:

"lamiam laxatis carae complexibus Urbis
Vincimur et serum vix toleramus iter."

(I, 35-6)

Other lines of Rutilius' encomium may perhaps recall for the reader the ideals set out by Anchises in *Aeneid* VI:

"tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos."

(*Aen.* VI 851-53)

Rutilius seemingly announces the completion of the mission:

"Mitigat armatas victrix clementia vires,
 Convenit in mores numen utrumque (Venus and Mars) tuos.
 Hinc tibi certandi bona parcendique voluptas:
 Quos timuit superat, quos superavit amat."
 (I. 69-72)

Another echo of the *Aeneid* has a more hollow ring for the modern reader, for Rutilius' couplet:

"Quae restant nullis obnoxia tempora metis
 Dum stabunt terrae, dum polus astra feret."
 (I. 137-38)

cannot be viewed with the same confidence as could the words put by Vergil into the mouth of Jupiter:

"his (sc. Romanis) ego nec metas rerum nec tempore pono:
 imperium sine fine dedi."

(*Aen.* I. 278-79)

The sentiments remain the same, but what was seemingly possible for a forward-looking Augustan age was no longer so, nor even relevant for the beginning of the fifth century.

In more ways than one, the polemic against Stilicho can be seen as a counterweight to the encomium of Rome, coming in a similar position, in the early part of its book, and also, despite the apparent antithesis of encomium and polemical denunciation, reaffirming those very ideas which Rutilius had previously expressed. Beginning with praise of Italy, with the natural defenses inherent in its geography, a passage in itself similar in tone to that devoted to the city of Rome, the attack on Stilicho, cast as the betrayer from within of this divinely ordained site, is all the more incisive because of its position after such a scene-setting:

"Iam tum multiplici meruit munimine cingi
 Sollicitosque habuit Roma futura deos.
Quo magis est facinus diri Stilichonis acerbum
 Proditor arcani quod fuit imperii.

(II. 39-42)

The statement that Stilicho burned the Sybilline books¹⁸ is perhaps particularly significant. This deed is not otherwise attested, and, given that the vast majority of works to survive from the early years of the fifth century are Christian, while still being anti-Stilichonian,¹⁹ this is perhaps not surprising. One can be sure that this act would be one which someone who was as steeped in tradition as was Rutilius would find especially hard to forgive. Whether or not the books had any real significance is irrelevant, for it was their symbolic importance which mattered. There is no mention of this particular action in Claudian, usually Stilicho's

propagandist, so it has been considered that it took place after his apparent disappearance.²⁰ But in fact he is unlikely to have mentioned such an act in works intended for consumption at least partly in the circles where it might have proved the most unpopular.

Rutilius has obviously read some of Claudian's works, and it should be noticed that, in writing his vituperative attack, he has drawn on Claudian's poetry, which gives an added irony to the passage. According to Claudian, Stilicho's reason for avoiding further battle with Alaric after Pollentia was that he wanted to prevent him from approaching Rome:

"... ut delubra Numae sedesque Quirini
barbaries oculis saltem temerare profanis
possit, et arcanum tanti deprendere regni."

(Claud. Get. 101-103)

We have already seen the passage where Rutilius echoed this:

"proditor arcani quod fuit imperii"

(II, 42)

But it remains to add that the phrase "proditor imperii" was a description applied by Claudian to Stilicho's rival and enemy Rufinus.²¹ Rufinus was, according to Claudian, on the point of allying himself with the Huns, while Stilicho had, according to Rutilius, allied himself with the Goths, but, this minor difference apart, the crime and its description are the same. Furthermore, both attacks are directed against dead men, rather like *damnationes memoriae* in print. All in all, Rutilius' treatment can therefore be seen as a particularly well thought out and savage attack, if not actually revenge for Stilicho's hand in the downfall of a fellow-countryman or friend and Claudian's subsequent vilification of his character.

In comparison to the evils of Stilichonian rule, Rutilius presents a number of sketches of his friends among the administrative classes. From what he has to say about these men, one can gain some idea both of what he himself felt about the question of government, and also the attitude held by others of the aristocratic class, into whose hands most of the important offices of state had now fallen.

The first of these figures whom we meet is Ceionius Rufius Volusianus, one of the very highest aristocracy, and later to be nominated to the prefecture of Rome.²² The passage which describes him is sufficiently typical to repay examination in some detail:

"Iamque aliis Romam redeuntibus haeret eunti
Rufius, Albinus gloria viva patris,
Qui Volusi antiquo derivat stemmate nomen,

Et reges Rutulos teste Marone refert.
 Huius facundae commissa palatia linguae:
 Primaevus meruit principis ore loqui.
 Rexerat ante puer populos pro consule Poenos:
 Aequalis Tyriis terror amorque fuit.
 Sedula promisit summos imitatio fasces:
 Si fas est meritis fidere, consul erit."

(I. 167-76)

Here in the space of a very few lines, we see encapsulated many of the characteristic traits and interests of the aristocracy at this time. The concept of lineage as a major factor in a family's importance was of course not a new one, being as much a feature of the late republic and early empire as of the fifth century, but the need to present a facade of continuity, often somewhat strained it must be admitted, seems to have been particularly felt at this period. Perhaps it was the refusal of the aristocracy to admit to itself that the great days of the Roman state were long past which saw names such as the Cornelii Scipiones, Gracchi and Acilii Glabriones apparently still flourishing, although it should be admitted that the latter, at least, do show some evidence of continuity from the republic. But it was rare for the majority of the senatorial families to be able to trace back their ancestry even as far as could the Anicii (to a consul of 198 A.D.).²³ Thus it is that any evidence for one's ancestry became worthy of report, and Vergil a more than respectable witness. This Vergilian ancestry produced for Rufius²⁴ can be paralleled from Ausonius:

"Glabrio, te maestis commemorabo elegis,
 stemmate nobilium deductum nomen avorum,
 Glabrio Acilini, Dardana progenies."

(Prof Burd. XXIV 2-4)

After dealing with his friend's ancestry Rutilius' next statement combines details of Rufius' early career with the information that he was gifted with eloquence, a virtue which was not unique to him among Rutilius' friends.²⁵ Once again we can see from this example that the old traditions of Roman rhetoric remained in force, as they did indeed until the time of Sidonius, who delivered panegyrics upon both Avitus and Majorian. Yet this emphasis on the importance of expressing oneself well is really just another symptom of the degree to which the aristocracy was out of touch with the world in which it lived, for public speaking in a language which, even for them must have been fast becoming artificial,²⁶ was of very small importance indeed. The business discussed in the senate might be of little import even to the City, and almost never to the Empire as a whole, but, so long as the fancy words survived, then so did the illusion.

Finally Rutilius sums up Rufius' career, giving generous praise to his subject's treatment of the people of Carthage, where he was held both in fear and in esteem. This forms the first of Rutilius' portraits of the ideal Roman functionary, the "uomo colto ed umano; assertore della civilitas", a man who "è specchio delle civiles virtutes nei rapporti coi subordinati. Vir bonus dicendi peritus e legato alla tradizione di famiglia ed ai morali obblighi che essa comporta; difensore energetico dell'ordine costituito, campione di onestà pubblica e assertore dell'unità indiscutibile dell'Impero nel nome di Roma."²⁷ We have seen the majority of these characteristics in this portrait of Rufius, and those which were not stressed here will be found among other acquaintances of the poet whom he meets during his journey. The final words which Rutilius addresses to his subject, the forecast of high office for him, provides a nice dramatic touch, for, if it is borne in mind that Rutilius was writing his poem with hindsight, and therefore knew what lay in the future for Rufius, the reference can be seen is giving a slight hint to the forthcoming announcement of Rufius' appointment to the city prefecture, without being sufficiently blatant to spoil the impression of the day-by-day narrative of the poem.

Although the whole of the *De reditu suo* is clearly devoted to the close-knit aristocratic community, it is also obvious that Rutilius is linked by more genuine emotions to Rufius than could be generated merely by membership of the same class. The scene of their parting at Rome is touchingly simple:

"Invitum tristis tandem remeare coegi:

Corpore divisos mens tamen una tenet."

(I 177-78)

Such lines as this caused Balmus to describe the poem as a whole as "l'elegio dell'amicizia stessa",²⁸ although it would be fair to add that Rutilius probably does have the closest ties of friendship with Rufius among all those to whom he presents his readers in the course of his poem.

It is this affection which is the cause of his joy when he hears the news of Rufius' promotion:

"Laetior hic nostras crebrescit fama per aures;

Consilium Romam paene redire fuit.

Hic praefecturam sacrae cognoscimus urbis

Delatam meritis, dulcis amice, tuis.

Optarem verum complecti carmine nomen,

Sed quosdam refugit regula dura pedes."

(I 415-420)

Fortunately for the purposes of identification, he is able to work in the name Rufius, if nothing else. Rutilius' joy in this passage is made to



seem all the greater by its juxtaposition with the preceding section, describing the ruins of Populonia, with its sombre ending:

"Non indignemur mortalia corpora solvi:
Cernimus exemplis oppida posse mori.
Laetior hic.....

(I 413-15)

The abrupt transition from 'mori' to 'laetior' illustrates how Rutilius' heart is lifted from its melancholic thoughts by the sudden arrival of the joyful news, the word 'laetior' being an announcement to the reader that he should turn his own mind away from sorrowful thoughts.

The point has also been made²⁹ that the good news of his friend's appointment also allows Rutilius to savour again the power which he had enjoyed himself only a few years earlier. Perhaps, however, it would be more correct to suggest that Rutilius' greatest joy came from the visible trappings of power, rather than the power itself, since it is the outwardly visible signs of celebration which spring to his mind:

"Festa dies pridemque meos dignata penates
Poste coronato vota secunda colat.
Exornent virides communia gaudia rami:
Provecta est animae portio magna meae.
Sic mihi, sic potius placeat geminata potestas:
Per quem malueram rursus honore fruor."

(I 423-28)

Rutilius has already made mention of his own period in office, being particularly proud of its bloodless nature:

"Temperet aequoream dux Cytherea viam,
Si non displicui, regerem cum iura Quirini,
Si colui sanctos consulique patres.
Nam quod nulla meum strinxerunt crimina ferrum,
Non sit praefecti gloria, sed populi."

(I 156-60)

His prefecture appears to have been a pleasant, trouble-free period, in which he could perform his duties as required by protocol and etiquette, but which did not require any really difficult decisions; indeed, but for the *De reditu suo* we would not even know about his time in office. Perhaps the judgement should not be unduly harsh but the writer rather brings it upon himself with this rather negative picture of his time in office. It is clear that many office-holders looked only for a short-term appointment in order to gain the prestige that went with the post, without feeling any real conscience about serving the state in its time of crisis. Members of the aristocracy who had sufficient talent and desire to hold office could

do so for long periods, as the career of Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus, holder of four praetorian prefectures under Valentinian, demonstrates.³⁰ But he is very much an exception to the rule, and the benefits which might have accrued from the imposition of some sort of continuity in the high posts of the Empire do not seem to have occurred at all to the senatorial class.³¹

Yet at least it appears that the majority did serve in some capacity for a time, a tradition which continued well into the fifth century, as Sidonius' remarks to the country-loving Syagrius³² show:

"quid Serranorum aemulus et Camillorum cum regas stivam,
dissimulas optare palmatam? parce tantum in nobilitatis invidiam
rusticari agrum si mediocriter colas, possides; si nimium,
possideris. redde te patri, redde te patriae ..."

(*Ep.* VIII, VIII, 2)

Rather surprisingly, Rutilius does not take such a harsh view of a similar case, that of Victorinus, who had refused high office for the sake of caring for his estate:

"Illustris nuper sacrae comes additus aulae
Contempsit summos ruris amore gradus."

(I 507-508)

It must be allowed to him, however, that he had at least served previously in Britain, as vicarius.³³

Passing quickly over the pen-pictures of Rutilius' other friends, we see similar characteristics stressed in each of them. Messalla³⁴ is of noble ancestry, and although he had achieved the rank of praetorian prefect, he had gained even greater glory by means of his oratory and literary output. Albinus,³⁵ while still a young man, had shown all the wisdom of a man much his senior during his tenure of office. Victorinus, prior to his early retirement from affairs of state, had displayed restraint in the use of power entrusted to him, thereby gaining popularity among his subjects. Protadius³⁶ too had been a fair-minded and prudent official, this time as prefect of Rome. Lucillus³⁷ had been an apparently exceptionally honest comes sacrarum largitionum, repelling the corrupt officials found in the Treasury, and he had also been a writer of satire, while his son was as upright as his father. Finally, Marcellinus³⁸ had ruled wisely among the Turones.

Such are the ideal representatives of the governing class, but Rutilius does also paint another side to the picture in his diatribe against those officials who are corrupted by the opportunites for self-enrichment and whom Lucillus had been instrumental in thwarting:

"Non olim sacri iustissimus arbiter auri
 Circumsistentes reppulit Harpyias?
 Harpyias quarum discerpitur unguibus orbis,
 Quae pede glutineo quod tetigere trahunt,
 Quae luscum faciunt Argum, quae Lyncea caecum:
 Inter custodum publica furta volant.
 Sed non Lucillum Briareia praeda fefellit
 Totque simul manibus restitit una manus."

(I 607-14)

The same image, of the rapacious official as a Harpy, is to be found in the *Querolus*,³⁹ where the satire is thinly disguised:

"Istae (Harpyae) sunt quae vota hominum observant atque honores
 numinum, non solum sollemnia, verum etiam extraordinaria requirunt
 et parentum debita. si aliquid ad diem praesentatum non est, cum
 tormentis exigunt. hac atque illac totum per orbem iuxta terras
 pervolant. digitos ad praedam exacuunt curvis timendos unguibus
 semperque mensis advolant. quod contiguunt auferunt, quod relinquunt
 polluunt."

(p 112, 2-6)

Whether or not one is to make any connection between Rutilius Namatianus and the dedicatee of the *Querolus*,⁴⁰ it is obvious that the problem of the corruption of various officials was common, and a cause for concern, at least in some quarters.

This diatribe against corruption can be closely linked to one of Rutilius' other digressions, on the evils of gold, particularly in comparison to the benefits brought to mankind by iron:

"Materies vitiis aurum letale parandis:
 Auri caecus amor ducit in omne nefas.
 Aurea legitimas expugnant munera taedas
 Virgineosque sinus aureus imber emit.
 Auro victa fides munitas decipit urbes,
 Auri flagitiis ambitus ipse furit.
 At contra ferro squalentia rura coluntur,
 Ferro vivendi prima reperta via est."

(I 357-64)

The evils of gold had become something of a rhetorical commonplace, and even a century earlier, Tiberianus could express very similar sentiments:

"denique cernamus, quos aurum servit in usus.
 auro emitur facinus, pudor almus venditur auro,
 tum patria atque parens, leges pictasque fidesque:
 omne nefas auro tegitur, fas proditur auro."

(Tib. II 18-21)

Some of the phrasing is remarkably similar, although perhaps too commonplace to be of any real significance. Indeed it is rather to Rutilius' credit that he has managed to fit what is a stock theme so neatly into his poem, and to avoid at least blunt reference to the obvious rhetorical examples of the evils of gold, such as Danae,⁴¹ although she may well lie at the back of his thoughts in line 360. But the passage in general is couched in timeless terms, so, in conjunction with the passage on the Harpies of the treasury, is sufficient to demonstrate that Rutilius actually held a genuine concern about these evils, and believed that corruption should be suppressed, rather than the topic being used merely as an excuse for the customary rhetorical excursus.

Apart from the passage dealing with the bad influence which the family of the Lepidi had always exercised in the affairs of the Roman state,⁴² and which is further illustration of Rutilius' view of the importance of service to the state, and of his dislike of upheaval, the remaining satirical digressions, on Jews and on monks, can be considered together, especially for the light which they shed upon Rutilius' religious and philosophical beliefs.

Notes

1. Mirella Ferrari: "Frammenti ignoti di Rutilio Namaziano", *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* XVI (1973) pp. 15-30.
2. Horace: *Sat.* I, V, itself modelled on Lucilius.
3. C. Balmus: "Rutilio Namaziano, l'ultimo poeta di Roma", in *Il mondo Classico* 1935, p. 284.
4. *ibid.* p. 268.
5. Vessereau, p. 254.
6. suppl. Keene, Duff.
7. e.g. I 341 ff, where he is overruled by his sailors.
8. I 20 ff.
9. Ausonius' famous verse is of course a symptom of this:

"Prima urbes inter, divum domus, aurea Roma" (*Ord. Urb.* I)

The doomed struggle of Sidonius and the people of the Auvergne to preserve Roman rule, at a time when Rome was no longer interested in them, is the climax of this idealisation. Other poets also show the same optimism that Rome's decline is only temporary, e.g. Claudian, *De Bell. Get.* 145 ff; *Stil.* III, 144 ff.
10. Cameron: *Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967) p. 31.
11. e.g. *De Civ. Dei* III, 18 ff, on Hannibal.
12. *Dio Cassius* 71. 11. 4-5; Porterfield "Rutilius Namatianus. De Reditu Suo. Some historical, political and literary considerations". pp. 29 ff discusses the gradual German penetration of the army.
13. Paschoud: *Roma Aeterna* p. 167.
14. e.g. I 409-414.
15. Paschoud *op.cit.* p. 165.
16. Postumus is unique among emperors of the third century in inscribing his milestones in Roman miles rather than Gallic leugae. Macmillen: *Historia* XIV (1965) p. 103.
17. Balmus. *op.cit.* p. 278.
18. *DRS* II, 52.
19. And hence would see no reason to praise him, let alone criticise such an action.
20. It is dated on several grounds to 407-408 by Demougeot *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* LIV (1952) pp. 83 ff.
21. Claud. *In Rufinum* I, 319. For these and other parallels, see A. Cameron: *Claudian. Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius* p. 251.
22. *DRS* I 415 ff.

23. Arnheim: *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the later Roman Empire* p. 109.
24. Vergil, *Aen.* IX, 463.
25. e.g. Messalla I. 274 ff and Palladius, described as "facundus iuuenis" I. 209.
26. F. Lot: *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 6 (1931) p. 101 ff.
27. L. Alfonsi: *Studi Romani* III (1955) p. 129.
28. Balmus, *op.cit.* p. 270; cf Cirino: L'idea di Roma negli scrittori latini e particolarmente in Rutilio Namaziano p. 109.
29. Alfonsi *op.cit.* p. 127.
30. PLRE: Probus 5.
31. Although, at least in the early part of the fourth century, the customary *cursus honorum* for the Roman noble on his way to the city prefecture did include posts such as praefectus annonae or other junior administrative posts within the city, and the customary governorship was that of Africa, a traditional Senatorial prerogative, but, more importantly, the source of Rome's grain supply. cf Chastagnol: "La Préfecture Urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire" pp. 411-12.
32. Apparently the great-grandson of the consul of 381.
33. *DRS* I, 499-501.
34. *ibid.* I, 267 ff.
35. *ibid.* I, 465 ff.
36. *ibid.* I, 541 ff.
37. *ibid.* I, 599 ff.
38. *Frag. A*, 11, publ. by Ferrari, *op.cit.* p. 30.
39. *Querulus* ed. Emrich. For this passage, see Introduction p. 7.
40. A further significant point for the identification may be provided by the fact that Rutilius uses the word 'querulus' for his *bête-noire*, the Jew at Faleria, *DRS* I, 383.
41. cf Tiberianus II, 5-8:
"aurum quod penetrat thalamos rumpitque pudorem.
qua ductus saepe illecebra micat impius ensis!
in gremium Danaes non auro fluxit adulter
mentitus pretio faciem fulvoque veneno?"
42. *DRS* I, 295-312. The identity of the fifth, and most modern, Lepidus whom he mentions is not known for certain, although Claudius Dardanus, Praetorian Prefect of Gaul 409-10 (cf Sidonius Apollinaris *EP* V, IX, 1) or his brother Claudius Lepidus are possible candidates.

Philosophy and Religion

One subject on which the commentators on Rutilius Namatianus have generally been agreed is that of his religion. Few have seen in him anything other than a fervent pagan, to whom the ascendancy of Christianity was abhorrent¹. This view is based on three passages, one aimed against the Jewish race, the result of a meeting with a rather surly representative of their number at Faleria, and the other two fierce denunciations of the practice of monachism. When it comes to the more positive side of the question of Rutilius' beliefs, the poem has far less to offer at first sight, although there are a few clues to be found.

First, however, it is necessary to look at Rutilius' views on, and indeed knowledge of, Christianity, in which we may include Judaism, which was to some extent identified with it in pagan circles. Strictly of course, confusion between Christianity and Judaism should no longer have been possible for an educated man, but, to a pagan, who saw his own beliefs under attack, the comparatively favourable treatment accorded to the Jews must have seemed suspicious, as well as unjust. The two religions did tend to treat each other as "soeurs ennemies"², an attitude exemplified in the somewhat equivocal stance of some Christian emperors towards what was, after all, the root of their own religion.³

Rutilius' wrath is aroused by the action of the Jewish innkeeper at Faleria, who claims that he and his party have damaged the pleasant gardens of the villa. The passage is worth quoting in full, in order to facilitate comparison with the treatment of the same theme in other authors:

"Namque loci querulus curam Iudaeus agebat,
 Humanis animal dissociare cibis.
 Vexatos frutices, pulsatas imputat algas
 Damnaque libatae grandia clamat aquae.
 Reddimus obscaenae conuicia debita genti
 Quae genitale caput propudiosa metit.
 Radix stultitiae cui frigida sabbata cordi,
 Sed cor frigidius religione sua.
 Septima quaeque dies turpi damnata ueterno,
 Tamquam lassati mollis imago dei.
 Cetera mendacis deliramenta catastae
 Nec pueros omnes credere posse reor.
 Atque utinam nunquam Iudaea subacta fuisset
 Pompeii bellis imperioque Titi!
 Latius excisae pestis contagia serpunt
 Victoresque suos natio uicta premit. (I, 383-98)

The most important charges seem to concern the Jews' eating habits (384), the custom of circumcision (388), the celebration of the Sabbath as a day of rest (391) and the search for proselytes to the religion (397). The extent to which such accusations were commonplace can be seen from a passage of Juvenal, who laments the fate of the son born to a father converted to the Jewish faith:

"quidam sortiti metuentum sabbata patrem
 nil praeter nubes et caeli numen adorant,
 nec distare putant humana carne suillam
 qua pater abstinuit, mox et praeputia ponunt; ...
 ... (ediscunt) non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
 quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.
 sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit lux
 ignava et partem vitae non attigit ullam." (Sat XIV 96-99, 103-06⁴)

It was the apparently anti-social behaviour of the Jews which always gave the greatest problems in comprehension to the Romans, used as they were to a synthesis of religions, into which any foreign creed could be incorporated, a process facilitated by the at least superficial polytheism of the state religion. A race which insisted on its own exclusively monotheistic belief was bound to come into collision with the authorities sooner or later, as the histories of both Christianity and Judaism demonstrate. It is this insistence on its own survival, and worse still, from the Roman point of view, its propagation, which lies in Rutilius' mind in the final couplet of his tirade:

"Latius excisae pestis contagia serpunt
 Victoresque suos natio uicta premit." (I, 397-98)

This second line is obviously a reference to Horace's well-known description of Greece:

"Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit"⁵

However, it bears an even closer likeness to a description of the Jews found in Seneca's *De Superstitione*: "victi victoribus leges dederunt"⁶, which was preserved by Saint Augustine in the *De Civitate Dei*; Cameron⁷ has argued that this passage, in the section *Quid de Iudaeis Seneca senserit*, was the source for Rutilius, rather than the work of Seneca itself, as book VI of the *De Civitate Dei*, where it appears, was published in 416, the year before Rutilius' departure from Rome.

It is worth while mentioning some of the other ideas which Augustine attributes to Seneca in this same passage:

"reprehendit etiam sacramenta Iudaeorum et maxime sabbata, inutiliter eos facere adfirmans quod per illos singulos septenis interpositos dies septimam fere partem aetatis suae perdant vacando et multa in tempore

urgentia non agendo Laedantur ... De illis sane Iudaeis cum loqueretur, ait: "Cum interim usque eo sceleratissimae gentis consuetudo convaluit ut per omnes iam terras recepta sit; victi victoribus leges dederunt".⁸

It can be seen that the last phrase is by no means the only point of contact as regards the thought expressed in the two works, for Seneca stresses the point of the laziness of the Jews in abandoning work on the seventh day, and also comments on the spread of the Jewish race throughout the world, just as Rutilius does.

That Juvenal was one of the most widely read of the ancient authors in the declining years of the Western Empire is well-known, so it is only fair to admit that Rutilius may have known the passage in *Satire XIV*. On the other hand, the very close similarity of one phrase, albeit a short one, to Saint Augustine's quotation from Seneca must weigh heavily for Cameron's thesis. It has long been held⁹ that Rutilius may have known some of the earlier parts of the *De Civitate Dei* and the arguments against Rutilius having known the *De superstitione* itself are quite strong. Seneca seems to have been out of favour as regards the school curriculum, especially where his philosophical works were concerned¹⁰, so Rutilius is unlikely to have encountered Seneca often during the period of his formal education. Generally his style was out of favour at this period and the *De Superstitione* suffers the even greater drawback of its subject matter; a work which was overtly critical of the orthodox religion is hardly one which is likely to have held much appeal to a diehard pagan of the beginning of the fifth century. The Christian writers of course found him more than useful¹¹ for this reason. But, in the opinion of Ross¹², whatever one may think about the likelihood of Seneca being on Rutilius' bookshelf, Augustine seems an even less likely candidate and, given Rutilius' supposed antipathy to the Christian religion and apparent shunning of all aspects of it, the point is hard to argue against. This does lead us far from our main point, the discussion of the remarks about Jews, and so further examination of Rutilius' possible knowledge of Christian writers must be laid aside for the moment.

Returning to the topic of Rutilius' portrayal of Judaism, it is necessary to consider some parts of the passage which do not seem to have been the rhetorical commonplaces that the rest were. The first phrase of note is "radix stultitiae" (l. 389), which Labriolle demonstrates to be a reference to the unsatisfactory nature (from the pagan point of view) of Judaism as the ancestor of Christianity. This attack had been made previously by Celsus and Julian, so that it is difficult not to see in the phrase "une intention assez brutalement hostile à l'endroit de la religion chrétienne, greffée sur la juive".¹³ If the widely held belief is correct, that it was by the time of the *De reditu suo* no longer possible to publish overt attacks on Christianity, then this veiled reference to it would

perhaps be the most open remark which Rutilius would dare to offer. Furthermore the remarks which follow are equally applicable to Judaism and to Christianity, as they appear to be a sideswipe at the Creation story told in Genesis:

"Septima quaeque dies turpi damnata ueterno,
Tamquam lassati mollis imago dei." (I, 391-92)

The use of the word 'mollis' is of course insulting, as it is normally used of effeminacy when applied to men, and 'lassati' brings with it a further imputation as to the quality of the Jewish god's divinity, one which is obviously absent from the context in Genesis¹⁴, but one which can be easily inserted in order to give a satiric interpretation. One interesting feature of this apparently original attack is that, by its very existence, it proves that Rutilius possessed some knowledge of the details of the book of Genesis, although whether at first or second hand is hard to say.

Passing on to Rutilius' attacks on monks, it is clear that the practice of monachism was one about which he felt strongly, as is evidenced by the existence of two polemics on the subject. The very existence of these two sections must be an indication of a particular dislike of this aspect of Christianity, for, artistically, the poem could certainly stand up without the diatribe against the unfortunate young man who had gone to live on the island of Gorgon, given that Rutilius had made similar points in his remarks about the inhabitants of Capraria.

The first passage is somewhat unexpected in its virulence, for Rutilius has just been describing the sea-scape, with Corsica visible far off in the mists, and he introduces Capraria as the next focal point of attention. The following line, however, promptly creates with its opening words the feeling of darkness and filth:

"Processu pelagi iam se Capraria tollit,
Squalet lucifugis insula plena viris." (I, 439-40)

Having thus built up an unfortunate impression from the very beginning, only then does Rutilius name these men, or rather, in a manner calculated to increase the distaste felt by the reader, say what name they give to themselves; the implication that he could think of several more choice and appropriate titles is clear. The concept of living alone, *nullo teste*¹⁵ may possibly also be intended to suggest overtones of suspicion as to the nature of their way of life, as *testis*, being a word often used for the witness to a crime, is perhaps employed here to imply some illegality or immorality in the monks' way of life.

This is followed by a passage damning the monks' abandonment of the secular life, with its rewards as well as its misfortunes:

"Munera fortunae metuunt, dum damna uerentur.
Quisquam sponte miser, ne miser esse queat?

Quaenam peruersi rabies tam stulta cerebri,

Dum mala formides, nec bona posse pati?" (I, 443-46)

It is the bald statement of the (alleged) reason for their withdrawal which is so damning, thus illustrating that if a falsehood is to be used, and Rutilius must surely have been aware that he was not telling the whole truth, however hard monachism may have been for him to understand as a whole, then it should be sweeping and complete. Of course, once the false premise is accepted, the remaining rhetorical development is both natural and faultlessly logical.

Total withdrawal from the outside world finds criticism, albeit of a far more gentle nature, even in ecclesiastical circles, for Saint Augustine writes to Eudoxius, abbot of Capraria, in about 398:

"Nec vestrum otium necessitatibus ecclesiae praeponatis, cui parturienti si nulli boni ministrare vellent, quo modo nasceremini, non inveniretis ... Sic ergo, dilectissimi, diligite otium, ut vos ab omni terrena delectatione refrenetis." (Ep XLVIII, 2)¹⁶

Despite his later protestation¹⁷ in this same letter that he is not suggesting that the monks are in any way failing to abide by his advice at the current moment, the suspicion must arise that some rumours about the colony had in fact reached Augustine's ears, so perhaps not all Rutilius' invective is empty of factual background, or at least of well-supported rumour.

The remainder of Rutilius' outburst about Capraria adds little to our knowledge of his views about monks, but his remark about Bellerophon is significant in another way:

"Sic nimiae bilis morbum assignavit Homerus
Bellerophonteis sollicitudinibus." (I, 449-50)

This claim that Homer portrays Bellerophon as suffering from an excess of bile is erroneous, as Homer writes that he was devouring his heart through grief:

" ὅν θυμὸν κατεδύε " (*Iliad* VI, 202)

Given such a blunder, it is hard to believe that Rutilius had made any sort of study of Homer, and thus, considering that Ausonius, writing at a time not too far distant from Rutilius' own schooldays, names the *Iliad* as one of the first books to be opened by the youthful scholar of Greek¹⁸, probably no real study of any Greek literature. A further point of interest in this couplet on Bellerophon is the use of just two words to make up the pentameter line, a feat which, while adding to the effect of the heavy and disturbed thoughts of Bellerophon, reminds us also of just how far one had to go with rhetorical trickery in order to find something new.

The second attack on monachism begins in a very similar way to the first, with a description of the scene of the evil, as it comes up over the horizon:

"Inconcuſſa uehit tranquilluſ apluſtria flatuſ;
 Mollia ſecuro uela rudente tremunt
 Adſurgit ponti medio circumflua Gorgon
 Inter Pisanum Cyrenaicumque latuſ.
 Aueroſor ſcopuluſ¹⁹ damni monumenta recentiſ:
 Perdituſ hic uiuo funere ciuiſ erat." (I, 513-18)

The ſcene iſ initially one of the utmoſt tranquillity, aſ Rutiliuſ moveſ gradually into hiſ ſtride, leading up to a ſavage attack. The phrase "aueroſor ſcopuluſ" iſ the firſt indication of anything amiſſ, and the following line iſ eſpecially ſignificant. With the uſe here of the word 'civiſ', Rutiliuſ putſ into the mindſ of hiſ readerſ the ſuggeſtion of ſome ideal, that of a man complete with hiſ reſponſibilitieſ aſ well aſ the advantageſ which accompany citizenſhip. The idea of the civilization reſented by Rome may alſo be preſent, with the implication that the manner in which the citizen now liveſ iſ fit only for ſlaveſ or barbarianſ. The remainder of the paſſage balanceſ what the unfortunate young man haſ loſt by hiſ action againſt what he haſ gained, and repeatſ accuſationſ, ſuch aſ thoſe of madneſſ and ſordid living conditionſ from the earlier paſſage about Capraria:

"Noſter enim iuueviſ maioribuſ ampliſ,
 Nec cenſu inferior coniugioſe minor,
 Impulſuſ furiſ homineſ terraque reliquit
 Et turpem latebram creduluſ exul agit.
 Infelix putat illuſie caeleſtia paſci
 Seque premit laeſiſ ſauior ipſe deiſ.
 Num, rogo, deterior Circaeſ ſecta ueneniſ?
 Tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi. (I, 519-26)

The reference to Circe and her potionſ createſ an impreſſion of the monk'ſ life aſ being ſimilar to that of an animal, a further example of Rutiliuſ' occaſionally ſubtle uſe of rhetorical material.

Juſt aſ the conversion of Paulinuſ of Nola haſ been ſuch a ſhock to ariſtocratſ of the previous generation, ſo, even now, it iſ clear that deſertionſ from the fold could ſtill arouſe high paſſionſ. The period immediately preceding Rutiliuſ' poem waſ marked by the beginniſgſ of monaſticism in Gaul. Lérinſ waſ founded by Honoratuſ in 410 and St. Victor de Margeille by Caſſian in 416.^{20a} In comparison, however, with Auſoniuſ' rather pathetic lamentſ over the loſſ of hiſ friend²⁰, Rutiliuſ' remarkſ haue a ſavageſy which iſ perhaps born of deſperation, and the knowledge that he waſ on a loſing ſide. The vehemence of thiſ attack haſ been conſidered aſ one of the major proofſ of hiſ paganism.²¹

Before leaving the topic of Christianity, it is necessary to examine the knowledge displayed by Rutilius of Christian writings and to attempt some sort of explanation of a phenomenon described by Vessereau²², with reference to Rutilius' echoing of Minucius Felix as "une étrange ressemblance". We have already seen that Rutilius has a knowledge of the Book of Genesis for certain, and has in all probability read at least some of the early books of the *De Civitate Dei*. To these it may also be possible to add further examples, in particular the *Octavius* composed by Minucius Felix. As Porterfield points out²³, Rutilius' remark about the island of Capraria swarming with monks²⁴, may be an echo of the description put by Minucius Felix into the mouth of the pagan Caecilius, who calls the Christians a "latebrosa et lucifuga natio" (*Octavius* VIII, 4). The word 'lucifugus' must also have recalled to the minds of Rutilius' readers, steeped as they were in Vergil, the phrase "lucifugis congesta cubilia blattis"²⁵, and the unpleasant connotations of these parasitic beetles transferred to the monks.²⁶

The continuation of the passage in the *Octavius* is also worthy of quotation:

"... honores et purpuras despiciunt, ipsi seminudi. Pro mira stultitia et incredibilis audacia! spernunt tormenta praesentia, dum incerta metuunt et futura, et, dum mori post mortem timent, interim mori non timent..." (VIII, 4-5)

Faced with such a passage, it is not difficult to recall Rutilius' own remarks about the monks' wretched fear of what fortune might bring:

"Munera fortunae metuunt, dum damna uerentur.

Quisquam sponte miser, ne miser esse queat?" (I, 443-44)^{26a}

The phrasing may differ, but the idea remains the same. Similarly one wonders whether Rutilius' criticism of the monks for living alone, 'nullo teste', may clothe the more explicit comment to be found in the *Octavius*:

"Cur etenim occultare et abscondere quicquid illud colunt magnopere nituntur, cum honesta semper publico gaudeant, scelera secreta sint ... Cur ... numquam palam loqui, numquam libere congregari, nisi illud, quod colunt et interprimunt, aut puniendum est aut pudendum?" (*Oct.*X, 2)

Furthermore, both Caecilius and Rutilius see Christianity as a form of madness²⁷. The direct parallels are perhaps few, but interesting, especially the use of 'lucifugus' by both writers, and hence it is possible that Rutilius may have known the *Octavius*, although this is less certain than for his knowledge of Augustine.²⁸ If Rutilius did in fact know Minucius' work, his turning of these accusations, made in the earlier work for the sake simply of refutation, to his own benefit, forms a parallel with his use of Claudian, whose own words he uses against his former master, Stilicho.²⁹

One final parallel between Rutilius and a Christian author may be drawn. The phrase 'postliminium pacis' (I, 214), where 'postliminium' is used merely to imply 'a return', as opposed to its normal, legal meaning of 'right of recovery', of home, property, etc. This meaning apparently only occurs elsewhere in Tertullian, and even more significantly, in the same phrase, "postliminium pacis".³⁰

The question now arises as to what we are able to make of Rutilius' apparently fairly detailed knowledge of Christian authors. On the one hand it is quite clear that he could not have performed his duties as an imperial civil servant without coming into contact with large numbers of Christians, and it is possible that, with gradually increasing numbers of the aristocracy being won over, or finding it expedient to join, the new religion, he must have known many of them socially. Therefore, the existence of Rutilius' generous Christian friend postulated by Cameron³¹ to explain his apparent reading of a large portion of the *De Civitate Dei*, cannot be dismissed too lightly. On the other hand, the recipient of the gift would still have to read it, and, although it would be nice to think of him whiling away the hours at Porto in this way, proof is completely lacking. Nor will this satisfactorily explain away the possible echoes of Tertullian or Minicius Felix, so some deeper exposure to Christianity, earlier in life must be sought.

Unfortunately little can even be guessed of Rutilius' early life. He is certainly from Gaul, most probably from the area around Toulouse, although some commentators would favour Poitiers.³² The date of his birth can only be guessed at, although, as it was customary to hold the prefecture of Rome as the crowning office of a civil career³³ in middle age,³⁴ if we were to take Rutilius' date of birth as around 370, this would probably not be far from the truth. This would also fit in with the career of Lachanius as we know it, giving some twenty years between generations, not unusual for the time. So, how much contact is Rutilius likely to have had with Christianity during his formative years, say between 380 and 390?

Christianity had certainly existed in Toulouse for about a century and a half by this time, but there is no way of really telling how much of a grip it had. The fact that Saint Martin, operating around Poitiers, from the time of his appointment as bishop in 371, could meet with such success in mass conversion, would suggest that, in the countryside at least, paganism was still strong. And yet the operations of Martin³⁵ and of Priscillian, whose brand of asceticism seems to have been particularly attractive in south-west Gaul, must have caused a stir, sufficient perhaps to arouse the interest of young, well-educated men to read a work such as the *Octavius*, which was well-written especially by the standards of Christian apology, and of course designed for an educated audience. This may be a solution to the mystery, but there can be no certainty in the matter.

Rutilius would have had no reason to ignore Augustine on stylistic grounds either, and given both the content and the out of favour style of Seneca's *De Superstitione*, it becomes on balance likely that Rutilius would have read the passage about the Jews in the Christian writer rather than the pagan one. But the attacks on Judaism and monachism have all the venom which one might expect of a recent convert to a cause, or even, dare one say it, an apostate from Christianity, although once again there is not a scrap of evidence. And there the problem must lie, unsolved, probably insoluble.

Turning now from the negative side of Rutilius' beliefs to the more positive one immediately presents the reader with a difficulty, that of appreciating the way in which the pagan religion had changed since the days of Augustus. It must be borne in mind that the pagan resistance of the later part of the fourth century was centred not around the old Gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon, which seem long before to have lost any, other than literary, significance, but rather around certain eastern cults, as well as that of the goddess Roma, with its patriotic, conservative appeal, and certain other state cults, such as the Vestal Virgins, and the infamous Altar of Victory in the Senate-house. From the evidence collected by Bloch³⁶, it can be seen that, among those people known to have held priesthoods, there are almost twice as many eastern cults represented as Roman ones, although it is equally true that most of these people held offices in several cults - in itself a significant factor in determining the real strength of this revival.³⁷

Furthermore, leaving aside local cults, it is probably among the eastern cults that the greatest numbers of adherents outside the senatorial class were to be found. Mithraism had been a very popular religion in military circles and, as such, had been a serious rival to Christianity as late as the end of the third century, when it became absorbed into the cult of Sol Invictus brought to prominence by Aurelian. However, this official stamp of approval perhaps gave it only a temporary, artificial popularity, since it seems to have faded away in appeal, other than in the pagan-dominated city of Rome, into the remoter parts of the Empire by the end of the fourth century. The cult of Isis is another of which the position is rather hard to determine at this time. It obviously survived in aristocratic circles, and the popularity of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* probably ensured that the cult was known to a wider public than that which actually took part in it. Moreover various Isiac designs are used on coins issued to commemorate the celebration of the *vota publica*³⁸ and also on the coinlike contorniate medallions, possibly used as new year gifts³⁹, both of which emanate in the senatorial circle at Rome, which underlines their use as propaganda, without implying any great diffusion of Isis-worship.

However, the fact that Rutilius witnesses the celebration of the *heuresis* of Osiris at Faleria⁴⁰ is an indication that the Egyptian cults at least had genuine

life at this date. Alföldi⁴¹ also puts forward further information about the interest in Isis, showing that the *navigium Isidis* (March 5th) continued to be celebrated even in the reign of Theodosius II⁴², despite the banning of other pagan festivals. As we see from Rutilius, the countryside in general was the greatest stronghold of pagan beliefs, although not necessarily those of Rome, as far as can be told from Sulpius Severus' description of what Saint Martin encountered in Gaul.⁴³

Therefore, in order to gauge Rutilius' views on the pagan cults, there is little to be gained from looking for references to the Greco-Roman pantheon in the poem. For example, Jupiter is not mentioned by name, being referred to merely as the god who, disguised as a bull, snatched away Europa⁴⁴, in a reference which is definitely literary rather than theological. The reference to a supreme deity at the head of a council may be to Jupiter, with an echo back to the *Aeneid*⁴⁵, but may also represent the Stoic idea of a ruling body over the world⁴⁶, or just conceivably, given Rutilius' definite approval of the rites of Osiris, the unified godhead formed from the various deities of the Isis cult⁴⁷.

In fact the only reference to a traditional Italian god appears to be that to the Pan or Faunus outside the gate of Castrum. The tone employed by Rutilius is certainly not hostile, as it would necessarily have been from a Christian, but yet it is light-hearted, perhaps almost gently mocking:

"Praesidet exigui formatus imagine saxi,
 Qui pastorali cornua fronte gerit...
 ... Seu Pan Tyrrhenis mutauit Maenala siluis,
 Siue sinus patrios incola Faunus init,
 Dum renouat largo mortalia semina fetu.
 Fingitur in uenerem pronior esse deus." (I, 229-30, 233-36)

Considering Rutilius' statement that the statue is made only from a modest block of stone, it is surprising that he can see the amorous propensities of the god so clearly from out at sea, and one must wonder whether he is drawing his description from a previous viewing at closer quarters, which further suggests a kind of affection for the statue.

Let us now examine the passage which is the most obvious guide to the nature of Rutilius' paganism, that which he devotes to the celebration of the festival of Osiris at Faleria:

"Lassatum cohibet uicina Faleria cursum,
 Quanquam uix medium Phoebus haberet iter.
 Et tum forte hilares per compita rustica pagi
 Mulcebant sacris pectora fessa iocis.

Illo quippe die tandem reuocatus Osiris

Excitat in fruges germina laeta novas." (I, 371-76)

The atmosphere of busy enjoyment portrayed here is given a further boost by its position in the poem, sandwiched between the heat and tedium of the journey, and the encounter with the surly Jew which follows immediately afterwards.

The use by Rutilius of the word 'hilares' led Carcopino⁴⁸ to suggest that he was referring to the feast called the "Hilaria", assigned to November 3rd by Philocalus, which is also the date given by Plutarch⁴⁹ for Osiris' reawakening and the culmination of his festival. Although Cameron⁵⁰ rejects this date as impossible for Rutilius' arrival at Faleria as complicating still further the chronology of Rutilius' voyage, it seems possible that the two festivals had become in some way linked by this time⁵¹. Whether or not one is to attribute to the word 'hilares' any religious significance, it is clear that Rutilius wishes to draw attention to the happiness of the country folk at their festival, a fact which can only indicate his complete approval of the celebration.

But one is forced to admit that there is really very little positive evidence for Rutilius' taking part in pagan religious practices, and to argue from this fairly neutral description of what he saw at Faleria, as compared to the swingeing attacks on monachism, does not give much assistance in solving the question of his beliefs. If one turns however to some of the philosophical remarks which occur in the *De reditu suo*, one can pick out something more of Rutilius' attitude to life.

As suggested above, the majority of pagan cults were little more than shells of what they had been and the various philosophical schools and systems had also for the most part become comparatively sterile during the third and fourth centuries. It has, however, been suggested that the *De reditu suo* displays a definite bias towards Posidonian stoicism⁵², while Boano⁵³ goes as far as to stress the extent of Rutilius' philosophical interests and the influence of philosophy on his work. In particular he suggests that Seneca was an intermediary between Posidonius and Rutilius⁵⁴, which appears improbable given that Seneca was so out of favour under the Late Empire.

It seems to me, however, that it is wrong to assume too formal a knowledge of Stoic philosophy in any writer at this period. The last author to write from a stoic viewpoint had been Marcus Aurelius and the whole complexion of the Roman world had changed since his day. In particular men were looking more for a purpose in life and some promise of an afterlife to compensate for the miseries of life on earth^{54a}. This does not mean that stoic ideas were lost for many of its views on mortality were similar to and thus welcomed by the Christian church. Furthermore, stoic ideas had penetrated earlier literature to a certain extent, which resulted in them forming part of the cultural heritage of any educated man.

In examining Rutilius' philosophical views, we must therefore bear these reservations in mind. Having said this, we have already seen Rutilius employing the stoic concept of a ruling deity and he also expresses the belief that the world is guided by reason, in the guise of nature, which is expressed in Rutilius' description of the way in which Italy is ideally situated for defensive purposes:

"Si factum certa mundum ratione fatemur
 Consiliumque dei machina tanta fuit,
 Excubiis Latiis praetexuit Appenninum
 Claustraque montanis uix adeunda uiis.
 Inuidiam timuit natura parumque putauit
 Arctoïs Alpes opposuisse minis,
 Sicut uallauit multis uitalia membris
 Nec semel inclusit quae pretiosa tulit.
 Iam tum multiplici meruit munimine cingi
 Sollicitosque habuit Roma futura deos." (II, 31-40)

It is clear that these careful divinities are not to be identified with particular personalities, such as Jupiter or Juno, but rather as guiding forces behind Rome, and indeed the world, with Italy and Rome at its hub. A similar demythologization can be found in the earlier reference to the fates, which forms part of Rutilius' eulogy of Rome:

"Porrigere uicturas Romana in saecula leges
 Solaque fatales non uereare colos." (I, 133-34)

Rutilius, from the evidence of these passages, obviously believes in some governing force, whether purely in nature, or on some more divine plane, but one which can in no sense be related to the traditional pantheon of gods.

Other stoic concepts to be found in Rutilius' poem can be summarized fairly briefly.⁵⁵ The concept of "semina" as a creative and generative force is common in Stoicism and used by Rutilius to describe the coming of virtue from heaven to Rome, obviously the most worthy site:

"Semina uirtutum demissa et tradita caelo
 Non potuere aliis dignius esse locis." (I, 9-10)

The phrase 'semina uirtutum' may be borrowed from Cicero⁵⁶, or possibly some other source. Rutilius' remarks upon the causes of tides in the oceans are also to be linked with those of Posidonian stoicism, this being a subject on which Posidonius was acknowledged to be an expert⁵⁷:

"Vidimus excitis pontum flauescere arenis
 Atque eructato uertice rura tegi,
 Qualiter Oceanus mediis infunditur agris,
 Destituenda uago cum premit arua salo,

Siue alio refluus nostro conliduntur orbe,
 Siue corusca suis sidera pascit aquis." (I, 639-44)

It is this last line which reflects the Posidonian belief, while it is interesting to note that Rutilius gives the opposing, Aristotelian view in the preceding one.⁵⁸ The major direct source for this passage may well be Lucan, who mentions the nourishing effect of the waters as they are drawn up to the stars in two passages:

"flammiger an Titan, ut alentes hauriat undas,
 erigat Oceanum fluctusque ad sidera ducat." (De Bello Civile I, 415-16)

"sed rapidus Titan ponto sua limina pascens
 aequora subduxit zonae vicina perustae." (ibid. IX, 313-14)

One of the few gods to be mentioned by name in the *De Reditu Suo* is Hercules, who was, of course, the greatest hero of the Stoics, for whom his adventures illustrated the ideals of virtue. Rutilius clearly attributed his promotion among the gods to these characteristics:

"Factus et Alcides nobilitate deus." (I, 76)

When one considers the scant attention paid by Rutilius to the traditional members of the pantheon, then such words gain in significance, suggesting that Rutilius held the view that a divinity should be representative of some sort of achievement and of some ideals; perhaps this emphasis on service and achievement should be linked to the old Roman ideals of public service, exemplified by such men as Cincinnatus, Serranus and Fabricius⁵⁹, and to the qualities displayed by Rutilius' friends.

Finally, one should mention that, while the subject of the destructive power of gold is to be found in a wide range of Latin writers⁶⁰, and in particular among the poets, the comparison with the more productive qualities of iron is especially a stoic concept, to be found in both Seneca and Vitruvius⁶¹. For Porterfield however⁶², Tibullus appears to provide the most likely source for Rutilius' views on the subject, although the two writers have different emphases. Tibullus writes thus⁶³:

"Quis fuit horrendos primus qui protulit enses?
 quam ferus et vere ferreus ille fuit!
 tum caedes hominum generi, tum proelia nata,
 tum brevior dirae mortis aperta via est.
 an nihil ille miser meruit, nos ad mala nostra
 vertimus, in saevas quod dedit ille feras?
 divitis hos vitium est auri, nec bella fuerunt,
 faginus adstabat cum scyphus ante dapes." (I, 10, 1-8)

Rutilius' remarks on iron follow the diatribe against the evils of gold:

"Auro uicta fides munitas decipit urbes,
 Auri flagitiis ambitus ipse furit.
 At contra ferro squalentia rura coluntur,
 Ferro uiuendi prima reperta uia est.
 Saecula semideum ferrati nescia Martis
 Ferro crudeles sustinuere feras.
 Humanis manibus non sufficit usus inermis,
 Si non sint aliae ferrea tela manus." (I, 361-68)

Apart from those obvious echoes, which even occur metrically in similar positions, one can perhaps add the use of 'crudeles' and 'saevas' as epithets applied to wild beasts, as well as the similarities of thought, especially as both poets draw attention to the later misuse of weapons which had originally been designed for man's protection against wild animals.

Such then, is the major evidence to support the view of Rutilius as holding Stoic ideas, and it is clear that, although the ideas may come from Stoic sources, Rutilius had been attracted to them as much for literary as for philosophical reasons. He certainly does not follow Posidonian Stoicism blindly, for he gives two explanations of the system of tides, one of which is drawn from the rival Aristotelian school. A further example of his eclecticism is provided by his reference to intelligence being governed by the temperature of the blood around the heart, which originates in Pythagoreanism.⁶⁴ Other remarks are not confined to the teachings of just one school, as is the case with the evil powers of gold. The passage, full of melancholy, brought about by the sighting of Populonia is a case in point:

"Agnosci nequeunt aeuī monumenta prioris:
 Grandia consumpsit moenia tempus edax.
 Sola manent interceptis uestigia muris;
 Ruderibus latis tecta sepulta iacent.
 Non indignemur mortalia corpora solui:
 Cernimus exemplis oppida posse mori." (I, 409-14)

Such reflections on the mortality of men and cities are not unique to any philosophy, although they perhaps allow us a glimpse into Rutilius' deeper thoughts, an apparently deep pessimism underlying the fine words about the eternity of Rome; such remarks can certainly be described as philosophical, but one should not, I think, be tempted to make of Rutilius a philosopher. Schuster⁶⁵ sums up well how Rutilius stands relative to Stoicism: "(er) stand als solcher in manchen Dingen der stoischen Gedankenwelt nahe; doch hat er sich selbst niemals zu den Stoikern gezählt."

In all probability he in fact gained the veneer of philosophy from his literary studies, which would expose him to various philosophical concepts without him being expected to develop them to any great extent. Such a source would also allow him to

hold the range of ideas which is present in the *De reditu suo*⁶⁶. As an intelligent, educated man of the period, he would be expected to have, and hence to display, a knowledge of such things, but certainly not to produce any originality, or even hold any profound and detailed beliefs.

One is left therefore to wonder to what extent Rutilius did have any identifiable religious or philosophical allegiance. The traditional forms of Roman worship were more or less extinct by the beginning of the fifth century, and even most of the ceremonial vestiges disappeared under the Christian Empire⁶⁷. And so one should not be too surprised not to find much trace of it even in such a conservative figure as Rutilius. Much of the pagan resistance, especially among the aristocracy, now centred around either the more exotic Eastern cults, or else that of the Goddess Roma, with all the traditions for which she stood. Hence it is no real surprise to find an encomium upon the city of Rome, and the civilisation which it has created, and also a complimentary reference to the Isis cult.

In philosophy, it is rather a case of Rutilius displaying a knowledge of certain maxims, and sincerely holding some sort of belief in the traditional Roman virtues, while criticizing those who fail to live up to them. He clearly believes the worst of the more extreme manifestations of Christianity, and it is hard to see how the ideals of monachism could fit with those in which Rutilius believes, such as service to the (secular) state. He does, however, seem to be surprisingly well read in Christian literature for one to whom it is, at first glance, anathema, and this is a matter not easily explained.

In conclusion, one must see him as a representative of an almost extinct race, a pagan gentleman, unwilling, if not unable, to understand the new religion, and left clinging to a fast disappearing, if not by now merely illusory heritage.

Notes

1. cf however, H. Schenkl, *Rheinisches Museum* 1911 p. 393-416, who considers him a Christian, a suggestion rebutted by P. de Labriolle, *Revue des Etudes Latines* 6 (1928) p. 30-41; cf also Vessereau, *op. cit.* p. 276 ff, who believes Rutilius' attacks are only aimed at the more excessive forms of Christianity.
2. Vessereau *op. cit.* p. 301.
3. Broadly speaking, the imperial policy towards the Jewish religion was one of toleration, together with exemption from some municipal duties, although acts of proselytism were actively discouraged. cf. *Cod. Th.* XVI, 8, passim.
4. Tacitus treats the Jewish religion at some length in Book V of the Histories, and also considers that the celebration of the Sabbath is a manifestation of laziness: "septimo die otium placuisse ferunt quia is finem laborum tulerit; dein blandiente inertia septimum quoque annum ignaviae datum". (*Hist.* V, 4)
5. Horace: *Ep* II, 1, 156.
6. Seneca: *Frag.* 42 (ed. Hause)
7. *JRS* 1967, p. 32.
8. *De Civ. Dei* VI, 11.
9. Dufourcq: *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature Religieuses* 1905, p. 488-92.
10. Ausonius' works betray a knowledge only of the Apocolocyntosis and the tragedies, cf Schenkl's edition. Index I p. 268. The Manichaean Faustus knew some of Seneca's philosophical works, Augustine *Conf* V, 6.
11. *De Civ. Dei* VI, 10.
12. Ross in *Seneca*, ed. Costa, London 1974, p. 154, n. 23.
13. Pierre de Labriolle, *Revue des Études Latines* 6 (1928) p. 38.
14. cf *Genesis II*, v. 2 (Vulgate edn.): "Complevitque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat; et requievit die septimo ab universo opere quod patrarat."
15. *DRS* I, 442.
16. Augustine *Ep* XLVIII, in Loeb *St. Augustine Select Letters* No. 15. More virulent attacks on monachism, because of its excess asceticism, were made by the Christians Jovinian (392) and later Vigilantius (406), both of whom crossed swords with Saint Jerome over the matter. cf. Labriolle *op. cit.* pp. 34-5.
17. *Ep* XLVIII, 4.
18. Ausonius: *Ep* XXII, 45-7:
"Perlege, quodcumque est memorabile prima monebo.
Conditor Idiados et amabilis orsa Menandri
evolvenda tibi."
19. The manuscript reading is *adversus scopulos*, which is rejected by Duff (Préchac prints *aduersus scopulus*), and this conjecture, auersor scopulos, seems to have more vigour.

20. Ausonius *Epp* XXVII-XXIX.
- 20a. Folz: "De l'antiquité au monde médiéval" p. 84.
21. Balmus, op. cit. p. 284.
22. Vessereau, op. cit. p. 285. no. 2.
23. Porterfield, op. cit. p. 373.
24. *DRS* I, 440: "Squalet lucifugus insula plena viris"
25. *Georgics* IV, 243.
26. Nor would the only other usage of 'lucifugus' in Golden Age Latin, in Cicero's *De Finibus* I, 18, 61, where it forms part of a long string of unflattering adjectives, and applied to men this time, have toned down the strength of the epithet in any way, if it happened to be remembered.
- 26a. The similarity of these passages was noted by Cirino, op. cit. p. 127.
27. *Oct* IX, 2: "vana et demens superstitio"; cf *DRS* I, 445, 521.
28. It should be added that the *Octavius* was still being read at the time of Rutilius, as Jerome quotes from it on several occasions.
29. Porterfield, op. cit. p. 373; and on the use of Claudian, pp. 432-40.
30. "postliminium largitus ecclesiasticae pacis." Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 15.
31. Cameron *JRS* 57 (1967), p. 39.
32. See Vessereau op. cit. p. 151 ff. for details.
33. Although an ordinary consulate might well come later, this does not in any real administrative sense have been anything other than an honorary, although much coveted and very glorious, post.
34. For the prefects appointed by Constantine, Chastagnol (*La Préfecture Urbaine* p. 413) gives their average age range as being between 42 - 50 years.
35. Martin in particular seems to have met with great success in introducing monachism; over two thousand monks are reputed to have attended his funeral; on this, and the growth of monachism in Gaul generally, see Courtois in *Aevum* XXXI (1957) p. 47-72.
36. H. Bloch *Harvard Theological Review* 1945 p. 194-244 and chart.
37. Bloch in Momigliano ed. op. cit. p. 203.
38. For details of these coins, see Alföldi: "A festival of Isis in Rome under the Christian emperors of the Fourth Century" *Dissertationes Pannonicae* II, 7. (1937)
39. Bloch in Momigliano ed. p. 202.
40. *DRS* I, 373 ff.
41. Alföldi, op. cit. p. 42 ff.
42. Vegetius IIII, 39, a clear reference to this festival, celebrating the reopening of the seas, although Isis herself is not actually mentioned.

43. Sulpicius Severus: *Vita S. Martini*, passim esp. ch. XII-XV.
44. *DRS* I, 259 ff.
45. *DRS* I, 17-18; cf *Aeneid* X, 2 ff.
46. Préchac, op. cit., p. 3 and note.
47. cf Alföldi op. cit. p. 42: "It was of great value for them (the Roman aristocracy) in their contest with Christian theology, that the priests of Isis had long ago announced the unity of the deity amidst its multifarious appearances".
48. Carcopino: *Revue des Etudes Latines* 6 (1928), p. 192.
49. ibid. p. 191.
50. Cameron: *Journal of Roman Studies* art. cit. p. 36.
51. As had apparently happened with the *vota publica* and the *navigium Isidis*. cf. Alföldi, op. cit. passim. Such a link might remove the chronological difficulty, as the Egyptian calendar, on which Plutarch (and Carcopino) base their calculations was capable of more than one conversion to the Roman one.
52. Porterfield, op. cit. p. 363.
53. Boano: *Rivista di Filologica Classica* N.5.26 (1948) p. 54-87.
54. ibid. p. 54 ff. cf. Porterfield, op. cit. p. 367, no. 15, suggesting other sources.
- 54a. Sandbach: *The Stoics*, p. 177.
55. For a list of stoic ideas used by Rutilius, see Porterfield, op. cit. p. 364 ff.
56. Cicero *De Finibus* V, 7, 18, "quasi virtutum igniculi et semina".
57. Strabo I, 1, 9, linking him with Athenodorus.
58. Boano op. cit. p. 56.
59. *DRS* I, 556 ff.
60. The idea is not just a stoic one, as it is used by Lucretius V, 1423 ff.
61. Vitruvius II, 1, 2; Seneca *Ep* 90, 45, 92, 31 cf. Boano op. cit. p. 54.
62. Porterfield, op. cit. p. 366.
63. I quote from the edition by Putnam, University of Oklahoma 1973.
64. *DRS* I, 390; Préchac, op. cit. p. xxiii
65. *Philologische Wochenschrift* 24-25 (1925) col. 717.
66. This eclecticism is stressed by Vessereau, op. cit. p. 186 ff.
67. Entering of temples, making sacrifices banned, 391 (*Cod Th.* XVI, 10, 10); Private worship condemned 392 (*Cod. Th.* XVI, 10, 12); however after the death of Ambrose, and the outbreak of the Gildonic war, Stilicho may have been less severe. cf. Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine*, p. 165 ff.

Chapter 11

Rutilius as a Poet

One of the first observations which should be made about Rutilius' poetry is that it is metrically sound, something which is an achievement in itself for the fifth century. It is also clearly influenced by his upbringing, within the bounds of the traditional education, although by no means being as permeated with the rhetorical traditions and trickery as that written by a professional such as Ausonius. As Balmus points out,¹ the ways in which rhetoric is used in the *De reditu suo* "non falsificano in nulla la sincerità di questo poema". The rhetorical features which do occur demonstrate rather that Rutilius has control over his art. Such mastery is unlikely to have been achieved at the first attempt, and it is probable that this poem was written as the culmination of Rutilius' literary career, a poem written after a number of others, which have not survived.² There are two major aspects of Rutilius' poetic talents which are worthy of consideration; first, what we may call the mechanical, the actual structure of the piece, together with such rhetorical devices as make it work, and secondly, the actual content of the piece, particularly Rutilius' powers of observation and what he finally makes of the things which he sees.

As we have already seen, the *De reditu suo*, despite any superficial appearance to the contrary which may be created by its diary form, was certainly composed at leisure after the author's return to Gaul. Even apart from the inherent improbabilities of a day-to-day composition, certain aspects of the work are so balanced as to guarantee that the author must have been working according to a previously drawn-up plan. Thus, for example, each of the two books begins with an encomium, the one on Rome, the other more generally about Italy. In fact, the poem's structure may have been worked out with extreme nicety, if we are to believe the theory put forward by Balmus.³

Although Balmus is attempting to adduce proof for his argument that the poem, in the form in which it was discovered in the fifteenth century, was incomplete because of an accidental loss during the middle ages, a theory now proved correct by Ferrari's discovery of an additional fragment of the work, his remarks upon the seemingly careful construction of a passage of twelve lines by Rutilius to describe each locality which he mentions still stand as valid and useful. Whether one can readily accept his proposed, and fairly rigid, twelve line divisions,⁴ is not, in a sense, important, for it is nevertheless quite clear that Rutilius is intentionally devoting

sufficient time to each locality to provide a thumbnail sketch delineating for the most part just one aspect of it which will remain with the reader, rather than attempting to provide anything approaching a complete picture. Thus it is that we hear about the statue of his father at Pisa, the festival at Faleria and the harbour at Triturrita. It is as if the narrative of the journey serves to join up a number of pictures which Rutilius has painted, or, in more modern terms, acts as a commentary to an illustrated travelogue. This aspect of Rutilius' work, however, his powers of observation and portrayal of what he sees, is one to which we will return later.

These 'snapshot' pictures are not alone in being self-contained, for the various polemical attacks which Rutilius launches against both people and objects, are also for the most part set pieces of rhetorical display. That passage which roundly condemns the fallen Stilicho, and which is possibly the most vituperative of all, is a case in point, and follows a long tradition of such invectives, such as that written by Claudian against Rufinus, which may well have been in Rutilius' mind.⁵ The couplet which follows this invective is instructive:

"Sed diverticulo fuimus fortasse loquaces;
Carminē propositum iam repetamus iter."
(II. 61-2)

Although modest disclaimers of literary ability, and even apologies for work published are by no means uncommon,⁶ their sincerity is always to be doubted, as the idea is a stock one; here in Rutilius, however, the remark does seem to be less obviously conventional, coming as it does some way after the start of the second book of Rutilius' poem, and perhaps therefore one is to attribute at least a small grain of genuine doubt to Rutilius' mind as to whether the invective is not too much divorced from the mainstream of the poem. In passing we may note the neat use of the phrase "repetamus iter", signifying both the continuation of the journey as well as of the description in the poem.

One further point may be made about the method by which Rutilius makes the various parts of his poem hang together as a coherent whole: as the poem progresses, the amount of it which Rutilius actually devotes to the strict detail of his journey in fact decreases, in comparison with those sections devoted to set-piece descriptions of places and people. For example, early on in the description of the journey, Rutilius does make quite detailed reference to places such as Pyrgi and Alsium which he is merely passing by, to the way in which the journey time is increased by the necessity of tacking round Mount Argentarius, and to the possibility of a safe landfall at the mouth of the Umbro.⁷

As the poem progresses, however, such passages become far more restricted in scope, as for example at Volaterra,⁸ where Rutilius deals merely with the moment of his arrival, and his progress up the shallow channel; even more stark is the transition from Gorgo to Triturrita, where the very brevity of the words seems to reinforce the idea of Rutilius' anxiety to quit the island⁹ with its monks as soon as possible:

"Inde Triturritam petimus: sic villa vocatur
Quae latet expulsis insula paene fretis."
(I, 527-28)

Henceforth Rutilius only really becomes expansive when dealing with the sea in order to portray the storm which closes the first book. This gradual shortening of what would be almost certainly repetitive passages serves to keep the reader's mind from straying, for it is inevitable that Rutilius can find greater variety in his set-piece descriptions, and in his outbursts of fury and thus keep up his momentum without destroying the framework of the journey upon which the rest of the poem is hung. As Vessereau has seen,¹⁰ Rutilius is remarkably inventive in the variety of ways he uses to express the idea of setting sail at daybreak, so that he manages to transmit this piece of information to the reader several times without running the risk of becoming repetitive:

"Solvimus aurorae dubio, quo tempore primum
Agnosci patitur redditus arva color."
(I, 217-18)

"Roscida puniceo fulsere crepuscula caelo;
Pandimus obliquo linthea flexa sinu."
(I, 277-78)

"Necdum decessis pelago permittimur umbris;
Natus vicino vertice ventus adest."
(I, 313-4)

"Lux aderat: tonsis progressi stare videmur,
Sed cursum prorae terra relictæ probat."
(I, 349-50)

"Currere curamus velis Aquilone reverso
Cum primum roseo fulsit Eous equo."
(I, 429-30)

It is true that there are several ways of getting a boat under way, whether by oar or by sail, but to find five different, although wholly acceptable, methods of expressing the same time of day shows some genius, from the stark 'lux aderat' to the most typically poetic image in the last example. The first three of these examples in particular demonstrate that Rutilius did possess some feel for his surroundings and an at least adequate sense of observation.

In the space of a single line, Rutilius is able to bring into the reader's thoughts a picture of dawn, when the colours of the scenery gradually emerge from its dark outline, or the air is full of a dewy freshness. His method is perhaps allusive, but possibly the more refreshing for not hammering to death the theme of dawn at any point.

It is in these more poetic and artistic areas of his art that Rutilius displays his originality and the qualities which mark him out as poet rather than a mere versifier. The undoubted care and competence with which he composed the *De reditu suo* would be in the end of little account, if Rutilius did not find something to say which could appeal to his readers. His greatest gift lies in his ability to write about what he sees, being "dotato di una sensibilità poco comune anche nei più grandi poeti latini",¹¹ although, as the same critic adds, his imagination is somewhat feeble, and some of the scenes which lodge themselves in his mind are, by their functional nature, indicative of his career in politics and the imperial service, rather than of a professional poet.¹²

But perhaps this "amateurism" is on the whole beneficial to the poem, as it is often possible to see Rutilius' true emotions appear through his words, whereas a poet more accustomed to writing might well allow his innermost thoughts to be overwhelmed in his search for rhetorical effect. Rutilius achieves a simplicity and brevity which adds to the poignancy of his parting from Rufius, who was his greatest friend at Rome, as far as we can tell:

"Invitum tristis tandem remeare coegi;

Corpore divisos mens tamen una tenet."

(I, 177-78)

The bald juxtaposition of the words "invitum tristis" seems to add to the sorrow of the situation, the placing of the words together symbolising the two men, about to separate unwillingly and sadly, and forcing Rutilius' emotions home to the reader at the start of the verse. Despite the fact that Rutilius, when writing these lines, is many miles away from Rome, and some distance removed also in time, the memory of his departure may well be strong enough to recreate the emotions felt at the time.

This is not to say that Rutilius is totally lacking in the kind of training received at school, for occasionally the rhetorical effects at which he strives are all too blatant. One of the most often quoted lines of Rutilius must be his two-word pentameter describing Bellerophon's misery:

"Sic nimiae bilis morbum assignavit Homerus

Bellerophonteis sollicitudinibus."

(I, 449-50)¹³

The mental turmoil which Bellerophon is suffering is quite obvious from the

ungainly contortion of the verse, all too obvious some might say, although the apparent uniqueness of this device to Rutilius perhaps makes the bold experiment justifiable.

Rutilius also possesses a neat, epigrammatic turn of phrase which he is able to put to good and indeed memorable use. His most famous line provides ample illustration of this:

"urbem fecisti quod primus urbis erat."

(I, 66)

One may add to this the neat remark about the Jews:

"Victoresque suos natio victa premit."

(I, 398)

Despite the echoes of Horace's description of Greece, and the probable source in either Seneca or Saint Augustine, Rutilius can still be given a fair amount of credit for the phrase. Similarly one may take the example of the torch metaphor used by Rutilius to portray the way in which Rome, having had its head once bowed, will retrieve its strength and thus be able to arise again:

"Utque novas vires fax inclinata resumit,
Clarior ex humili sorte superna petis."

(I, 131-132)

The source for the words may well be Ovid's *Amores*,¹⁴ but Rutilius has put the image to a completely new use, and in fact has all but created a new one, and one certainly apposite to its context. This kind of imitation is anything but slavish, the mark of a poet rather than a versifier.

Furthermore this image is one which is essentially visual, and probably one which the poet has observed and made note of, and it is these powers of observation which are one of the most important and original characteristics of his verse. This awareness of, and ability to notice, his surroundings has been commented on before, although sometimes rather grudgingly, as by Pichon,¹⁵ who says that he sees with the eyes of an administrator rather than those of a poet. Such criticisms are rather unfair, because the very fact that Rutilius records anything at all of nature and the world which surrounds him, which has formed part of his personal experience, is unusual in Latin poetry, and something which he shares with Ausonius at this period.

One may begin with his description of the hunt in which he took part at Triturrita:

"Otia vicinis terimus navalia silvis
Sectandisque iuvat membra movere feris.
Instrumenta parat venandi vilicus hospes
Atque olidum doctas nosse cubile canes.
Funditur insidiis et rara fraude plagarum
Terribilisque cadit fulmine dentis aper,

Quem Meleagrei vereantur adire lacerti,
 Qui laxet nodos Amphitryoniadae.
 Tum responsuros persultat bucina colles
 Fitque reportando carmine praeda levis."

(I, 621-30)

The first few lines are not very remarkable, although the personal comment as to the virtues of exercising tired limbs is a nice touch; indeed there is little to indicate that the passage could not have been written by any elegaic poet from Ovid onwards, especially in view of the almost compulsory reference to the Calydonian boar hunt. In the last couplet however, reality intrudes with the report of the trek homeward at the end of the day. Rutilius clearly has experienced the feelings of joy and comradeship which can make light of what would be a wearisome walk for a man on his own, and by this short description brings the whole scene far more alive to the reader.¹⁶ One can feel that Rutilius has taken a genuine part in the proceedings which he describes, unlike an earlier aristocratic author, Pliny, whose efforts at boar-hunting were anything but strenuous.¹⁷ The whole passage in fact displays an appreciation of the world of nature which comes close in tone to that of a more modern age, and seems unusual in an aristocratic Roman. Perhaps this is to be attributed to Rutilius' Gaulish background where hunting seems to have been a popular pastime to judge from Ausonius' remarks about Theon and his brother.¹⁸ Of course it is possible to find descriptions of hunts in other writers, but it is only apparently in these later times that such personal touches can be found, suggestive of personal enjoyment and involvement.

From here we must turn to Rutilius' actual use of natural description, of which one of the most striking examples comes at the point where the second book of the poem breaks off, with Rutilius' arrival at Luna:

"Indigenis superat ridentia lilia saxi
 Et levi radiat picta nitore silex;
 Dives marmoribus tellus quae luce coloris
 Provocat intactas luxuriosa nives."

(II, 65-8)

The simplicity of the description and of the similes which form part of it, are the factors which make it successful; for once the stock comparisons with other kinds of marble, such as that from Paros,¹⁹ are forgotten, to the general benefit of the poem.

Other descriptive passages are possibly, at first sight, rather more mundane, such as that which Rutilius devotes to the harbour at Volaterra, and in which he recounts his entry to the port in minute and vivid detail:

"In Volaterranum, vero Vada nomine, tractum
 Ingressus dubii tramitis alta lego.

Despectat prorae custos clavumque sequentem
 Dirigit et puppim voce monente regit.
 Incertas gemina discriminat arbore fauces
 Defixasque offert limes uterque sudes.
 Illis proceras mos est adnectere lauros
 Conspicuas ramis et fruticante coma,
 Ut praebente ulvam densi symplegade limi
 Servet inoffensas semita clara notas."

(I, 453-62)

Because of Rutilius' use of four consecutive spondees in the third line of the passage, there is created an atmosphere of caution and slow movement which is paralleled in the picture of the man standing in the bow of the vessel to warn of any troubles ahead during the careful entry into port. It is the last six lines, however, which are important for what they show us of Rutilius' powers of observation, with the ability to take in detail, such as the laurels attached to the poles marking out the channel. Such a piece of information is valuable not only as a guide to Roman techniques of navigation but is proof that Rutilius is possessed of the poetic quality of using material from his own experience, rather than relying on the ideas and thoughts of earlier authors.

The description of Centumcellae is in many ways parallel to that of Volaterra, as, once again, Rutilius concentrates his attention on the more functional aspects of what he sees:

"Molibus aequoreum concluditur amphitheatrum
 Angustosque aditus insula facta tegit.
 Attollit geminas turres bifidoque meatu
 Faucibus artatis pandit utrumque latus.
 Nec posuisse satis laxo navalia portu:
 Ne vaga vel tutas ventitet aura rates,
 Interior medias sinus invitatus in aedes
 Instabilem fixis aera nescit aquis."

(I, 239-46)

Without going so far as to subscribe to Pichon's view that Rutilius saw things with the eyes of an administrator, it is fair to remark that Rutilius is probably assisted in making clear to his readers what he has observed at Centumcellae and Valaterra by his training as an administrator, which may possibly have brought him into some contact with the problems of civil engineering.

On a smaller scale than these other descriptions we may add the brief, almost idyllic picture which Rutilius draws of Faleria, the calm of which was soon to be shattered by the intrusion of the Jew, who, by his complaints,

so greatly aroused Rutilius' passions:

"Egressi villam petimus lucoque vagamur:

Stagna placent septo deliciosa vado.

Ludere lascivos inter vivaria pisces

Gurgitis inclusi laxior unda sinit."

(I, 377-80)

Once again we may note Rutilius' use of contrast, as the picture he has built up of the quiet rural scene is rudely shattered:

"Sed male pensavit requiem stationis amoenae

Hospite conductor durior Antiphate."

(I, 381-82)

Some remarks have already been made about the metrical soundness of Rutilius' work,²⁰ and also about the way in which he makes use of the hexameter rhythm to achieve certain effects. Without in any way detracting from Rutilius' skill in the traditional metrician's art, it is interesting for us to note that he also seems to foreshadow a development in hexameter poetry which occurred during the Middle Ages, namely his frequent use of what became known as Leonine lines. The earliest example quoted by Beare²¹ from the pseudo-Cyprianic *Ad Flavium Felicem de resurrectione mortuorum* of the sixth century:

"aeternisque deum precibus placare tremendum.

pessima cuncta bonis cedant mortalia vivis.

conservate novam iam iam sine crimine vitam."

(lines 382-84)

Although such hexameters, with the rhyme contained in either one or two syllables, can be found scattered throughout Latin poetry, they are nevertheless rare and seem to have been avoided except for deliberate effect.²² Rutilius himself only gives us one disyllabic rhyme, and word play may be intended here:

"Postquam Tuscus ager postquamque Aurelius agger."

(I, 39)

However, given the Classical preference for avoiding such jingles, the number of monosyllabic rhymes in the hexameter lines is surprising:²³

"Intercepta tuis conduntur flumina muris;

Consumunt totos celsa lavacra lacus.

Nec minus et propriis celebrantur roscida venis

Totaque nativo moenia fonte sonant.

Frigidus aestivas hinc temperat halitus auras."

(I, 101-105)

Although far rarer, the rhymed pentameter is also to be found:

"Exiliuntque imis altius acta vadis."

(I, 130)

It is true that a number of the rhymes may appear rather feeble, but no more than those in the example quoted by Beare. It would seem that fore-runners of the Leonine rhymes, which had their heyday in the tenth - twelfth centuries are to be found in the early fifth, and perhaps even late fourth centuries. Ausonius for example, although using the device far less infrequently than Rutilius as a whole, provides a number of examples.²⁴

If one considers Rutilius' work in comparison with that of other writers of this same period, clear differences do emerge. In many ways he represents a kind of intermediary between Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris, being a member of the generation which saw the disappearance of one Roman world, before another, more spiritual, took its place. As such, both the content of his work and its treatment differ from that of the aforementioned writers, from whom he is also easily distinguishable, as being the only amateur writer among the three. Although this is manifest in his lesser reliance on rhetorical flourishes, he is of course not ignorant of them, as he will certainly have attended school to the highest level. As we have seen in Ausonius' personal poetry and the *Mosella*, there is an awareness and interest in his environment shown in Rutilius' work. The natural scenes which he depicts seem generally to have appealed to him as much because of man's artistry, which has adapted the original natural surroundings, as because of nature itself.

Notes

1. Balmus, *op. cit.* p. 285.
2. *ibid.*
3. Balmus, *op. cit.* p. 268, for a very detailed breakdown of the poem.
4. Sometimes he is strained to reach the required numbers. Thus, as part of the passage on Faleria he includes the couplet:

"Sed male pensavit requiem stationis amoenae
Hospite conductor durior Antiphate." (I, 381-82)

This surely belongs at least as much with what follows, the diatribe against the Jews, as what goes before. Conversely, he has used up his allowance of lines for Pisa before the couplet mentioning Lachanius' statue (I, 575-76).
5. cf Porterfield *op. cit.* p. 432 ff.
6. An obvious example can be found in Ausonius' adaptation of the first line of Catullus on two occasions to dismiss his own work as "inlepidum rudem libellum" (*Ecl.* I, 4; *Grph.* Praef.). It is greatly to be doubted if the thought that his addressees, Drepanius and Symmachus, could consider taking this seriously even crossed his mind.
7. *Purgi*, *Alsium*, I, 223 ff; *Mount Argentarius* I, 313ff; *Umbro* I, 337 ff.
8. *DRS* I, 453 ff.
9. It is just possible that the juxtaposition of the words 'expulsis insula' in the second line of this couplet may be intended as a sort of rejection of what has gone before, although the words are not grammatically linked, nor is this 'insula' the same as Gorgo.
10. Vessereau, *op. cit.* p. 366-67.
11. Balmus, *op. cit.* p. 269.
12. cf. Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 253.
13. Rasi: *In Cl. Rutilii Namatiani De reditu suo libros adnotationes metricae* p. 185.
14. Ovid, *Amores* I, ii, 11 "Vidi ego iactatas mota face crescere flammam". Vessereau, *op. cit.* p. 386.
15. Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 253.
16. Norwood, *op. cit.* p. 41.
17. Pliny, *Ep.* I, VI. cf Ausonius, *Ep.* XIV, where Theon takes a more positive role. Sidonius had certainly hunted in his youth, *Ep.* IV, 4, 1.
18. Ausonius, *Ep.* XIV, 28 ff. And the tradition continued into the middle of the fifth century, cf. Sid. *Ap. Ep.* VIII, vi.
19. e.g. Horace, *Odes* I, 19, 6; Seneca, *Phaedra*, 797.

20. Pr  chac, *op. cit.* p. XX only gives one example of a false quantity, the 'o' of Paeoniam (I, 75) being short instead of long as in Greek, παίωνιος.
21. Beare: *Latin verse and European song*, p. 261.
22. Lucretius provides one striking jingle: "saepe salut  tum tactu praeterque meantum", (I, 318).
23. I cannot agree with Rasi's comment: "nulla enim aut fere nulla soni similitudo auribus accipitur", *op. cit.* p. 210, n. 1. In the passage quoted the accumulation of rhymes surely cannot be missed.
24. e.g. the first twenty lines of the *Mosella* have half a dozen examples. The *Cupido Cruciatur* also begins with two Leonine lines. cf Delachaux, *op. cit.* p. 17. After Rutilius, Sidonius Apollinaris also employs such lines although with a frequency between the Classical norm and that of Rutilius. In one passage of his panegyric on Anthemius such cases occur in about one line in fifteen (*Carm.* II, lines 375, 388, 404, 420, the latter dependent on the visual appearance of the verse rather than the sound).

Chapter 12

The Position of Drama in the Later Roman Empire

The greatest flowering of drama in Rome had occurred under the Republic, in particular in the first half of the second century, long before any other form of Roman literature was out of its infancy. The creative period of comedy in particular seems to have ended by the first century although performances were still held as late as the time of Nero.¹ After this the comedies of Plautus and Terence were of course still read and studied in the schools until the very end of the Empire.

Tragedy seems to have continued to be composed for a rather longer period, although its nature did change to a certain extent, as is shown by the plays of Seneca, with their strong rhetorical influence and emphasis on declamation. The question of whether these plays were produced on stage is not one which need exercise us here for, if they were not produced as drama, they were certainly intended to be read aloud in public performance which is perhaps more than one can say for the *Medea* written by Hosidius Geta in the second century A.D. This piece is a Vergilian cento of some four hundred and sixty lines, a literary exercise rather than an original dramatic composition.

During the general renaissance of letters which occurred in the fourth and early fifth century, there is evidence of renewed interest in the creation of new pieces of drama. We possess only one such piece, the *Querolus*, which we shall discuss at length later, but the evidence for other productions is worthy of consideration first. The extant piece which is closest in terms of style and genre to true drama is Ausonius' *Ludus Septem Sapientium* which, while by no means a drama in the strictest sense, does display dramatic touches as the sages follow each other in giving their advice.

Solon talks of himself as appearing on stage² and, while promising to be brief,³ delivers a speech twice as long as that of any of the other sages, the length of which is not lost on Chilon who follows him:

"Lumbi sedendo, oculi spectando dolent,
manendo Solonem, quoad ad se se recipiat.
hui, quam pauca, di, locuntur Attici!
unam trecentis versibus sententiam
tandem peregit meque respectans abit."

(*Sept. Sap.* 131-35)

The beginning of this speech is doubly humorous, being a parody of a passage from Plautus' *Menaechmi*:

"lumbi sedendo, oculi spectando dolent,
manendo medicum dum se ex opere recipiat."

(*Men.* 881-82)

The whole of this work is strewn with echoes of Plautus and Terence, which suggests that Ausonius had drama much in mind when he wrote it. There is further gentle humour in Cleobulus' parting comment after a speech of more moderate length:

"Dixi: recedam, sit modus. venit Thales."

(*Sept. Sap.* 162)

As we have seen, this procession may well have been performed, at least in the schoolroom, and the dramatic presentation would have been useful for fixing the sages' sayings in young scholars' minds.

To judge from Ausonius' correspondance with Axius Paulus, the latter was heavily engaged in all kinds of literary production including drama:

".....tota cum merce tuarum

veni Camenarum citus:

dactylicos, elegos, choriambum carmen, epodos,

socci et coturni musicam

carpentis impone tuis."

(*Ep.* VI, 35-39)

Ausonius also refers to Paulus' *Delirus*,⁴ clearly a work with a comic theme, although not necessarily a comedy in our terms.

Further evidence of comic writing at this period is provided by later works, especially from the twelfth century. From this period (c. 1175) comes the *Aulularia*, a dramatic poem by Vital de Blois, written in elegiacs and based supposedly (perhaps by confusion with the name of the Plautine play) on Plautus' *Aulularia*⁵ but actually on the *Querolus sive Aulularia* of the Late Empire. The same author is also responsible for a *Geta*, again allegedly based on a play by Plautus, this time the *Amphitruo*,⁶ but the differences are large enough to suggest an intermediary, probably of similar date to the *Querolus*.⁷ A remark made by Sedulius in his *Carmen Paschale* may point to the existence of this intermediary:

"Cum sua gentiles studeant figmenta poetae

Grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu

Ridiculove Geta."

(I, 17-19)

The reference seems probably to be to a recent success, which may therefore be our lost intermediary.

It has also been suggested⁸ that two of the tales contained in Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* may have sources in the fourth or fifth century. In particular the *Sceva and Ollo*⁹ has been put forward as a descendant of Axius Paulus' *Delirus*. The evidence adduced suggests that a work of this date is indeed involved but the arguments in favour of this being the *Delirus*

are hardly conclusive and some might even militate against it on a second view.¹⁰ Another of Map's stories, the Sadius and Galo,¹¹ may also, in Boutémy's opinion,¹² have had a late classical source because of its polished dialogue.

The medieval understanding of the concept of ancient drama also casts some light on our period. The ancient works were thought of as pieces intended for reading rather than acting,¹³ or perhaps for "un récit déclamé".¹⁴ A number of manuscript illustrations suggest that it was believed that Terence or one of his friends had recited his plays while a group of mime actors acted out the parts.¹⁵ It seems to me that this misunderstanding may help to explain the presence of lines in the surviving twelfth century Latin "plays"¹⁶ which are purely narrative and present solely in order to connect the dialogue and further the plot. These intrusive lines have led Faral to class the *Geta* and the other pieces as *fabliaux*,¹⁷ a view strongly contested by Cohen,¹⁸ who believes that they were actually performed. Now, given the misunderstanding about the nature of Terence's plays, it seems a reasonable hypothesis¹⁹ that these medieval "plays" were performed in the manner which their authors believed to be that of the ancients, with a narrator and mime actors.

Vital certainly believed that he was following in the footsteps of Plautus, with his confession about his (supposed) source and his reference to his "play" as a *fabula*.²⁰ If the supposition about the presentation of these pieces is correct, one might perhaps be inclined to view the possible performance of the unique *chante-fable Aucassin et Nicolette* in similar light, although in this case the question is complicated by the existence of some sung parts.²¹

One further twelfth century work should be mentioned here, the *Alda* by Guillaume de Blois, the source of which he describes as follows:

"Versibus ut pulicis et musce iurgia risi,
Occurrit nostro mascula virgo stilo:
Nominis accipio pro nomine significatum,
Non potui nomen lege domare pedum.
Venerat in linguam nuper peregrina latinam
Hec de Menandri fabula rapta sinu:
Vilis et exul erat et rustica plebis in ore,
Que fuerat comis vatis in ore sui."

(*Alda* 9-16)

Guillaume is most likely to have come upon this original in Sicily, where he was from 1167-69.²² If so, the link between the ancient text and the medieval is a strange one, largely oral rather than literary.

Apart from these various links with ancient plays, there may well have been a continuance of the secular dramatic tradition throughout the Dark Ages.²³

Certainly there was a continuing literary tradition, although certainly not all the resultant dramatic pieces will have been for production. From the sixth century we possess an *Orestes* by Luxorius, a dramatic poem rather like the twelfth century productions in form,²⁴ but probably more suited to declamation than to performance. On the other hand, Hroswitha's adaptations of Terence's comedies (c. 960) may possibly have been performed,²⁵ being composed, apart from the prefaces, entirely in dialogue with no narrative lines. If we assume that Hroswitha was aware of the existence of secular mimic drama,²⁶ then she really should be considered as part of a living tradition of drama.

Of slightly earlier date, but of equal significance, is a fragment of dialogue between Terence and a Delusor,²⁷ a dispute over the old poet's worth. The dialogue may have led up to a production of Terence, but we cannot be sure of its purpose. The representation of Terence on stage gives further demonstration of the belief that he acted as narrator of his plays; indeed, this may be the function which he is about to fulfil here. The Delusor makes one significant criticism of Terence's work:

"An sit prosaicum nescio an metricum.

Dic mihi, dic, quid hoc est?"

The difficulty encountered with Terence's metre, which is generally more simple than that of Plautus, is important illustration of how these skills could be lost. As we shall see, even under the Roman Empire Plautus' metre had become largely incomprehensible.

The last years of the Roman Empire seem to have been important ones in the history of dramatic literature. Although we only possess one play from this period, it is clear that a number of other pieces were written then and survived long enough to influence medieval literature. As far as we can tell, the drama of the period, while following Plautus and Terence to a certain degree, does have a certain originality of its own.

Notes

1. Duckworth: *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, p. 70.
2. Ausonius: *Sept. Sap.*, 73.
3. *Sept. Sap.*, 90.
4. *Ep. VII in med.*
5. Vital de Blois: *Aulularia*, 11-12.
6. *Aulularia*, 27.
7. Faral: *Romania L* (1924), p. 324. The whole emphasis of the play is different (the birth of Hercules is not even mentioned). The name Archas is used for Mercury, as was common in the Later Empire.
8. Boutémy: *Latomus V* (1946), p. 27-34; Oliver: *Latomus VII* (1948) p. 47-50.
9. Map: *De Nug. Cur.* IV, 16.
10. e.g. the anti-Christian elements which Oliver (*op. cit.*) has detected. Ausonius was hardly a militant Christian but his beliefs must have been well enough known to his friend (cf. Ausonius, *Ep. IV*, 9 on the Easter celebrations) for him not to send Ausonius an anti-Christian satire.
11. *De Nug. Cur.* III, 2.
12. Boutémy, *op. cit.* p. 28.
13. The mistake arose out of a misunderstanding of Isidorus of Seville, VIII, 7, 7, which talked of old and new comic authors including Plautus and Terence among the old and the satirists (Horace, Persius and Juvenal) among the new.
14. Ghellinck: *L'essor de la littérature latine au XII^e siècle*, vol. II, p. 253.
15. Nicoll: *Masks, mimes and miracles*, pp. 152 ff.
16. These have been edited by Cohen in *La "comédie" latine en France au XII^e siècle*.
17. Faral, *op. cit.*
18. Cohen, *op. cit.* I, pp. X ff.
19. Axton: *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 25-26.
20. Vital de Blois: *Geta* 13.
21. For other possible methods of performance, see Aucassin et Nicolette, ed. Roques, p. 6.
22. Cohen, *op. cit.* I, pp. 111-12.
23. Nicoll, *op. cit.* p. 169.
24. i.e. including narrative as well as dialogue.

25. Axton, *op. cit.* p. 27.
26. Axton, *op. cit.* p. 29.
27. For the text, see Magnin, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 1840, pp. 517-34.

Chapter 13

The *Querolus* - Introduction

It is clear however that any discussion of the position of drama in the Later Roman Empire must centre upon the one surviving example of the genre, the *Querolus* or *Aulularia*, a work which has come down to us anonymously, and which is in fact the only piece of Latin comedy to survive, apart from the works of Plautus and Terence written over five hundred years before.

It seems likely that the decline in the production of comedy which took place in the earlier Empire can be attributed to the rise of the mime to a position of pre-eminence. These shows which had originally formed tail-pieces to other shows, or filled intervals between them, gradually came to take over the stage for themselves; some of their subject matter was calculated to appeal to the lowest tastes,¹ and the result of their popularity was that very little true comedy seems to have been performed in the theatre under the Empire. Nor, of course, does the *Querolus* present any exception, although it was almost certainly written for performance and may therefore have been produced as a kind of "comédie de salon".

The structure and plot of the play can be set out as follows: at the beginning there is a dedication to a certain Rutilius, the author's patron, in which the author sets out his reasons for writing, his source (Rutilius' work) and an outline of the plot. There follows a prologue, referring to the author as following in the footsteps of Plautus,² and again making reference to the plot. After this comes the first scene of the play, which consists of a monologue by the Lar Familiaris, in which he outlines his own role, the events which have preceded the action on stage and the shape of the play to come. This triple outline of the plot seems both strange and unnecessary. One possible explanation for its existence may be that the author, in his efforts to copy Plautus, was deceived by the existence of the two argumenta preceding the expository prologue which are to be found in many Plautine plays, including the *Aulularia*.

According to these various expositions, Euclio, the father of Querolus, had buried a pot of gold, disguised as a funerary urn, in his own house. He then went abroad, where he died, but, before dying, he told his companion, Mandrogerus, of the hidden gold, promising him half of the treasure, if he told Querolus honestly of its existence. Whether by design or not (the text is contradictory) he did not make clear the disguised nature of the treasure; the Lar at least believes that the omission was deliberate, a deception to defeat the dishonest parasite, who will come, succeed in stealing the treasure for himself, but then return it, having been taken in by the exterior appearance of the urn.

After his remarks about the plot, the Lar says a few words about the character of Querolus before the latter's entry on to the stage. There follows a long debate between Querolus and the Lar on the nature of Querolus' misfortunes, and on the drawbacks to the alternative styles of living which he imagines that he would prefer, such as riches or military glory. The Lar then tells Querolus that he will become rich if he acts to his own disadvantage, and disappears into the house where he is followed, after a short soliloquy, by Querolus.

The next scene introduces Mandrogerus and his fellow-conspirators, Sycophanta and Sardanapallus, who approach the house in order to set in motion their scheme for tricking Querolus into parting with the pot of gold. Upon their arrival, Mandrogerus withdraws and the two others set about arousing Querolus' curiosity, now that he has re-emerged from the house. They achieve this by describing the marvellous power of the magician Mandrogerus, and Querolus is soon drawn into their conversation, with the result that all three go off in search of Mandrogerus. Mandrogerus tells them of the powers that rule the world, a satire on secular rulers in the guise of heavenly bodies, and then describes the characters of Sycophanta and Sardanapallus. He then proceeds to relate Querolus' problems, quickly introducing the idea of the Evil Fortune which oppresses him and then offering to purify the house, with the aid of strangers (i.e. Sardanapallus and Sycophanta).

While they are inside the house, the stage is held by Pantomalus, Querolus' slave, previously sent by him to fetch Arbiter, and who delivers a monologue describing his master's failings and also the life which slaves lead, unbeknown to their masters. Finally, Pantomalus disappears to fulfil his task, and Querolus and Mandrogerus emerge carrying a heavy box containing, without Querolus' knowledge, the urn. Querolus then returns indoors to lock out the Evil Fortune which Mandrogerus has suggested will make every effort to return. The crooks then withdraw to inspect their treasure, which they had not done in the house because of their haste to escape.

Pantomalus returns with Arbiter to find the door locked, but knows of a servants' door by which they can enter. Meanwhile the conspirators have taken the funerary urn out of the box and have been taken in by its appearance and inscription, and they determine to avenge themselves on Querolus by throwing the 'Evil Fortune' back into his house. This they do, and then flee. Sardanapallus returns, however, and, much to his amazement, hears sounds of delight from within, thus discovering the crooks' mistake.

The Lar then reappears in order to sum up the play to this point³ and announces that Mandrogerus is coming back to claim his share of the treasure. Seeing him on his way back, Querolus and Arbiter plan to accuse him of the

theft of the gold and also of throwing an urn containing the remains of a stranger into the house. Mandrogerus duly comes on to the stage and presents Euclio's letter to his son and claiming the half of the treasure which was to be his inheritance. Querolus asks Mandrogerus to hand over the treasure so that it may be divided, which Mandrogerus insists he has already done. His admission that he threw the funerary urn in through the window leads him into even further trouble, as he then lays himself open to the charge of sacrilege as well as that of theft. Thus, if he admits to the theft of the gold it is simply a matter of burglary, and Querolus can press for the return of the gold; if he admits to the theft of the funerary urn, it is sacrilege, and in either case his way to the treasure is blocked. The whole of this scene must be considered as a parody of legal procedure, or at least of the kind of legal cases to be found in school handbooks. Finally Querolus relents sufficiently to allow Mandrogerus to become a parasite in his house, while Sardanapallus and Sycophanta are given a small amount of money to speed them on their way.

Such a synopsis, including at least some detail, is worth while, if only to demonstrate just how little the author of the *Querolus* does in fact owe to the plot of Plautus' *Aulularia*. Indeed, Lockwood⁴ goes as far as to state that the author of the *Querolus* borrowed nothing from Plautus' *Aulularia* save his alternative title, two character names and the pot of gold itself. Although in a sense true, for it is very difficult even to find half a dozen verbal parallels between the two texts,⁵ this does create the impression rather of a completely independent play, which the *Querolus* is not, for it relies in fact quite heavily on the language, and to a lesser extent, on the content and ideas of earlier drama. As we shall see later, the language of the play is in many ways a pastiche of expressions from the playwrights of the Republic, chosen rather as though the author had a glossary of Plautine and Terentian expressions before him as he wrote. It is only by assuming either this, or a deep knowledge of earlier drama (which certain other aspects of the *Querolus*, such as its largely unmetrical form, may belie), that one can explain certain aspects of the vocabulary employed by the author, for, although it is a commonplace to say that the Latin actually spoken by the populace is best represented in the plays of Plautus and in some of the writings of the Later Empire, the similarities are on this occasion to be accounted for more by deliberate archaism than by any continuous sub-literary tradition.

That this is the case is made particularly evident by the audience at which the *Querolus* was aimed. It is certain that this must have been composed of cultured and educated men, for the contents of the play, and its by no means hurried pace, would never have appealed to the groundlings; if the plays of Terence could not get a hearing even before the rise of the mime, then the *Querolus* would hardly have stood a chance at this period,

when such popular entertainments seem to have been almost totally lacking in subtlety and comment upon what they portrayed. An audience accustomed to entertainments which imitated real life, in all its aspects, both good and evil, as the mime was intended to do, would not, I think, have had the patience or training necessary to have appreciated the *Querolus*' more subtle parodies and comments upon life, and life from a very limited point of view, that of the wealthy and educated.

The author's own words do of course give a fair indication as to the nature of his audience; the dedication and address to his patron could only have been spoken in the presence of a small group of intimate friends and relations.⁶ The terms in which he refers to his patron's work are also suggestive of a small gathering:

"atque ut operi nostro aliquid adderetur gratiae, sermone illo philosophico ex tuo materiam sumpsimus. meministine ridere tete solitum illos, qui fata deplorant sua atque Academico more quod libitum foret destruere et adserere te solitum."

(*Quer.* 32, 8-11)

Before examining the actual play in depth, something should be said of the various problems inherent in trying to place the work within the context of the Later Empire. It is impossible, for example, to adduce for certain any exact date for the composition of the play. The name of the author's patron, Rutilius, ought, at first sight, help to place the play more certainly, but causes, in fact, almost as many problems as it solves. The two questions of the date and of the identity of Rutilius have, together with the arguments over the original form of the play, whether prose or verse, dogged scholarship almost since the time of the first edition.

Perhaps the one piece of evidence from the text which is not open to dispute as to its meaning is the reference to the 'solidus', a coin first minted by Constantine, which does therefore provide us with some sort of terminus post quem for the piece. The other major reference to historical fact, that to the *Bacaudae* living around the river Loire, has been a constant source of difficulty. It is true that the first upheaval, and in many ways the major one, took place in the second half of the third century,⁸ being crushed by Maximian in 286, and hence it is to this that some scholars, despite the evidence of the mention of the solidus, have looked in their attempts to date the *Querolus*.⁹ Large scale disturbances are however also known to have occurred in the early years of the fifth century, being mentioned in the writings of both Zosimus and Rutilius Namatianus.¹⁰ Nor do even these mark the end of the troubles, for revolts under the leadership of Tibatto are known to have occurred in 435-37 and 442.¹¹ In fact, as Thompson points out,¹² considering how few sources for fifth century history

we possess "and how reluctant they are to record the struggles of the oppressed classes, we need to have little doubt that Spain and Gaul swarmed with peasants in open revolt as Western Imperial history drew towards its close".

The majority of critics have fixed upon the period of revolt in the early part of the fifth century as the most plausible dating of the *Querolus*, as this coincides with the known lifetime of Rutilius Namatianus, an obvious choice for the author's patron,¹³ and his relation Exsuperantius' pacification of troubled Armorica. The major difficulty in the identification of the dedicatee with Rutilius Namatianus arises from the fact that Rutilius did not achieve the rank of *illustris*, with which the author credits his patron,¹⁴ until 412, and, given that he seems to have remained in Italy until 417, the date to be supposed for the composition of the *Querolus* becomes very late in terms of the Roman occupation of South-western Gaul. Indeed the Visigoths under Wallia were settled there in 418, and both Toulouse and Poitiers, the most probable suggestions for Rutilius' home, came under their sway. Rutilius Namatianus was anything but in favour of such Germanization of the Empire, and it is strange that our author says nothing of these new "invaders", but comments only upon the *Bacaudae*, the more so if Rutilius' relative has supposedly just brought peace to them.

One alternative, discussed by Corsaro,¹⁵ is that the title *illustris* does not necessarily refer to the patron's rank, and that a date prior to 412 can be considered. This does however seem to be unlikely in a period which placed such importance in honours and titles. Corsaro also points out¹⁶ that if the composition of the *Querolus* followed closely upon the sack of Rome in 410, then it is surprising that no mention is made of it, when so much is made of the upheavals on the Loire. Such an argument from silence is of course dangerous, but it is worth bearing in mind that Rome, with its symbolic importance as the centre of the Empire, perhaps meant more to provincials such as Rutilius Namatianus, at this period, than it did to the court of Honorius, safe behind the marshes of Ravenna. In fact, of course, the sack of Rome did make little difference to the history of the period, as the city's importance, other than in emotional terms, had been in decline for many years.

A further difficulty which arises from setting aside the traditional explanation of the dedication is that of finding another suitable Rutilius. To postulate the existence of an otherwise unknown Rutilius, preferably to whom the word *illustris* could be applied would multiply the difficulties. For Dezeimeris, however, a solution does suggest itself: "tout concordera si nous l'attribuons au père, auquel la qualification de vir *illustris* conviendrait avec justesse".¹⁷ We have already seen how the career of Claudius

Lachanius probably came to its climax with the prefecture of Constantinople in 396, and that he probably returned home to Gaul after the completion of his term of office. Despite the fact that we do not know whether Rutilius Namatianus' father also had the name Rutilius, it is not unlikely, for, although we do know two of his names, among the aristocracy of this period a minimum of four was not uncommon so that this does not present any serious obstacle. One attractive aspect of this identification is that, if a date for the play around 407 is postulated, the appointment of Exsuperantius to deal with the revolt of the Bacandae may be reflected in the Lar's comments:¹⁸

"O silvae, O solitudines, quis vos dixit liberas? multo maiora sunt quae tacemus. tamen interea hoc sufficit."

(*Quer.* 68, 14-15)

Apart from this possible hint, there is in fact very little to support Dezeimeris' theory. The fact that so little is known of Lachanius, especially after 396, makes objections difficult. However there is one major factor in the *Querolus* which does seem to militate against such an early date for the play; the question of the semi-metrical phrasing, which suggests that although the author may have read ancient comedy he did not have the metrical knowledge to reproduce its poetic forms, something of which Ausonius was capable in his *Ludus Septem Sapientum*, which can be dated by its dedication to 390.

The list of possible Rutilii does not end there, however, for a further candidate may be added in the form of Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius, the writer of a work on agriculture who was apparently active in the middle of the fifth century. There are several references to people probably to be identified with him. Rutilius Namatianus speaks of a Palladius as:

".....generis spemque decusque mei.

Facundus iuvenis Gallorum nuper ab arvis

Missus Romani discere iura fori

Ille meae secum dulcissima vincula curae,

Filius affectu, stirpe propinquus, habet."

(*DRS* I, 208-12)

He is evidently a young man at this time, born therefore around the beginning of the fifth century, and the closeness of the relationship suggests that he may well have shared Rutilius Namatianus' name.

Palladius is described in the manuscripts of his work as 'vir illustris', which would fit in well with the prologue of the *Querolus*, and if we wish to link up Palladius to known holders of offices which carried this rank, then an Aemilianus is mentioned as the prefect of the city of Rome in 458.¹⁹ It has also been suggested²⁰ that Palladius is the object of Sidonius' remark at about this time:

".... quem municipalibus poetis
praeponit bene vilicum senatus"

(*Carm.* IX, 309-10)

which suggests that this author is both a writer on country matters as well as praefectus urbi (the phrase vilicus urbi referring to the prefect occurs in Juvenal IV, 77). That this man also originated in Gaul is clear from Sidonius' next line, in which he proceeds to catalogue Gaulish writers whom their native country still holds within its boundaries. It is therefore not too unlikely a hypothesis to presume that, like Victorinus²¹ more than a generation earlier, Palladius had been forced to leave Gaul and settle in Italy, where he seems to have held land around Rome and in Sardinia,²² and where he turned to writing about agriculture.

In which case, Palladius seems to fit the requirements of the author of the *Querolus*' patron remarkably well. He holds the rank of illustris and is of Gallic origin (so that the reference to the disorders on the Loire makes some sense, perhaps vis-à-vis the comparative quiet of Italy. Palladius was also a student of the law, so the mock-legality of Querolus' and Arbiter's dealings with Mandrogerus at the end of the play would certainly have appealed to him. Furthermore he was living at a time when the culture of the west had very nearly broken down, and, as we shall see, the *Querolus* displays certain characteristics that suggest a rather shaky knowledge of at least the metre of ancient drama on the part of its author.

If the *Querolus* is to be dated to the latter part of the Christian Empire, one aspect of its content, the various manifestations of astrological detail, does at least at first glance seem incongruous. And it is certainly true that the Christian emperors had long raged against the survival of this particular art.²³ That they were not entirely successful is made clear by Sidonius Apollinaris, who in recounting the murder of Lampridius,²⁴ probably in 477, states that he had consulted astrologers as to how his life would end. Despite the several remarks condemning Lampridius' actions which Sidonius makes, the wealth of detail which he is able to furnish about the horoscope provided by the astrologers suggests that he too was not uninterested:

"qui (mathematici) constellatione percontantis inspecta pariter annum, mensem diemque dixerunt, quos, ut verbo matheseos utar, climactericos esset habiturus ... (et) quibus ... schema patuisset, quia videlicet amici nascentis anno, quemcumque clementem planetarum siderum globum in diastemata zodiaca prosper ortus erexerat, hunc in occasu cruentis ignibus inrubescentes seu super diametro Mercurius asyndetus seu super tetragono Saturnus retrogradus seu super centro Mars apocatastaticus exacerbasset."

(Ep. VIII, 11, 9)

The bishop in Sidonius condemns, the man, one feels, is fascinated by it all. If this is in any way indicative of the attitude of the educated aristocracy, then the *Querolus*' use of astrology as part of the 'magician'

Mandrogerus' stock in trade is hardly surprising even as late as the mid-fifth century.

If we now turn to the authorship of the play, it will be obvious that previous suggestions are now disqualified on grounds of probable date of composition of the piece. Nevertheless some points are worth making about these suggestions. Avianus, the writer of fables, was first suggested as the author of the *Querolus* by Herrmann,²⁵ a thesis supported by Cosaro,²⁶ both of whom attempt to draw parallels of language between the fables and the play. Not all of these are convincing and, particularly at this period when imitation of older authors was not only permitted but expected, it is probable that any borrowings or parallels are to be explained by assuming that our author had read Avianus' *Fables*.²⁷

The name of Axius Paulus was first put forward by Dezeimeris,²⁸ on the grounds that he was known to have written comedy, including a piece entitled "*Delirus*", and also because he considers that the prologue to the *Querolus* consists of a patchwork of borrowings from Ausonius, particularly from works dedicated to Axius Paulus himself. Unfortunately, to shore up this latter piece of evidence, he is forced to include the *Technopaegnia* which the Manuscript tradition suggests having been dedicated to Paulinus of Nola. More important objections to Paulus as author are chronological, for it seems that Paulus would have had to have reached a truly advanced age even to be semi-active at the time of Rutilius Namatianus, if, as it seems, he was a near contemporary of Ausonius. Furthermore, as Süss points out,²⁹ Axius Paulus could surely have produced a more truly Plautine piece than the *Querolus*. Once again, I suspect, the echoes of Ausonius are due to the author's reading rather than to any more intimate relationship.

Because of the late date which I have suggested above, none of the names suggested by earlier critics remain possible. Under the circumstances it would seem that the author of the *Querolus* must remain anonymous, for there does not seem to be any means of gaining positive proof as to his identity.

Notes

1. On the rise of the mime see Allardyce Nicoll: *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* p. 99 ff. The indecency of the mime is commented on by several authors: Tertullian *De Spect* XVII; Valerius Maximus II, 10, 8, reporting that Cato the Younger left the theatre at the Floralia so that his embarrassment should not hinder the customary nudity of some of the participants. The Floralia does seem to have been in some ways untypical, and the nude parts seem to have been played by prostitutes rather than mimae. It is even alleged that the emperor Elagabalus had the simulated adulteries of the mime performed in reality (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae: Vita Elagabali* XXV, 4).
2. *Quer.* 34, 13. All references by page and line are to the edition by Emrich (Berlin 1965).
3. Jupiter acts in a similar way in Plautus' *Amphitruo*, Act III, sc. 1.
4. Transactions of the American Philological Association 44 (1913) p. 217.
5. Lockwood, *ibid* p. 217, n 5; Corsaro: *Querolus. Sudio Introduttivo e Commentario*, p. 33.
6. *Quer.* 32, 3.
7. *Quer.* 86, 22, etc.
8. Thompson: *Past and Present* 2 (1952) p. 15-16; a precedent can be seen in the revolt under Maternus in 186; Thompson *ibid.* p. 12-15.
9. e.g. Berengo, Jannaccone. For details see Corsaro *op. cit.* p. 9-11.
10. Zosimus VI, 5, 3; Rutilius Namatianus I, 213-16.
11. Chron. Min. (ed. Mommsen) I, p. 660; Thompson *op. cit.* p. 16.
12. *op. cit.* p. 17.
13. Slüss, Rheinisches Museum 1942 p. 72 ff and Dezeimeris, *Etudes sur le Querolus* p. 33-34 are however sceptical.
14. *Quer.* 34, 7.
15. Corsaro *op. cit.* p. 12.
16. *ibid.*
17. Dezeimeris *op. cit.* p. 34.
18. *ibid* p. 37.
19. Nov. Majoriani 4.
20. Loyen: Sidoine Apollinaire Vol I, p. 187.
21. Rutilius Namatianus *DRS* I, 495 ff.
22. Palladius: III, 25, 20; IV, 10, 16.
23. e.g. Cod. Th. IX, 16; XVI, 5, 62 (A.D. 425)

24. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* VIII, 11, 4-13.
 25. Herrman: *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 1948, p. 538-40.
 26. Corsaro: *op. cit.* p. 16-19.
 27. If the dating of the *Querolus* to the middle of the fifth century is accepted, then either of the possible dates for Avianus' literary activity (370-79, Herrmann; c. 430, Cameron, *Classical Quarterly* N.S. XVII (1967) p. 396) would allow our author to have read the *Fables*.
 28. Dezeimeris *op. cit.* p. 7ff.
 29. Süss, *op. cit.* p. 65ff.
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Chapter 14

The Metre of the *Querolus*

The question of whether the *Querolus* was written in verse or in prose has justly been described by Corsaro¹ as "uno dei problemi appassionanti della nostra commedia nasce del fatto che il *Querolus*, scritto in massima parte in prosa, presenta delle clausole poetiche che ubbidiscono grosso modo allo schema metrico della commedia". Generally speaking, scholars are divided into three groups over this question. Some believe the play to have been written in rhythmic prose, others in free verse, while a third group thinks that the play was originally in verse, but was reworked into prose at a later date. Of this last group, Havet produced an edition attempting to reconstruct the hypothetical original *Querolus*. This was not successful.

The major argument against such wholesale transpositions of words and emendations has been well enunciated by Cavallin,² who, although himself the proponent of a theory upholding an at least partially metric text, states, while drawing attention to the generally sound state of the transmitted text: "Wenn der Text sonst einwandfrei ist, darf man also nicht einen schlecht metrischen Fall gegen die Überlieferung ins Fall führen". Bearing this precept in mind, one must therefore consider that any attempt at obtaining a consistently metrical text by means of alteration of word and line order and textual emendation, must be dismissed, for, given that there is no outside evidence for the alleged reworking from verse to prose, it is impossible to justify any such tinkering merely to prove an hypothesis.

As for the remaining efforts to show that the *Querolus* possesses at least a semi-metrical form, albeit a very free one, these are at best only partially successful. As an example we may take Süß's³ attempt to show the metrical nature of the 'canticum' at the end of Pantomalus' long soliloquy:

Vivat ámbitor togátus
 cónvivátor iúdicium
 óbservátor íanuárum
 sérvulórum sérvulús
 rímatór circúmforánus
 circúmspeclátor cállidús
 spéculátor cáptatórque
 hórarum ét témporúm
 mátutínus méridiánus
 véspertínus ímpudéns etc

Although the scheme works out quite well initially, it can be seen from the last four lines quoted that certain liberties have to be taken with the quantity of the syllables to produce the required result. Classical Latin

scansion would produce the following:

"spēculātor captatorque
 horar(um) et temporū
 matutinus meridianus (or matutinus meridianus?)
 vespertinus impudens

It is evident that there is no real similarity between the line lengths, which range from three to four and a half feet. Nor can one really justify Süss' scansion in terms of a four-beat stress accent. A line such as

"hónarum ét témporúm"

is enough to demonstrate the impossibility of this theory.

A somewhat different theory of metre was put forward by Cavallin,⁴ who suggested that the 'lines' of the play, although irregular in length and thus corresponding to the senarii, septenarii and octonarii of the author's predecessors, all end with an iambic four-stress half-line. Certainly his two line example from the second act⁵ works quite well in this respect:

curvis timendos unguibus semperque mensis advolant
 quod contingunt auferunt, quod relinquunt polluant

The line which precedes these, however, seems to be far less happy in metrical form:

iuxta terras pervolant digitos ad praed(am) exacuunt

Unless one resorts to an anapaest in the final foot, I do not see how an iambic scansion can possibly be made to work. The occasional 'lines' which do scan can perhaps be attributed to chance, bearing in mind Quintilian's remarks that almost anything written in prose can be scanned as some sort of verse,⁶ and also that iambic clausulae tend to slip into speech most readily, as this metre is the closest to prose.⁷

Generally speaking, therefore, no system of metre seems to fit the *Querolus* satisfactorily. Whether the author intended his work to be metrical in the manner of Plautus and Terence, whatever he understood that to be, is another matter. It is essential to bear in mind that the similarity of dramatic verse to prose, in terms of metre, was notorious, so that even in the age of Cicero there was difficulty in differentiating between the two:

"At comicorum senarii propter similitudinem sermonis
 sic saepe sunt abiecti, ut nonnunquam vix in eis numerus
 et versus intellegi possit."⁸

If there were difficulties of this nature at that time, then it is obvious that by the fifth century, real problems must have arisen in recognising

the metrical schemes of ancient comedy. That this was so for Plautus' cantica (admittedly by far the hardest parts of his plays to deal with in this respect) has been amply demonstrated by Questa.⁹ If, therefore, as I hope to have shown, the *Querolus* was composed as late as the middle of the fifth century, it does not seem at all unlikely that the author might have found difficulty in grasping the intricacies of Plautine metrication,¹⁰ the more so if he had in fact been employed in the legal profession for most of his working life, as some of the material employed in the *Querolus* would seem to indicate.

It would appear therefore that either the author believed that his predecessors had written in prose, or possibly prose interspersed with verse cantica, or that, while aware of the fact that Plautus and Terence had employed verse, he was unable to comprehend how their metre worked. A number of factors do suggest the latter. The very fact that some critics have been led by the apparently metrical nature of certain passages to believe that the *Querolus* can be made to scan, does imply that the author occasionally came close to his models. The part of Pantomalus' speech which we have already discussed is a case in point. The four-stress line which can clearly be made out, at least initially, may well have been intended as a pastiche of the kind of comic canticum which the author, and as importantly, his audience, might have encountered in the schoolroom readings of Plautus of their childhood.

It is of course possible that the gradual breakdown of the metrical form in Pantomalus' mouth may be intentional, as his is, after all, the character of the comic slave, and that the author had in mind the attainment of comic effect through this ridiculous character's attempts at verse. On balance, however, this explanation is too subtle, for I do not think that much would be gained by such a procedure, even if the author were capable of it, in a play where for the most part, consistently correct metre is lacking.

Before concluding, something must also be said about the author's own mysterious remarks about the form of the play. These remarks occur in the Prologue, where the author speaks of his 'sermo poeticus', and then says:

prodire autem in agendum non auderemus cum clodo pede,
nisi magnos praeclarosque in hac parte sequeremur duces."¹²

One point which has given rise to disagreement among certain critics¹³ can easily be explained. The phrase 'magnos praeclarosque duces' must refer to Plautus and Terence. None of the other candidates put forward could really be said to merit these epithets. The fifth century was undoubtedly given to praising the literary mediocre to the skies, but when, as in this

case, there is no further evidence offered by the writer as to the identity of the 'duces', it is pointless to look beyond the obvious dramatic forerunners of our author, who has admitted to following in Plautus' footsteps anyway.¹⁴

As for 'sermo poeticus', the precise significance of the phrase cannot, I think, be determined with certainty; sermo is often used with reference to prose speech or conversation, and hence verses in conversational style, such as Horace's *Satires*, but can also be used for the manner of speaking. Although the *Querolus* has its satirical points, demonstrating the vanity of human wishes in Querolus' discussion with the Lar, the phrase is, it would seem, intended to refer rather to the form of the piece than to its content. As, in this case its meaning could range from 'verse of a chatty nature' to 'prose with poetic vocabulary', it is clear that this alone is not going to solve our problem.

In many ways the crux of the whole problem is the phrase "cum clodo pede", the meaning of which has again been variously interpreted.¹⁵ If the reference is to a metrical foot, it is presumably to one which can be described as 'limping', such as the iambus or trochee, both of which are composed of parts of unequal length. Alternatively the phrase might be used to describe an alternation of prose and verse in the piece. Finally, and this is the view adopted by Süss,¹⁶ it is possible that the author is comparing the lameness of his own abilities compared to those of the great masters, Plautus and Terence. It seems likely that the author could have had more than one meaning in his own mind, perhaps playing on the words to indicate that he intended to follow the metre of Plautus and Terence, as he understood it, while self-deprecatingly drawing attention to his (unfortunately all too real) deficiencies in following them.

In conclusion, then, I think that one can say that the author's intention was probably to follow, at least in rough terms, the kind of metres exploited by his comic predecessors. This is not to say that the *Querolus*, as we possess it, is capable of anything approaching consistent scansion, and even less that it can be 'restored' to some previous metrically satisfactory form. In fact it is probably best written in continuous prose form, rather than in artificially created lines. Undoubtedly it is possible to find clausulae which can be made to scan, which might indicate that the author had at least some notion of what he was doing; whether he believed that this mixture of prose and verse was how Plautus and Terence wrote cannot be determined, but, given the difficulty found in re-establishing the bases of Plautine metre, especially that of the cantica, in the modern world, one can hardly attach much blame to our author if he experienced similar difficulties.

Notes

1. op. cit. p. 55.
2. Cavallin: Bemerkungen zu Querolus, *Eranos* 49 (1951) p. 149.
3. op. cit. p. 119. cf Emrich 132, 2ff, where the passage is written as continuous prose.
4. op. cit. p. 148.
5. = Emrich, 112, 5-7.
6. Quintilian, IX, 4, 52.
7. Quintilian, IX, 4, 76.
8. Cicero *Orator* lv, 184.
9. Questa: "L'antichissima edizione dei *Cantica* di Plauto" in *Rivista di Filologia Classica* 102 (1974) p. 58-79, 172-88.
10. It should be noted that Sidonius Apollinaris describes the iambic senarius as "metrum diu infrequentatum" (*Ep.* IX, xv, 1), prior to demonstrating that he can write them. Sidonius was however something of a living literary fossil.
11. *Quer.* 34, 9.
12. *Quer.* 34, 23-24.
13. For details, see Corsaro op. cit. p. 56.
14. *Quer.* 34, 13.
15. Corsaro op. cit. p. 55ff.
16. op. cit. p. 81.

Chapter 15

The Humour of the *Querolus*

The different kinds of humour contained in the play, indeed the existence of any humour whatsoever, form an almost untouched area as regards previous criticism.¹ The question of the humorous techniques employed in any production of the piece has suffered similar neglect, although a fair amount has been written on the coherence of the play.²

If we assume that the *Querolus* was actually staged, even on the limited scale of a performance after some aristocratic dinner-party, then we may discuss the humour in three broad areas. First there is the humour which arises out of the plot, out of Querolus' situation in the play. Secondly there is the humour which arises out of actions on stage, from the actors themselves; the content of this is obviously the most difficult to ascertain and appreciate, but the text does provide us with some clues as to possible stage business, such as the reference to the Lar's trident, an obvious stage prop. Finally mention must be made of the jokes within the text, which can be considered along with the "Plautine" elements in the text, those words and phrases borrowed from ancient comedy which add to the general atmosphere of the piece. Clearly there will be overlaps between these categories, but we may use them as a starting-point for our investigation of the subject.

We must first therefore consider the plot of the play. A humorous piece must of course be geared to the tastes of its audience and the impression gained from the prologue³ is one of a performance before an aristocratic audience, an educated one, but one which has probably just eaten and drunk its fill. As befits such an audience the *Querolus* is quieter and more reflective than other Roman comedies and, in this respect at least, closer to the work of Terence than that of Plautus. The general lack of vulgarity⁴ has led Havet to suggest that the dinner guests themselves may have taken part in the performance (or a dramatised reading, perhaps) and the lack of female roles contributes to such a possibility.

Querolus' first appearance gives ample illustration of his general querulousness, thereby fixing the suitability of the name chosen in the audience's mind. We may notice here in passing the author's penchant, shared with Plautus, of using humorously suitable *redende Namen* to pinpoint certain aspects of character. Querolus, Arbiter and Sycophanta are obvious examples of this trait, while the Greco-Roman hybrid name Pantomalus will hardly have been difficult for the audience to understand.⁵ The name Mandrogerus may also come into this category, with its similarity to *mandrogeras*, the mandrake-root which had magical connotations⁶.

The choice of the name Querolus is especially geared to his behaviour in the second scene of the play, during his confrontation with the Lar. This aspect

of the character is summed up by the Lar⁷ and also in his own opening words:

"O Fortuna, O Fors Fortuna, O Fatum sceleratum atque
impium." (38, 15)

The early part of the dialogue is devoted to a development of this theme, which in part lays the basis for other humorous aspects of the plot⁸, but chiefly plays on the topic of Querolus' unsociability. The part which deals with Querolus' attitude to greetings gives us our first hint as to the comic possibilities of the piece in terms of action on stage as well as in the dialogue:

"Quer: O Fortuna, O Fors Fortuna, O Fatum sceleratum atque
impium! si quis, nunc mihi tete ostenderet, ego nunc tibi facerem
et constituerem fatum inexsuperabile.

Lar: Sperandum est hodie de tridente. sed quid cesso interpellare
atque adloqui? salve, Querole.

Quer: Ecce iterum rem molestam 'salve, Querole'. istud cui bono,
tot hominibus hac atque illac 'ave' dicere? etiamsi prodesset, ingratum foret.

Lar: Misanthropus hercle hic verus est: unum conspicit, turbas putat."
(38, 15-25)

It is noticeable that timing here is important because of the use of asides to the audience as well as straightforward dialogue. The way in which the Lar draws attention to the trident is also significant, for this is an important comic prop during the early part of this scene, as when the Lar prevents Querolus from rushing past him:

"Lar: Mane paulisper.

Quer: Non vacat.

Lar: Sic necesse est, mane.

Quer: Iam istud ad vim pertinet. age dic, quid vis." (40, 7-14)⁹

The first part of this scene between the Lar and Querolus can be seen as a brisk and comic interlude between the occasionally ponderous explanations of the dedication and introduction and the slightly more serious "philosophical" dialogue which follows. Temporarily at least the author soft pedals his talent for caricature in order to indulge in humour on a more thoughtful level. For this section, Querolus is made to adopt the role of Everyman¹⁰, to parade the follies of ambition unallied to talent or desire for responsibility.

The discussion begins from the mention of one of the great theological questions of the period, that of theodicy¹¹:

"Unum solum est, unde responderi mihi volo: quare
iniustis bene est et iustis male?" (44, 20-21)

We do not of course get an answer; we would hardly expect one in a work of this nature but, as a point from which to start the Lar's sophistic arguments, it is ideal. First the Lar proves to Querolus that he himself (and, one assumes, the human race for which he stands) is guilty of all kinds of crimes, before showing him, in a complete change of outlook, that he is in fact very well off.

As for Querolus' confessions of various faults, he is certainly guilty of these crimes in the strictest moral terms, but one cannot help but think that some of his admissions are included purely for their humorous side rather than to assist in the making of any moral point. The tone of comic banter in the dispute is set very early on:

"Lar: Celeriter nunc mihi responde, Querole. quanta iam putas fecisse te capitalia.

Quer: Equidem nullum, quod sciam.

Lar: Nullumne? ergo exciderunt omnia?" (46, 15-19)

Nor is the suggestion of theft treated with any great seriousness:

"Lar: Eho Querole, furtum nullum admisisti?

Quer: Numquam ex quo destiti.

Lar: Ha, ha, he, hoc est numquam admisisse.

Quer: Quod verum est non nego. adulescens quaedam feci fateor, laudari quae solent.

Lar: Cur igitur destitisti de scelere tam laudabili." (46, 23-48, 4)

It is impossible to be certain but I do wonder whether one is meant to recall such thefts as Augustine's, from fruit trees, which he, in contrast to Querolus, found so repugnant in later life.¹² At any rate, the point about youthful misdemeanours has been made, without losing the cheerful flow of dialogue, as would have happened had the question been developed. Querolus displays similar flippancy when asked about murder and adultery. In the case of murder we have one of the earliest jokes at the expense of mothers-in-law:

"Lar: Nulli igitur mortem optasti?

Quer: Nemini.

Lar: Quid si convinco.

Quer: Nihil est quod respondeam.

Lar: Dic mihi, si soceros numquam habuisti.

Quer: Ecce iterum generalia." (48, 25-50, 8)

As for adultery, it is apparently not even a crime in Querolus' eyes:

"Lar: Quid de adulterio?

Quer: Attat etiam hoc crimen non est.

Lar: Quando autem licitum esse coepit?

Quer: Men rogas, quasi tu nescias. hoc est quod nec permitti

nec prohiberi potest." (48, 8-15)

The serious point is made amidst the levity, however, that adultery, by its very nature of secrecy, cannot be permitted or prohibited. Because it is an issue of personal morals and conscience, it cannot be controlled by any outside agency. Briefly then, the Lar has exposed the moral laxity of the human race in general and Querolus in particular, not so much because of its commission of crimes, but because of its attitude to them.

As for the Lar's demonstration of the benefits of Querolus' position, this may again be viewed in two parts. The first of these consists of a demonstration of how Querolus' complaints about his own life are groundless, while the second contains the exposition of how human ambitions and dreams do not take account of reality.

Initially there is a return to Querolus' general misanthropy, milking the already established joke once again:

"Quer: Primum tibi, geniorum optime, conqueror de amicis.

Lar: Spes Bona, quid de inimicis iste faciet." (52, 17-19)

Such employment of a stock, running joke shows a knowledge of comic technique and an appreciation of the way in which an audience's mind works. The use of such a ploy, which can scarcely have been arrived at by accident, suggests that the author was no stranger to the art of making people laugh.

Querolus' complaints of poverty are easily exposed as greed by the Lar, for he strips away the pretence to display the truth, but in an ironic and entertaining manner:

"Quer: Scisne me nuper patrem amisisse?

Lar: Servasti praeceptum! speciale hoc plane est: hoc est, quod nemini antehac contigit. quid igitur? nonne iustum hoc fuit, bustum ut efferret filius?

Quer: Fateor, sed pater ipse nihil reliquit.

Lar: Dura deploratio! exequias inanes tibi contigisse luges? irascaris ergo, non doles. patri certe nihil defuit, tibi que hodie nihil deficit. non enim hoc parva hereditas." (58, 12-20)

Querolus' complaint about his servant Pantomalus is also dismissed in jesting manner although there is an underlying truth in the answer:

"Quer: Servus mihi est, quem tolerare nequeo, Pantomalus et mente et nomine.

Lar: Felicem te Querole, si unus tibi est Pantomalus: multi Pantomalos habent." (58, 25-27)

The play with Pantomalus' name suggests that the author expected its significance to be understood and the words which he puts into Querolus' mouth neatly prepare his listeners for the jest. The folly of not appreciating the limits of one's own problems as opposed to those of others is further exposed in the lines which follow:

"Quer: Sed plures audio qui suos etiam laudant.

Lar: Isti peiores habent.

Quer: Cur igitur laudant?

Lar: Quia quid deperdant nesciunt." (60, 2-8)

The message comes across together with the humour: if one knows one's faults and problems, one should be happy at least on that score. Once Querolus knows that Pantomalus is a rogue, he is far better off than someone who is in ignorance of his servants' misdeeds.

Querolus is finally convinced that he is better off than at least some of his neighbours by something which the Lar will only tell him in a whisper¹³, a proceeding to which we shall return. A further factor which the Lar brings into account is Querolus' good health¹⁴. The juxtaposition of this with those matters which seemed important to Querolus makes one wonder whether Juvenal's line suggesting what one ought to pray for¹⁵ was at the back of our author's mind. The message of the two authors about the folly of ambition is similar and Juvenal was certainly well-known at this period, so a connection is not impossible.

And so we come to the Lar's exposition of the frailty of ambition not backed by responsibility. It is notable that, when offered a choice of life different from his current one, Querolus promptly opts for the privileges accorded the military, even at a relatively humble level:

"da mihi divitias atque honores militares vel mediocriter" (66, 8)

Resentment at the exalted position achieved by the soldiery vis-à-vis the civilian population is also hinted at by Sidonius Apollinaris in a letter from Rome where he comments that he has been consulting the most powerful men, outside the ranks of the army¹⁶. Querolus is quietly put in his place by the Lar, who points out that military glory does not come of its own accord:

"Lar: Potes bellum gerere, ferrum excipere, aciem rumpere?

Quer: Istud numquam potui.

Lar: Cede igitur praemio atque honoribus his, qui possunt omnia." (66, 13-17)

Querolus similarly fails to take account of the realities when asking for a place in civil life, for with the prestige of curial position come also the duties of the post:

"Quer: Saltem aliquid nobis tribue in parte civili
et miserabili.

Lar: Vis ergo omnia et exigere et exsolvere?

Quer: Attat hoc excidit. iam neutrum volo." (66, 17-21)

The list of requests is long and clearly the greatest effect can be achieved if Querolus' demands become ever more frenzied and desperate. The Lar is of course always ready with a suitable, if occasionally facetious reply, perhaps as a counterbalance to Querolus' increasing frenzy, all of which enhances the humour already present in the basic formula of repeated request and denial. As an example of the Lar's facetiousness we may cite his reply to Querolus' request for wealth:

"Quer: Da mihi saltem vel capsas Titi

Lar: Sume igitur et podagram Titi." (70, 23-25)

Gout is hardly a compulsory accompaniment to riches, but the riposte should have raised a laugh, especially if some particular Titus were in the writer's (and audience's) mind. The Lar's role as a tormentor is gradually built up towards the end of this section by means of such replies, so that Querolus finally reaches a point of exasperation, only to receive a mocking, echoing reply:

"Quer: At abi, Lar familiaris, cum tua disputatione.

Lar: At abi, Querole, cum tua querimonia." (72, 25-27)

Having thus battered Querolus into submission so that he is willing to accept his lot¹⁷, the Lar then promises him great wealth, but once again in obscure and annoyingly unhelpful terms. The passage demonstrates a certain degree of character reversal in that Querolus, a moment before all too eager to grasp at any form of self-improvement, now will not believe the Lar's promises. The following passage, summing up the Lar's "helpful" remarks, does help to explain Querolus' unwillingness to believe him:

"Lar: Ut si quid tibi spei aut praesidiest, (fures) totum auferant.

Quer: Cur ita?

Lar: Ut sis dives,

Quer: Quo modo?

Lar: Bona si perdideris tua.

Quer: Quam ob rem?

Lar: Ut sis felix.

Quer: Quo modo?

Lar: Si fueris miser.

Quer: Istud plane est quod saepe audiui, 'obscuris vera involvere'."

(78, 19-80, 10)

Once again the dialogue must depend to a large extent for its humour on the speed and style of its delivery, but it is not difficult to imagine Querolus growing ever more puzzled and exasperated by the Lar's replies to his questions, which lead almost round in a circle. This itself is a comic formula almost guaranteed success. The humour of this passage may be on more than one level, for it is possible that fun is being poked at certain Christian doctrines, particularly that of gaining (spiritual) riches as a result of abandoning those which one possesses already¹⁸. The idea of truth being wrapped in mystery would also suggest a religious reference.

Between this scene and the one which introduces us to the three villains, Mandrogerus and his cronies, there is a short soliloquy by Querolus, which serves superficially to remind the audience of his state of mind and what he is about to do, but just as importantly provides a quiet moment between the two comic scenes.

The scene portraying the machinations of the rogues is reminiscent of some of Plautus' slave scenes where the participants aim to deceive their masters but, apparently just as importantly, to enjoy it at the same time. Mandrogerus' introduction of himself, as a man-hunter¹⁹ sets the humorous tone of his villainy, while perhaps also awaking the audience's memories of Plautine *milites gloriosi*. The more specific reference to his customary victims may well be spoken with the audience in mind:

"homines venor publice. sed quos homines! divites
et potentes et litteratos maxime." (86, 5-6)

The timing of the dialogue and action of this scene is all important for, if maximum comic effect is to be obtained, a certain degree of "hamming" on the part of the actors is probably desirable. For example the matching up of the directions to Querolus' house which Mandrogerus possesses with the different parts of the scene on stage²⁰ could provide a rich vein of humour if the minor crooks actually inspect these different items at close quarters. Once the identity of Querolus' house has been established, there is a neat and quietly humorous piece of character drawing by the author, as he makes Mandrogerus' initial remarks about the house pertain to its defences against burglary²¹.

The actual method employed to gain Querolus' interest is a scheme worthy of Plautus, for Sardanapallus and Sycophanta arouse his curiosity by talking about the great magician whom they have just seen. The plan works, for Querolus, contrary to the views which he expressed earlier about greetings, wastes little time in butting in:

"Cur non omnia agnosco? salvete, amici." (96, 4)

His eagerness to meet the magician is further fired by Sycophanta's feigned unwillingness to introduce him and indeed general playing of devil's advocate in the matter²². This is an imaginative touch by the author, who must have observed the human failing of being more drawn to things as they become more unobtainable.

Once Mandrogerus appears, it is Querolus who goes to greet him²³, thus completing his volte-face in this matter. Sycophanta soon takes over the role of leading enquirer, however, in order to establish Mandrogerus' credentials. This is done in two ways and on various levels of humour. Mandrogerus talks initially about the powers which rule life, a satire on the system of government at this period²⁴ and perhaps also on the state religion of Christianity. The precise identification of those aimed at cannot be ascertained but the point about the relative realistic powers of the different groups shows perception, for the greater the power held, so the less accessible and hence less useful the holder becomes:

"Mand: Duo sunt genera potestatum: unum est quod iubet, aliud quod obsecundat; sic reguntur omnia. praeclarior maiorum potestas, sed minorum saepe utilior gratia. verum de maioribus neque mihi dicere neque vobis audire est utile." (104, 5-7)

The various religious references²⁵ may suggest a criticism of the Christian church in respect of its increasing involvement in secular affairs, but whether or not this is the case, the main message is clear; the system of power is too complicated and those at the bottom, with whom the ordinary citizen has to deal, are often corrupt (e.g. the Harpies, *Quer* 110, 26 ff) and difficult to get past²⁶.

Sycophanta and Sardanapallus further strengthen Mandrogerus' standing by asking about their own backgrounds, receiving accurate replies, much to their disgust²⁷ (real or feigned). This disgust is an obvious comic point, particularly as the audience is aware of the two men's real standing with Mandrogerus. Querolus' awe increases still more when Mandrogerus addresses him by name²⁸; his puzzlement must have amused the audience. Mandrogerus promptly launches into an astrological explanation of the reasons for Querolus' misfortunes:

"Mars trigonus, Saturnus Venerem respicit, Iuppiter quadratus, Mercurius huic iratus, Sol rotundus, Luna in saltu est. collegi omnem iam genesim tuam, Querole. Mala Fortuna te premit." (118, 10-12)

One cannot be sure, but the terms used probably amount to specious nonsense. This would assume a level of knowledge in such matters among the audience sufficient

to detect the fraud and its humorous composition, but this is by no means unlikely²⁹. Querolus is of course impressed and agrees to allow Mandrogerus, assisted by the two "strangers", to purify the house; not without a momentary suspicion, however, for he does send Pantomalus to fetch his neighbour Arbiter.³⁰

This task provides the artistic justification for the scene which in some ways forms the centrepiece of the comedy, Pantomalus' soliloquy, of which Havet remarked that, if it had survived as a separate fragment, "on pourrait le croire un débris d'une comédie du premier ordre."³¹ In some ways this scene marks the point at which our author comes closest to Plautus in tone. Pantomalus is in many ways typical of the traditional comic slave in respect of his attitude to his master and the slaves' life which he describes³² is one which Plautine slaves would have dreamed of, even if they never achieved it. The portrait of the slave is not an entirely unattractive one, for we have the opportunity to compare Pantomalus' view of Querolus' with the master's earlier remarks about his slave. Querolus' pettiness is explored in amusing detail:

"calidariam fumosam non volt neque calices unguentatos quoniam haec sunt deliciae? urceolum contusum et infractum, oenophorum exauriculatum et sordidum, ampullam truncam rimosamque densis fultam cerulis non simpliciter intuetur: bilem tenere vix potest." (128, 11-14)

The use of such grandiloquent language over small matters adds to the humour but there may be a serious message behind the humour: even slaves should not be made to accept unreasonable demands. A similar point perhaps lies behind the complaints about the problems of preparing for journeys, although these were very real for the fifth century aristocrat³³.

Some of the other deeds of the slaves are equally humorously portrayed, such as their efforts at defrauding Querolus of some of his best wine³⁴. The injured innocence with which Pantomalus speaks of this particular peccadillo must have been doubly amusing to an aristocratic and slave-owning audience probably sated with food and wine:

"solemus etiam vinum vino admiscere. numquod adulterium dici hoc potest, cum lagoena vetere castrata suco rursus completur novo?" (128, 15-17)

Amusing too would be the insult hurled at their fellow aristocrats in the play, humour directed at members of one's own class (especially caricatures) often being successful:

"itaque illis ambobus deus iratus sit." (130, 2)

The actor playing this part should be able to increase the humour of the curse by means of some suitable look at the audience. Visual humour, in the form of

gestures and looks would also be appropriate in the next part of Pantomalus' speech, his description of life "below stairs"³⁵ after the master has retired to bed. So good is this secret life that some slaves do not even want to gain their freedom:

"propter hoc quidam nec manumitti volunt. quis enim tantam expensam tantamque inpunitatem praestare possit libero?" (130, 21-23)

The rhythmical and catalogue quality of the remainder of the speech give it an amusing sound, which is enhanced by the varied use of alliteration and assonance:

"vivat ambitor togatus, convivator iudicum, observator ianuarum, servulorum servulus, rimator circumforanus, circumspectator callidus, speculator captatorque horarum et temporum, matutinus meridianus vespertinus." (132, 2-4)

With Pantomalus' eventual departure, the robbers return to the stage accompanied by Querolus who, ironically, is carrying the disguised treasure out of his own house. His own words increase the irony of the situation:

"O Mandrogerus, fateor, numquam fieri posse hoc credidi. potentiam tuam et religionem ipsa res probat: arcula istaec iamdudum ut a me introlata est quam levis mihi soli fuit et nunc quam gravis est duobus!" (132, 12-14)

Ironical too is the loving care with which Mandrogerus gives Querolus instructions as to how to protect his house from a return of Mala Fortuna³⁶.

The following scene between Pantomalus and Arbiter begins with an exchange of compliments, apparently sincere, although we and the audience know what Pantomalus really thinks of Arbiter³⁷. The irony of Pantomalus' words would therefore be lost on no-one but it comes as a neat and surprising touch of humour to find that Arbiter may well have been playing Pantomalus at his own game all along:

"Pant.: Tu nos bonos ac semper felices facis, qui nostrum illum bene mones.

Arb: Feci et facio semper.

Pant.: Vah, utinam ille mores servaret tuos essetque apud nos tam patiens atque indulgens quam tu cum tuis!

Arb: Non agnosco haec, Pantomale, suffragia; nimium nosmet praedicas

Pant.: Edepol nos omnes scimus et laudamus plurimum. utinamque illa tibi omnia eveniant, quod nos optamus servuli!

Arb: Immo tibi hercle, pelligibus ossibusque vestris eveniat quidquid optasti mihi!" (140, 2-14)

The skirmish between master and slave (although Pantomalus does not belong to

Arbiter) is again reminiscent of Plautus.

As Pantomalus and Arbiter disappear off stage into the house, the three villains reappear in huge disarray, the actors no doubt all shouting simultaneously and attempting to outdo each other in grief over the (apparent) nature of their booty:

"Mand: O me miserum!

Syc: O me infelicem!

Sard: O me nudum et naufragum!

Syc: O magister Mandrogerus!

Sard: O Sycophanta noster!

Mand: O pater Sardanapalle! (142, 18-144, 4)

The humour of catastrophe is enhanced by that arising from the repetitive and re-echoing nature of the lines. Our author once again shows his grasp of psychology here, making Sycophanta and Sardanapallus produce reasons why they should have known that the venture would not turn out well, but reasons with a certain degree of humour attached to them, at least for the audience:

"Syc: Ego istaec non pertulissem, si recinenti ac monenti credidissem graculae.

Sard: Ego in laqueos non incidissem, si monita curti servassem canis.

Mand: Et qualiter te admonuit?

Sard: Egredienti mihi ad angiportum suras omnes conscidit.

Mand: Utinam tibi crura ipsa enervasset, ne umquam inde movisses pedem." (146, 24-148, 6)

In the best tradition of the Plautine characters in whose footsteps he follows, however, Mandrogerus refuses to lie down and promptly comes up with a plan for at least some revenge over Querolus, whom he sees as partly responsible for his misfortunes, namely to throw the urn back into the house as a symbol of Mala Fortuna returning to its home.³⁸ Mandrogerus carries out his plan while Sardanapallus and Sycophanta make a noise at the door, in a scene capable of much visual humour. It is only when Sardanapallus returns, expecting to hear the sound of wailing from within the house, only to hear laughter instead, that the crooks discover the true nature of their mistake.

The fifth and final act, which seems in many ways to be almost an afterthought³⁹, begins with an exposition by the Lar of what is to come. The remainder of the act has similarities with the first in that it consists of a debate between two characters, this time Querolus and Mandrogerus, but on this occasion it is Querolus who is the sharper and who comes off better. Nor is this the extent of the role-reversal, for the plan concocted by Arbiter and Querolus⁴⁰ is as devious as that of Mandrogerus earlier. This ironic twist will have been

doubly funny to anyone who remembered Pantomalus' words⁴¹ about the honourable behaviour to be found among slaves.

Mandrogerus now returns to claim his rightful share of the fortune, rightful that is if he had honestly told Querolus of its whereabouts. Querolus wants his revenge and, having once got an admission from Mandrogerus that he had had the gold in his possession⁴², he then allows him to admit further that he threw the urn through the window⁴³ and makes him identify the fragments of it (another good chance for comic play, as they try to fit the pieces together⁴⁴) before claiming that the contents were indeed ashes and that he is therefore guilty of two crimes:

"Eho scelestissime, dispicis? si vivorum neglexisti gratiam, etiamne mortuis manus intulisti ad ludum et ludibria? neque contentus eruisse bustum atque cineres, ultimo per fenestram etiam funestas mihi proiecasti reliquias. quid ad haec dicis? thesaurum abstulisti, violasti sepulchrum, perditte: domum meam non solum compilasti, verum etiam polluisti, sacrilege. tu negas?"

(170, 13-17)

He has a choice of admitting to sacrilege or theft, dependent upon his choice as to what the contents of the urn were, which Querolus is not saying⁴⁵. The end result is that Mandrogerus becomes so confused that he even asks Querolus to tell him which of the crimes he has committed:

"ego totum feci, solus totum nescio. iam iam quaeso, quoniam mihi neque res neque causa superest, simpliciter dicite, utrumne furtum an sacrilegium ego commisi, nisi forte illud nunc restat mihi, ut qui furtum non potui, sacrilegium neque volui, utrumque fecisse convincar nefas." (176, 11-14)

This scene, conducted in the presence of someone named Arbiter, is probably a parody of the world of law. It may well not be intended to follow the actual procedures of the courtroom, but seems rather to be humorous guying of the complicated cases to be found as practice subjects for declamation in the schoolroom. Corsaro is correct therefore not to assume any necessity for detailed legal knowledge on the part of the author, although he tries to place the scene in the philosophical tradition.⁴⁶ Schoolmaster advocates were quite common in Ausonius' circle, however, and we are almost certainly dealing with an ex-schoolmaster as our author, so some legal experience should not be ruled out.

The piece ends happily for all concerned, as Arbiter persuades Querolus to take Mandrogerus into his house⁴⁷ and the other two crooks are given something to speed them on their way.

During this examination of the humour inherent in the plot, something has

already been said of the possible areas of humour arising from actions on stage, but we must now look at these more closely, as a production of the play might well stand or fall on them. In terms of necessary props, the play's requirements are simple. The Lar's trident has already been mentioned and would clearly be useful as an aid to stopping Querolus from leaving the stage. Furthermore the trident is rather a comic weapon, in that it has an unusual shape and, as the Lar observes, gives three wounds.⁴⁸ Play with the urn, especially in its fragmentary form, is also likely to have been a useful comic aid, but little other material is used by the actors. If one is to assume the use of some kind of stage set, then the action of the crooks discovering the location of Querolus' house and later their pretence of being Mala Fortuna attempting to return home will have been enhanced. The second scene would also be helped if some way of making loud noises, in the form of knocking on doors, were provided.

Otherwise the action depends upon the actors' own invention. Clearly there are possibilities for deliberate "hamming" by the thieves, especially when checking the identity of the house. There may well also be by-play between the crooks after they have made contact with Querolus, in the form of signals to Mandrogerus to come on stage. One certain piece of stage business is the Lar's aside to Querolus in which he tells him something about his neighbour.⁴⁹ Whether any visual clue as to this secret was provided for the original audience we have no way of knowing, but it is possible. Similarly, it is hard to believe that the actor who took the role of Pantomalus did not amplify his part, especially in the monologue, by means of looks and gestures, in order to heighten the effect of his jokes on the audience.

Finally we may examine the textual humour, which should be viewed in the context of the language of the whole piece. The one thing which must strike any reader of the play is the amount of effort which the author put into making his composition resemble earlier Latin comedy, in manner of expression rather than content. He did this in several ways, using a large number of words and expressions solely or normally associated with comedy and also such typical devices as alliteration. A few of the most striking examples of the latter may briefly be mentioned:

"(aula) furtum fecit furibus" (154, 4-5)

"qui totum habere potui partem peto" (166, 9)

"O Fortuna, o Fors Fortuna, o Fatum sceleratum" (38, 15)⁵⁰

As for the vocabulary employed by our author, there are a number of words otherwise associated with Plautus and Terence such as *attat* (66, 23), *volupe* (38, 2), *cedo* (170, 10), *clanculum* (148, 15) and *sodes* (94, 23)⁵¹. In terms of

grammatical construction and syntax, the author diverges from the classical norm on several occasions and it is sometimes difficult to know whether this is the result of his fifth century environment or of his attempts to follow ancient comedy. The use of certain paratactic constructions suggests the latter:

"Scin tu, quam ob causam tridentem istum gestito?" (40, 16)

"Non facile intellego, periurium ioculare quid putas?" (50, 23)

"Egomet quoque scire cupio quisnam iste est, de quo sermo nunc erat." (96, 26-27)

Conversely, however, as Corsaro has noted⁵², the *Querolus* displays the same fondness for using prepositions where they would not have been found in Classical Latin as we have already seen in Ausonius. The use of *foris* for *foras* and *hic* for *huc* suggests that a simplification of such expressions was taking place and that some of the distinctions between them were already being lost. Nevertheless, the major part of the play is written in classically correct Latin, although, as already stated, there is a heavy leavening of "Plautine" words and methods of expression to increase the flavour of comedy.

As for the jokes in the text themselves, a number of them also have the flavour of older comedy. The most obvious of these is the proverbial expression used by Mandrogerus to describe his position under Querolus' cross-examination and which is borrowed from Terence⁵⁴:

"Auribus teneo lupum." (172, 20)

The joke by near repetition is also characteristic of Plautus:

"Quer: At abi, Lar familiaris, cum tua disputatione

Lar: At abi, Querole, cum tua querimonia." (72, 25-27)

The comment about the Lar's colour also has a Plautine flavour, with its reference to the mills, the dread of slaves:

"quod seminudus es recognosco, unde dealbatus nescio. egomet iamdudum apud carbonarias agere te putabam, tu de pistrinis venis." (44, 4-6)

The play is also sprinkled with puns, some of which Plautus would probably have been pleased to call his own. One particularly well-developed passage occurs in Mandrogerus' first speech with both an extended metaphor and several plays upon words (e.g. *ius* and *conditum/conditor*):

"aula quaedam hic iacet, cuius odorem mihi trans maria ventus detulit. cedant iuris conditores, cedant omnia coquorum ingenia, cedant Apici fercula! huius ollae conditum solus scivit Euclio." (86, 7-9)⁵⁵

There is a similarly lengthy jest about the likelihood of Mandrogerus' relationship to Querolus after he has presented himself as a co-heir:

"ubinam mihi tu frater nasceris et novellus et senex? unde subito tam vetustus, qui nuper natus non eras? nam si fratrem meum te esse adseveres, perditte, illud nunc restat, ut te dicas bimlum, nam tertio anno pater meus ille Euclio cum est profectus, me hercle reliquit solum atque unicum."

(160, 22-162, 2)

The author also seems to have a taste for antithetical humour:

"vita erat, ubi nos mortem putabamus esse conditam." (152, 16-17)

A number of jokes were noted during our examination of the dispute between the Lar and Querolus and their purpose seems to have been to reinforce the serious message by making its presentation more palatable. One or two other jests may also have a serious purpose, such as Sardanapallus' remark after he and his fellow-conspirators have discovered their treasure to be a funerary urn:

"Sumite tristitiam, miseri sodales, cucullorum tegmina. plus est hoc quam hominem perdidisse: damnum vere plangitur." (144, 6-7)

That the joke is at the expense of monks is likely⁵⁷, but I do wonder whether the specific reference to a lost man may be to Christ, whom the monks are seen by their dress to be mourning. In practical terms, of course, no man is as valuable as a sum of money!⁵⁸ Once again the value of abandoning one's worldly possessions for the unknown is questioned.

It should be clear from this discussion of the humour of the play that it has more to recommend it for study than just its linguistic peculiarities or metrical features (if any). The play, while amusing, has certain moralizing characteristics and asks certain topical questions, which distinguish it from the comedy of Plautus and Terence. In its use of reflective humour and its examination of human faults, it comes closer to Terence than to the more rollicking plays of Plautus, our author's alleged model. Yet he is nevertheless following in the footsteps of Plautus, not just because he borrows the idea of Euclio and his pot of gold but also because of the Plautine material in which he has clothed his comedy, both in terms of language and of humorous style.

The *Querolus*' importance lies most of all in its appearance at such a late date in Roman literature. It demonstrates the extent to which a certain (aristocratic) sector of the community was determined to preserve as much of their heritage as possible in the face of a political and military position declining almost year by year. But the play is not just a shadowy imitation of a glorious past, as was so much else from the fifth century, but an attempt to look at some aspects of contemporary life (e.g. slavery, theodicy), albeit in a somewhat strange combination of ancient and modern language and form.

The Humour of the *Querolus* - Notes

1. Although Süss, *Rheinisches Museum* 1942 pp. 103-04, does examine the humour of the scene between Querolus and the Lar.
2. Havet, *op. cit.* pp 16 ff; cf. Corsaro, *op. cit.* pp. 24 ff for a collection of critical views.
3. *Quer.* 32, 2.
4. Vulgarly is not completely missing. Both Pantomalus' soliloquy and the Lar's aside to Querolus are fairly broad in their humour.
5. It may have been harder for the twelfth century readers for Vital de Blois, in his version of the *Aulularia* calls him Pantolabus, a borrowing from Horace, *Sat.* I, 8, 11.
6. Süss, *op. cit.* p. 90.
7. *Quer.* 36, 19 ff.
8. Human nature being what it is, Querolus has a far different attitude to such politenesses when he thinks there is something to be gained. Hence it is he who first approaches Sycophantus and Sardanapallus (96, 4) and then Mandrogerus (102, 8).
9. He uses similar persuasion not long afterwards, *Quer.* 42, 13 ff.
10. *Quer.* 44, 25; cf Süss, *op. cit.* p. 61.
11. Süss, *op. cit.* p. 98.
12. Augustine, *Confessions* II, 4.
13. *Quer.* 62, 12 ff.
14. *Quer.* 64, 6.
15. Juvenal: *Sat.* X, 355: "orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano".
16. Sidonius Apollinaris: *Ep.* I, 9, 2.
17. *Quer.* 76, 2.
18. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p. 107.
19. *Quer.* 86, 5.
20. *Quer.* 90, 3 ff.
21. *Quer.* 92, 2 ff.
22. *Quer.* 100, 6-15.
23. *Quer.* 102, 8.
24. *Quer.* 104, 5 ff. cf. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p. 117.
25. e.g. shrines and temples, *Quer.* 104, 13; altars, *Quer.* 108, 5. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p. 122 identifies the men who serve these altars as Christian priests.

26. Corsaro, *op. cit.* pp. 120-21.
27. *Quer.* 114, 21.
28. *Quer.* 118, 2 ff.
29. Although astrology had long been frowned upon, it still seems to have exercised a fascination in intellectual quarters, at least on an academic level. cf. Ausonius, *Ecl.* VII, *De ratione puerperii maturi*. Ausonius' own horoscope had been cast by his grandfather, *Par.* IV, 17 ff. Another teacher, Lampridius, took matters more seriously, *Sid. Apollinaris, Ep.* VIII, 11, 9. The letter is couched in a way which suggests that Sidonius may not have been uninterested in the matter. The belief in the evil influence of some stars continued into the Gallo-Roman period, for the French word *malotru* must come from a form *male *astrucus*, literally 'born under an evil star'. A word *astrosus* is known with this meaning, but, with normal development, this would have come into French as **malâtreux*. I should like to thank Dr. T. O. Jones for assistance on this last point.
30. *Quer.* 124, 4 ff.
31. Havet, *op. cit.* p. 18.
32. *Quer.* 130, 3 ff.
33. *Quer.* 126, 11 ff. cf. Loyen, *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule*, p. 61.
34. *Quer.* 128, 15 ff.
35. e.g. the description of the relationships between male and female slaves, *Quer.* 130, 8-12.
36. *Quer.* 134, 9-25.
37. *Quer.* 128, 28 ff.
38. *Quer.* 148, 25.
39. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p. 25, pointing out Querolus' change of character in this act; Jannaccone, *Aevum* XX (1946), p. 270 even suggests that it should be considered as a separate piece, but this would create more problems than it solves.
40. *Quer.* 158, 16 ff.
41. *Quer.* 130, 13-15.
42. *Quer.* 166, 13.
43. *Quer.* 168, 19.
44. *Quer.* 170, 3 ff.
45. *Quer.* 174, 16.
46. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p. 48.
47. *Quer.* 180, 2 ff.
48. *Quer.* 42, 24-25.
49. *Quer.* 62, 13.

50. The first two phrases in this expression are borrowed from Terence, *Phormio* 841.
51. Perhaps here and certainly at *Quer.* 146, 2, *sodes* as misunderstood as an alternative to *sodales*.
52. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p.52.
53. *foris*, *Quer.* 134, 11; *hic*, *Quer.* 168, 28. Corsaro, *ibid.*
54. Terence, *Phormio* 506.
55. The use of *aula* and *olla* here prefigures play on the same words later:
"quae nos aula recipiet? quae nos olla tuebitur?" (144, 22)
56. cf. the Lar's remark on the subject of Querolus' complaints about friends:
"Spes Bona, quid de inimicis iste faciet?" (52, 19)
57. Corsaro, *op. cit.* p.143.
58. cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* XIII, 130-31, 134, quoted by Corsaro, *ibid.*

Sidonius Apollinaris and the end of Roman Gaul

"L'empire est prêt à choir et la France s'élève." (Corneille, *Attila* I, 2)

Although Rutilius' poem is, in the opinion of Paschoud¹, the last pagan work to appear in the west and a demonstration of the impasse into which pagan ideology and inspiration had come, this view does not take sufficient account of the synthesis of paganism and Christianity which occurred in some later literature. In some ways pagan literature was victorious where the pagan ideals and philosophy had failed to be, for the leading Christians of the fifth century seem to have been more welcoming to the methods of traditional education than their predecessors had been. Augustine in particular had been unwilling to leave the advantages of rhetoric in the hands of opponents and found its standard effects useful even in his sermons for the unlettered.² Furthermore, when the aristocrats were won over, the majority of them could not be expected to abandon their cultural riches any more than their material ones.

The way in which many such men progressed hand in hand with their new religion has been succinctly described by Storoni, in particular contrast with the more ascetic traditions of Eastern Christianity: "Ma il cristiano dell' occidente appartiene a una tradizione umanistica, ha ereditato una concezione civica della sacerdozio. Nel momento della prova, egli è patrono, duce, console, prefetto; raziona i viveri, improvvisa l'assistenza per i feriti, organizza persino la difesa".³ I do not know whether the author had Sidonius in mind when she wrote thus, but his career fits this description remarkably well.

In Gaul, during the fifth century, the control of the central government had grown ever weaker during the round of invasions and usurpations and it was perhaps inevitable that the men on the spot, whether possessed of economic or spiritual power, would come to obtain wide *de facto* powers. In these troubled times it was also natural that these two sections of the community would come together, in that the aristocracy came to look for greater involvement in the church, which had previously been dominated by the urban poor. The church in its turn looked to the aristocracy for many of its leaders, for the needs of a diocese, as Storoni indicates, could no longer be catered for simply by a thorough biblical knowledge and personal sanctity. As a result the episcopate might be thought to have lost some of its pristine simplicity, but the possessors of rich sees even in the previous century seem sometimes to have concentrated too much on the worldly rather than the spiritual. This had aroused some ironic comment among the pagans, as for example Praetextatus' alleged remark to Damasus: "facite me Romanae urbis episcopum et ero protinus christianus."⁴ It is clear that the great pagan did not imagine that he would have to change his style of life appreciably in order to conform to the manners of at least some of the successors of Saint Peter.

In many ways typical of the assimilation of the aristocracy into the new order is the career of Sidonius Apollinaris. He appears always to have professed Christianity, but of the rather lukewarm Ausonian variety, rather than the ascetic favoured by some. Indeed it is reasonable to assume that, had history taken any of the many other courses available to it, Sidonius' chequered career might have culminated in a high state office rather than a bishopric.

His career need be only briefly traced here, for he has not lacked biographers⁵. He was born at Lyon in about 430, received the traditional aristocratic education and then married Papianilla, the daughter of Eparchius Avitus, a landowner from Auvergne who had been praetorian prefect of Gaul in 439 under Aetius. In 454-55 the successive assassinations of Aetius, Valentinian III and Petronius Maximus took place. The last of these had appointed Avitus as *magister militum per Gallias* (or possibly *magister militum praesentalis*, the supreme command)⁶ to curb outbreaks of unrest among the federates who viewed the death of Valentinian, last scion of the Theodosian line, as releasing them from their vows⁷.

At this crisis point, Avitus was elected emperor at Beaucaire by his Gallic *confrères*, but significantly also in the presence of the Visigoths Theodoric and his brothers⁸. Avitus had long been well-regarded at the court of Toulouse and his sympathies and influence are reflected in his son-in-law's panegyric on him.⁹ Sidonius delivered this speech at Rome with great success and the future looked rosy. The illusion was soon shattered, however, when Avitus, having failed to be accepted by the Eastern Empire, was overthrown by an alliance of Ricimer, Majorian and the Italian aristocracy. He was eventually succeeded by Majorian, but Gaul had been disappointed by the overthrow of its emperor and Majorian had to come to Gaul on a mission of pacification. Sidonius had disappeared from public life for a short period after Avitus' fall, but re-emerged to deliver a panegyric on Majorian at Lyon, a work to which we shall return later. Sidonius became a *comes* and an associate of Majorian but once again his career was interrupted, this time because of the assassination of Majorian by Ricimer in 461. This left Sidonius at leisure, time which he devoted to literature, Carmina IX - XXIV and the original versions of most of those letters later collected into the first five books.

It was only with the elevation of Anthemius by Leo (467) to be his co-emperor in the West that Sidonius re-entered public affairs, being chosen to lead an embassy from the Arvernians to the court. Again he met with success and, because Anthemius was anxious to placate the Gallo-Romans¹⁰, Sidonius also found himself appointed to the prefecture of the city of Rome, the ultimate "aristocratic" honour. After his term of office, he returned to Gaul with the rank of patrician and apparently devoted himself initially to quiet pursuits, including the publication of his poetry.

Perhaps in 469¹¹ he was elected bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, in succession to Eparchius, to whom he may well have been related by marriage through his father-in-law

Eparchius Avitus.¹² As bishop he found himself organising the defences of Clermont against the besieging Visigoths for four consecutive summers (471 - 74), a resistance ended only by the ceding of Auvergne by the government in 475 and the subsequent imprisonment of Sidonius. Although not imprisoned for long, it was some time before he was allowed to return to his see and regain his possessions, which he did only after composing a panegyric poem on Euric's court.¹³ In many ways, Sidonius achieved his greatest real power and influence as a bishop, which makes rather a mockery of his words to his wife in 474, wishing for continued honours for his family:

"sicut nos utramque familiam nostram praefectoriam nacti etiam patriciam divino favore reddidimus, ita ipsi quam suscipiunt patriciam faciant consularem." (*Ep* V, 16, 4)¹⁴

Such faith in the continuance of the Roman state, even after his recent experiences of being besieged by the Visigothic hordes in Clermont-Ferrand, speaks volumes for the man's beliefs and depth of loyalty to Rome.

It is now time to examine Sidonius and what he represents in greater detail, by means of a study of his work, both as an illustration of his views and those of his Gallic contemporaries and also from his use of the Latin language. First there is the matter of Sidonius' views of the German peoples, formerly invaders but now settled in part of Gaul and bent on expansion. Early in his life he had displayed a certain belief in co-existence with the Goths under Theodoric II, and even some fondness for the king himself. This emerges from a letter to Agricola¹⁵, which is composed of a flattering description of the king, including both his physical and moral attributes, and also the life at his court. Perhaps the atmosphere at the court was sufficiently civilized in Sidonius' eyes to meet with his approval, especially as the Visigothic expansion had been halted at this time.¹⁶ The picture painted is a Roman one, albeit with a Gothic tinge:

"reliquum mane regni administrandi cura sibi deputat. circumstetit sellam comes armiger; pellitorum turba satellitum ne absit, admittitur, ne obstrepat, eliminatur, sicque pro foribus immurmurat exclusa velis, inclusa cancellis. inter haec intromissis gentium legationibus audit plurima, pauca respondet."
(*Ep* I, 2, 4)

Theodoric himself is described elsewhere as:

"magno patre prior, decus Getarum,
Romanae columen salusque gentis." (*Carm* XXIII, 70 - 71)

Later, however, Sidonius wrote to Philagrius in words which suggest no possibility of compromise:¹⁷

"barbaros vitas, quia mali putentur; ego, etiamsi boni." (*Ep VII, 14, 10*)

What caused this clear change of heart? A number of factors should perhaps be taken into consideration. The change in the leadership of the Visigoths brought about in 466 by Euric's murder of Theodoric certainly made a difference to the state of affairs in Gaul, but even the supposedly more moderate Theodoric had seized Narbonne in 462. As already observed, part of the reason for the renewed Gothic demands was the ending of their status as *foederati* after Valentinian's death, but the reliance placed on them by Avitus initially can only have worsened the situation for the Gallo-Romans, by pointing out to the Visigoths their own strength. Two men who recognised this strength, Arvandus and Seronatus, and who, while holding Roman office, attempted to hand Gaul over from Roman to Gothic control bring different reactions from Sidonius, although a number of factors are at play here.

Arvandus had been prefect of Gaul from 464 - 68, a length of tenure which says much for his initial success in the post. His second term was less popular, however:

"praefecturam primam gubernavit cum magna popularitate
consequentemque cum maxima populatione." (*Ep I, 7, 3*)

Despite the typically punning method of expression, the meaning is clear and clarified further by the reference to his debts which follows. What led to his condemnation, rather than the extortion which Sidonius hints at, was a letter allegedly written by him to the Goths¹⁸, in which he suggested that they should divide up Gaul with the Burgundians. Arvandus was condemned to death but the sentence was later commuted, perhaps through the influence of Ricimer, with whom Arvandus may have been in collusion¹⁹. Yet even after his condemnation, Sidonius still makes a point of his personal affection for the man, which not even his treason could cause to waver.²⁰

In stark contrast to this attitude is the one which Sidonius holds towards Seronatus who had acted in a similar way to Arvandus during his tenure of the vicariate of the *Septem Provinciae* in about 469. Even before his treachery was exposed, his behaviour apparently met with aristocratic disapproval for Sidonius describes him in bestial terms in a letter to Pannychius²¹, which makes no mention of his intimacy with Euric, unless the reference to his return from Toulouse is more significant than it appears at first sight.²² Indeed, even Seronatus' name is not safe from Sidonius' mockery:

"Seronati, inquam: de cuius ut primum etiam nomine loquar, sic mihi videtur quasi praescia futurorum lusisse fortuna, sicuti ex adverso maiores nostri proelia, quibus nihil est foedius, bella dixerunt." (*Ep II, 1,1*)

One reason for Sidonius' additional antipathy may be that Seronatus was not of the highest birth; reports of his boorish behaviour and lack of education suggest a lack of refinement²³. Arvandus, by contrast, had definitely been a member of the Gallic aristocracy and a personal friend of Sidonius. Seronatus was also more successful than Arvandus in his negotiations with Euric who, having gained Touraine and Berry in 469, annexed most of Aquitania Prima in that year and the next, leaving Auvergne encircled²⁴.

The question of birth was clearly a sensitive one at this time, as perhaps is always the case where a relatively new aristocratic caste is concerned, and Seronatus is not the only official who meets with Sidonius' disapproval on these and other grounds. The unfortunate Paeonius provides us with another example, having crossed swords unsuccessfully with Sidonius over a scurrilous satire which he had accused Sidonius of writing²⁵. Not only did Majorian vindicate Sidonius, but he also had the satisfaction of his revenge in Majorian's presence and also in his published letter on the subject which generally drags Paeonius' name and reputation through the mire:

"erat enim ipse Paeonius populi totus, qui tribuniciis flatibus crebro seditionum pelagus impelleret. ceterum si requisisses: "qui genus, unde domo?", non eminentius quam municipaliter natus quemque inter initia cognosci claritas vitrici magis quam patris fecerit, identidem tamen per fas nefasque crescere adfectans pecuniaeque per avaritiam parcus, per ambitum prodigus." (*Ep* I, II, 5)

Perhaps therefore the question of the birth and connections of the man concerned in treason was a factor to be taken into account for it seems to me that, had the two attempts to hand Aquitania over to Euric been reversed in chronology, Sidonius might well still have condemned Seronatus, yet continued to support Arvandus, at least on a personal if not a political level. One wonders how far such *amicitia* could be stretched in Sidonius' circle before it had to be abandoned. Sidonius' change of views over the Gothic presence in Gaul may therefore be considered as chiefly the result of Euric's increasing aggression and the concomitant, though partially unconnected, decline in the influence of the Italian-based emperors. Sidonius' words about the aristocracy's probable future in the face of this decline are unusually prophetic:

"Si nullae a republica vires, nulla praesidia, si nullae, quantum rumor est, Anthemii principis opes, statuit te auctore (sc. Ecdicio) nobilitas seu patriam dimittere seu capillos." (*Ep* II, 1,4)

And so in late 469, or soon after, Sidonius himself forfeited his hair to become bishop of Clermont-Ferrand. This did indeed give him his best chance of helping to resist the Gothic advance, which was unfortunately, in the long run, irresistible. As a representative of catholicism, Sidonius had a further interest

in thwarting Euric's plans, for he reports the Visigothic king to have been a militant arian:

"quod fatendum est, praefatum regem Gothorum, quamquam sit ob virium merita terribilis, non tam Romanis moenibus quam legibus Christianis insidiaturum pavesco. tantum, ut ferunt, ori, tantum pectori suo Catholici mentio nominis acet, ut ambigas ampliusne suae gentis an suae sectae teneat principatum." (*Ep VII*, 6,6)

How true it may have been that Euric could not even abide mention of the sect opposed to his own or that he would not allow the election of new Catholic bishops²⁶ is not known for certain, but the significant point is that Sidonius believed it to be so, thereby increasing his determination to hold out.

Because of these factors Sidonius clung all the closer to Rome and all that it stood for. Even after Roman arms had failed, Roman literature could carry on Rome's mission of civilization.²⁷ But before this failure, while Sidonius was still heavily involved in temporal affairs, his panegyric on Majorian clearly preached a Roman solution to Gaul's problems. This speech at Lyon was delivered after the failure of Avitus to give Rome a Gallic emperor and the subsequent abortive *coniuratio Marcelliana*.

This speech is one of interesting contrasts and Sidonius clearly has more than one end in view. Although the work is ostensibly a panegyric in praise of Majorian, it goes on to ask for the emperor's favour in relieving Lyon of the tax which had been imposed on the city:

"et quia lassatis nimium spes unica rebus
venisti, nostris, petimus, succurre ruinis
Lugdunumque tuam, dum praeteris, aspice victor:
otia post nimios poscit te fracta labores
cui pacem das, redde animum." (*Carm V*, 574 - 78)²⁸

Sidonius' remarks about Gaul in general are a neat paradox, aimed at pleasing both sides:

"Gallia continuis quamquam sit lassa tributis,
hoc censu placuisse cupit nec pondera sentit
quae prodesse probat." (*Carm V*, 446 - 48)

This section, composed with both the emperor and his local audience in mind, is typical of the poem. Approximately half of the work is made up of an address by Africa to the goddess *Roma*²⁹, asking that Majorian should come to her rescue and free her from Vandal rule. The appeal is phrased with masterly tact:

"O Latii sopite vigor." (*Carm* V, 61)

The inference that Roman power could be exercised again in the future, almost at will, allows Sidonius to escape from the need to criticise previous failures in Africa.

Furthermore it is clear that Sidonius is suggesting to his Gallo-Roman audience that what is good for Africa is also good for Gaul. Africa's speech, now delivered through the mouth of Aetius' wife, is also given a Gallic bias as Majorian's earlier career is outlined:

"istum iam Gallia laudat
quodque per Europam est. rigidis hunc abluit undis
Rhenus, Arar, Rhodanus, Mosa, Matrona, Sequana, Ledus,
Clitis, Elaris, Atax, Vacalis; Ligerimque bipenni
excisum per frusta bibit." (*Carm.*V, 206 - 10)

This list of rivers has a distinctly parochial flavour and some of them can scarcely have been known outside Gaul (e.g. the Lez, Lot and Allier). This passage must therefore be a deliberate appeal to Gallic sentiment, as the waterways represent most areas of Gaul and may partially rely on the traditional appeal of water divinities to Gauls. The use of such lists is quite a common feature of Sidonius' poetry and he inserts another one to illustrate the peoples allegedly already brought by fear under Majorian's control:

"rigidum septemplicis Histri
agmen in arma rapis. nam quidquid languidus axis
cardine Sithonio sub Parrhase parturit Ursa,
hoc totum tua signa pavet; Bastarna, Suebus,
Pannonius, Neurus, Chunus, Geta, Dacus, Halanus,
Bellonotus, Rugus, Burgundio, Vesus, Alites,
Bisalta, Ostrogothus, Procrustes,³⁰ Sarmata, Moschus
post aquilas venere tuas." (*Carm* V, 471 - 78)

Possibly Sidonius intends to emphasize the civilizing influence of Majorian, while raising the spectre of further strange invaders, in order to drive any waverers among the Gallo-Roman aristocracy back into the Roman fold.

In the end, of course, Sidonius' political efforts were doomed to failure and, after the end of Clermont-Ferrand's heroic resistance, literature was the only means by which Sidonius could continue the propagation of any Roman ideals distinct from those of the barbarians. We must now examine the other topics about which Sidonius writes, apart from those which may generally be categorised as praise of the continuing *res Romana*, especially in Gaul.

To some extent Sidonius' material is dictated by the tradition in which he is writing. He himself describes his position as follows:

"Quinti Symmachi rotunditatem, Gai Plinii disciplinam maturitatemque vestigiis praesumptuosius insecuturus." (*Ep* I, 1, 1)

He does not, however, make any claim to be following Cicero, whose epistolary style he admits to be beyond anyone's emulation. In fact, in terms of news content, Sidonius' letters perhaps come closer to those of Cicero than to any of his conscious models, although he is correct to place himself in the school of Pliny and Symmachus in terms of literary presentation. As for his poetry, it is difficult to be as exact, but his panegyrics are in the mould of Claudian, while the remainder of his verse perhaps follows Statius³¹ or the epigrammatic tradition. In some ways he is rather trapped by his models, for the events of fifth century Gaul sit rather unhappily in the framework of polite first century correspondence. As we shall see later, there are some aspects of Sidonius' method of expression and style which would have surprised, perhaps even shocked, Pliny, but some of Sidonius' letters are written in the tradition of his predecessors. The letter describing his villa is a case in point, being modelled on two of Pliny's letters on similar subjects.³²

As one might expect, however, Sidonius devotes rather more time to a description of the natural surroundings than does Pliny, although the latter is himself not unaware of the attractiveness of nature.³³ Apart from some brief words about the setting of Avitacum within the countryside³⁴, Sidonius also writes at some length about the view from the villa, including the picture of a fisherman:

"hinc iam spectabis ut promoveat alnum piscator in pelagus, ut stataria retia suberinis corticibus extendat aut signis per certa intervalla dispositis tractus funium librentur hamati, scilicet ut nocturnis per lacum excursibus rapacissimi salares in consanguineas agantur insidias: quid enim hinc congruentius dixerim, cum piscis pisce decipitur?" (*Ep* II, 2, 12)

Apart from the word play, which Sidonius seems to have difficulty avoiding in his work, the observation of the scene, with its minute detail of the cork floats on the surface of the water, is striking. One might consider it a pity that Sidonius did not apparently consider his descriptive abilities to be sufficiently strong, or possibly of sufficient literary merit, to allow them to stand on their own without the additional support of rhetorical development or mythological reference. The list of animal and bird sounds which can be heard by night and day is spoiled in this way by its allusive conclusion:

"hic iam quam volupe auribus insonare cicadas meridie concrepantes, ranas crepusculo incumbente blaterantes, cygnos atque anseres concubia nocte clangentes, intempesta gallos gallinacios concinentes, oscines corvos voce triplicata puniceam surgentis Aurorae facem consalutantes, diluculo

autem Philomelam inter frutices sibilantem, Progen inter asseres
minurrientem." (*Ep* II, 2, 14)

Some of Sidonius' descriptions of water, in this case the lake adjacent to the villa, form an interesting comparison with parts of the *Mosella*. Although the one work is in prose while the other is in verse, such a comparison seems valid at least to a limited extent, as the material is similar and Sidonius, although writing prose, is rather poetic in his choice of vocabulary. Although the reflection of trees in the water, so well described by Ausonius, is duly recorded by Sidonius, one senses a certain reluctance, almost a tone of apology in his explanation of the phenomenon:

"aequor ab Africo viride per litus, quia in undam fronde porrecta ut
glareas aqua, sic aquas umbra perfundit. huiusmodi colorem ob oriente par
silvarum corona continuat." (*Ep* II, 2, 18)

So too the portrayal of the fish entrapped in the lake by the system of drains displays more of an eye for the mechanics of the process than any real appreciation of the sluggish pools and their captive fish:

"quem (fluvium) fors fuat an incurrat an faciat, praeterit certe,
coactus per cola subterranea deliquari, non ut fluctibus, sed ut piscibus
pauperetur; qui repulsi in gurgitem pigriorem carnes rubras albis
abdominibus extendunt: ita illis nec redire valentibus nec exire
permissis quendam vivum et circumlaticium carcerem corpulentia facit."

(*Ep* II, 2, 17)

A further striking feature of the passage is the constant use of alliteration, apparently as much for its own sake as for any deeper reason connected with the emotive qualities of sounds. This combination of good observation, without any great appreciation of the sights observed is found again in Sidonius' description of Ravenna³⁵ and is rather reminiscent of the practically-minded administrator Rutilius Namatianus as opposed to Ausonius. The detail given about the surface of the lake and the island with its turning point is again more in the spirit of Rutilius' description of the channel at Volaterra³⁶ than of anything in Ausonius:

"a Zephyro plebeius et tumultuarius frutex frequenterque lemborum superlabentum
ponderibus inflexus; hunc circa lubrici scirporum cirri plicantur
simulque pingues ulvarum paginae natant salicumque glaucarum fota
semper dulcibus aquis amaritudo. in media profundum brevis insula, ubi
supra molares naturaliter aggeratos per impactorum puncta remorum
navalibus trita gyris meta protuberat, ad quam se iucunda ludentum
naufragia collidunt." (*Ep* II, 2, 18 - 19)

Some of Sidonius' simplest lines are those to celebrate the gift of two fish

to his brother-in-law which he had caught during a nocturnal angling expedition:

"Quattuor haec primum pisces nox insuit hamis;
inde duos tenui, tu quoque sume duos.
quos misi, sunt maiores; rectissimus ordo est;
namque animae nostrae portio maior eras." (*Carm.* XXI)

For once simple feelings are couched in equally simple language, which adds to the attractiveness of the lines. Such outdoor occupations were not only common but also considered fit subject for literature among the Gallo-Roman aristocracy and Sidonius and Ecdicius seem to have taken part at least in their youth.³⁷ That Sidonius believed hunting to have been an important activity for the well-bred is clear from the section of panegyric devoted to Avitus' fondness for both boar-hunting and falconry during his youth³⁸. For Sidonius, as for Rutilius and Ausonius, it is probable that this penchant for outdoor sports and the time spent upon them may have partly led to their observation and appreciation of nature and subsequent use of it in their writings.

As suggested above, Sidonius sometimes allows his passion for word play and undoubted abilities in this direction to run away with him, producing effects which jar on the ear of the modern reader. The craze for alliteration has already been mentioned and we may quote another example of it, in this case of the letter 'p' in the description of the senators Gennadius Avienus and Caecina Basilus:

"hi in amplissimo ordine seposita praerogativa partis armatae facile
post purpuratum principem principes erant." (*Ep.* I, 9, 2)³⁹

The tendency to play on the same word, manifest here, or on similar words, is another frequent characteristic:

"annum pande novum consul vetus ac sine fastu
scribere bis fastis; quamquam diademate crinem
fastigatus ..." (*Carm.* II, 3 - 5)

This example comes close to punning, an activity which brought out either the best or worst in Sidonius according to one's tastes. Among the more obvious examples we may cite the following:

"quantum doluisti campos sepultos ossibus insepultis!" (*Ep.* III, 2, 1)

"(Ravenna) facilius territorium potuit habere quam terram." (*Ep.* I, 8, 3)

Finally there is the example of rather black humour describing Arvandus' tenure of office:

"praefecturam primam gubernavit cum magna popularitate
consequentemque cum maxima populatione." (*Ep.* I, 7, 3)

This is not to say that Sidonius is never successful with his devices. One

of his descriptions of Ravenna is quite vivid:

"cum sese hinc salsum portis pelagus impingeret, hinc cloacali pulte
fossarum discursu linternum ventilata ipse lentati languidus lapsus
umoris nauticis cuspidibus foraminato fundi glutino sordidaretur,
in medio undarum sitiēbamus, quia nusquam vel aquaeductuum liquor
integer vel cisterna defaecabilis vel fons inriguus vel puteus
inlimis." (*Ep* I, 5, 6)

The alliteration of the letter 'l' to suggest the lapping of water is of course conventional, but at least apposite here, while the point about being thirsty while surrounded by water is a neat paradox.

The city of Ravenna exercised Sidonius' wit on more than one occasion and one of his most amusing letters is that to Candidianus, in which he makes the imperial capital out to be entirely topsy-turvy:

"in qua palude indesinenter rerum omnium lege perversa
muri cadunt aquae stant, turres fluunt naves sedent, aegri deambulant
medici iacent, algent balnea domicilia conflagrant, sitiunt vivi natant
sepulti, vigilant fures dormiunt potestates, faenerantur clerici Syri
psallunt, negotiatores militant milites negotiantur ..." (*Ep* I, 8, 2)

Although some of this is obscure, a number of neat jokes are made, such as those about the thirsty living and the floating dead. Doctors are attacked again elsewhere:

"medicorum consilia vitamus assidentum dissidentumque, qui parum docti
et satis seduli languidos multos officiosissime occidunt." (*Ep* II, 12, 3)

Although Sidonius' sense of humour is sometimes rather ponderous, he is nevertheless able to appreciate the humorous side of his art, as in his poem to Magnus Felix.⁴⁰ This piece consists of what must be an elaborate joke built on the rhetorical convention of not mentioning certain notable events:⁴¹

"Non nos currimus aggerem vetustum
nec quicquam invenies ubi priorum
antiquas terat orbitas Thalia.
non hic antipodas salumque rubrum,
non hic Memnonios canemus Indos
Aurorae face civica perustos ...
... Non hic Cecropios leges triumphos,
vel si quo Marathon rubet duello ...
... Non vectos Minyas loquente silva
dicam Phasiaco stetisse portu." (*Carm* IX, 16 - 21, 38 - 39, 65 - 66)

This convention having been a favourite of Cicero, we may mention here Sidonius'

swipe at the orator, who was forever on his feet:

"desudatam varicosi Arpinatis opulentiam
loquacitatemque." (Ep V, 5, 3)

This constant striving for new effects sometimes produces outlandish results. The concept of turning ploughshares (or rather scythes) into swords⁴² is an attractive antithesis of an old theme but another intended rhetorical flourish in this same poem about Avitus goes sadly awry:

"tandem prorumpit et arma,
arma fremit, pinguisque etiamnum sanguine fertur
lorica, obtusus per barbara vulnera contas
atque sub assiduis dentatus caedibus ensis." (Carm VII, 260-63)

One might have expected these remarks about the blunt lance and the notched sword to arouse laughter rather than admiration, so bathetic is the impression on our ears. Again, the play on Oedipus' different relationships with Jocasta and his children is rather forced and black-humoured:

"patris extincti thalamis potietur adulter,
frater natorum, coniunx genetricis habendus,
vitricus ipse suus." (Carm XXII 97-99)⁴³

Finally here one might wonder whether it is really a compliment to a man to say that he speaks Latin like an inhabitant of the Subura, which was normally considered to be an area of doubtful repute:

"o, sodes, quotiens tibi loquenti
Byzantina sophos dedere regna,
et te seu Latialiter sonantem
tamquam Romulea satum Subura." (Carm XXIII, 233-36)

The "learned" reference here seems to reverse the intended meaning.

This last passage brings us to a few brief remarks on Sidonius' use of the Latin language. The use of *sodes* there seems to be for *sodalis*, springing from a misunderstanding of the old comic word (*si aud*e*es*). *Latialiter* is a fifth century coinage, one of many in Sidonius' work, a number of which are unique to him.⁴⁴ The use of *de* by Ausonius has already been commented upon and Sidonius provides further examples of this word's development towards French:

"namque iniquitas mea tanta est, ut mederi de lapsuum eius assiduitate
vix etiam tuae supplicationis efficacia queat."⁴⁵

All in all, therefore, it seems that the rhetorical machine was finally grinding to a halt, as much through old age as for any other reason. Not only was the range of effects being exhausted, but their purpose was lost, as we have seen in the case of alliteration. This, rather like assonance in the Middle

Ages became the rule rather than the literary device which it had been before.

Sidonius was himself a great influence on the Middle Ages as a model especially for description. The extended portrait which he composed of Theodoric's appearance and life-style⁴⁶ was particularly well-known in this respect (see Appendix). He is in many ways a transitional figure between the two periods, much as his life spanned the ending of the Roman empire in the West. His use of natural description, his stressing of the virtues of *Roma* and its influence, his displaying of friendships and his literary style demonstrate him to be in the footsteps of Ausonius, as does his seeking for and delight in worldly honours. Other aspects of his work and his ending as bishop tend to place him in the world which was to follow that of Rome.

Sidonius Apollinaris and the end of Roman Gaul

1. Paschoud, op. cit. p. 328.
2. Loyer: *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'Esprit Précieux en Gaul* p. 154.
3. Storoni: *Galla Placidia*, p. 119.
4. Jerome: *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum episcopum* 8, quoted by Paschoud, op. cit. p. 95.
5. e.g. C. E. Stevens: *Sidonius Apollinaris and his age*; A. Loyer: *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule aux derniers jours de l'Empire*; (henceforth, Loyer, *L'esprit*) H. Rutherford: *Sidonius Apollinaris. L'homme politique, l'écrivain, l'évêque*.
6. A. Loyer: *Sidoine Apollinaire I. Poèmes*, p. XI, n. 2. (Henceforth: Loyer *Budé I.*)
7. Stevens, op. cit. p. 25.
8. Loyer, *Budé I*, p. XI.
9. *Carm.* VII, 214-29; 347 ff.
10. Loyer, *Budé I*, p. XX.
11. Stevens, op. cit. pp. 205-07; cp. Loyer, *Budé I*, p. XXII, opting for 471: although the same author, *Budé II*, p. XV argues for 470.
12. The family held bishoprics in the area into the next century. Sidonius' own son Apollinaris became bishop of Clermont in 507 or perhaps just after, as he fought at Vouillé in that year. His relative Alcimus Avitus was bishop of Vienne at this time, having succeeded his own father in 490. Raby, *Christian Latin Poetry* (2nd ed.) p. 78.
13. *Ep* VIII, 9, 5.
14. All quotations are from the edition by Anderson in the Loeb Classical Library.
15. *Ep* I, 2.
16. Loyer, *L'esprit*, p. 52.
17. Châanée: *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 47 (1969) p. 372.
18. *Ep* I, 7, 5.
19. Stevens, op. cit. p. 19.
20. *Ep* I, 7, 1.
21. *Ep* V, 13. The words used of him include *belua*, *ballaena* and *draco*.
22. *Ep* V, 13, 1.
23. *Ep* II, 1, 2.
24. Loyer, *Budé II*, p. XVIII
25. *Ep* I, 11. cf. Stevens, op. cit. p. 52 ff.

26. Euric had refused to replace deceased catholic bishops in a number of sees, *Ep VII*, 6, 7.
27. *Ep VIII*, 2, 1.
28. *Carm XIII* suggests that the tax on the city itself, as opposed to the province, was not raised immediately, but presumably was soon afterwards.
29. *Carm V*, 56-349.
30. This is the reading of the manuscripts but Loyen *Budé I*, p. 46 is probably correct to accept the emendation Pirustes, unless the mistake is Sidonius'.
31. *Carm XXII*, ep. 6.
32. Pliny, *Ep II*, 17; *V*, 6.
33. Pliny, *Ep V*, 6, 32 ff.
34. *Ep II*, 2, 3.
35. *Ep I*, 5, 6 ff.
36. Rutilius Namatianus, *DRS I*, 453 ff.
37. *Ep III*, 3, 1 (Ecdicius); *IV*, 4, 1 (Sidonius).
38. *Carm VII*, 187-206.
39. The fad is perhaps at times an unconscious one. There is, for example, little justification for the alliteration in the initial words of his invitation to Ecdicius, *Carm XX*.
40. *Carm IX*.
41. Sidonius also uses the convention in a straightforward manner, e.g. *Ep III*, 3, 7.
42. *Carm VII*, 411.
43. Gide's mind ran on similar lines. His Créon speaks thus: "Ne plus savoir s'il est ou mon beau-frère ou mon neveu." (*Oedipe III*).
44. Loyen: *L'esprit* p. 145 cf. *Ep IV*, 1, 4, where three compound adjectives (*paludicola*, *Caucasigena*, *equimulga*) all hapax legomena, occur in two lines.
45. *de* is apparently used for *ex* in *Ep V*, 5, 2: "quasi he harilao vetere novus falco prorumpas."
46. *Ep I*, 2.

Chapter 17

The Celtic Strain

It is clear that certain characteristics of the work of these men from Late Roman Gaul are unique in Latin literature. Natural description in particular seems to play a greater part than in the work of earlier Roman writers. Aside from this, we may also mention the tendency to catalogue poetry (especially where Ausonius and Sidonius are concerned) and the possibly connected points of an increase in the personal content of their work and the greater part which people and the description of people play in it.

The question of the origin of these peculiarities is one which requires investigation; one does not normally think of Ausonius and his successors as innovators, certainly not willing ones, and so it is reasonable to assume that they are writing in some kind of tradition, perhaps one native to Gaul. The origins of all three of the writers in this study¹ are known to be Gaulish, Ausonius, at least on his mother's side, from the Celtic aristocracy, Sidonius from a very well established family around Lyon and Rutilius to a father who had preceded him to a high place in the imperial service from beginnings somewhere in Southern Gaul, where Rutilii are found in several areas. It seems certain, therefore, that they were all brought up with a Gaulish background, and it must therefore be a possibility that their writings stem partially, admittedly also at some remove, from some Celtic tradition of which no trace now survives.

It is an unfortunate fact that no Celtic literature from Gaul survives whatsoever and, indeed, even the evidence for the language itself, mostly in inscriptions, is scanty. Other aspects of Celtic culture which manifested themselves in this period do survive, however, which should allow us at least to consider the possibility of such a source for the literature. A number of features, artistic and religious, can be taken into account.

The first field in which the revival of Celtic art, dubbed the "Celtic Renaissance", has been noticed is that of pottery, where the Samian ware, itself originally modelled on Italian Arretine ware, was displaced by pottery from the Argonne Forest (and in particular from the centres of Trier and Rheinzabern) decorated in indigenous styles.² The technique of wheel-moulding used for this pottery was also pre-Roman. First appearing in the mid-second century, these wares made great inroads after about 275 A.D., completely displacing Samian ware from Northern Gaul, Germany and Raetia, while also becoming increasingly similar to *terra nigra* and other older native styles. The flood of barbarians entering the country in the third quarter of the century had been fatal to the great *officinae* of the north-east, which had depended on the army stationed on the *limes*, a market which had now disappeared.³

The importance of this change is commented on by Hatt: "c'est dire que la poterie gallo-romaine, dès les débuts de la crise, et telle que nous pouvons la connaître par des découvertes préfigure déjà celle du IV^e siècle, à laquelle elle doit être rattachée."⁴

Nor is the evidence confined to pottery, for a similar return to earlier styles is also found in sculpture. "For illustration we may turn to the rendering of hair, in portraiture, which the La Tène artist almost drew upon stone, by combing straight lines back from the forehead, in a fashion found occasionally in the earlier Empire, and very commonly in the later Empire."⁵ The Celtic use of facing animal heads in heraldic position was also revived. In metalwork too, a return to an earlier style of decoration can be seen, for example on two pieces of harness decoration from Autun which are dated to the third century, but which recall the patterns of the pre-Roman era.⁶ In general, various old Celtic motifs, such as the S symbol, wheel and swastika reappear in Gallo-Roman art, probably continuing into the Merovingian period.⁷

Returning to the pottery of the period, this exhibits another piece of evidence for the decline of Roman influence, apart from that of design and technique, namely that the graffiti to be found on it, at least in the northern part of Gaul, shows a marked increase in potters' names of Gaulish origin, rather than the Roman *tria nomina*.⁸ Indeed, the number of native names found doubles in Lyon, Metz, Reims and Langres and even quadruples in Autun from the second century onwards. Some cities also undergo a change of name back to one of tribal (hence Celtic) origin in the later Empire (e.g. Lutetia > Parisii).

As for religion, matters are rather complex. First it should be observed that Roman religion was syncretic in that it attempted to reconcile and identify existing local deities with those of the traditional pantheon. While this procedure undoubtedly assisted the establishment of Jupiter and other divinities in Gaul, it did not eliminate their predecessors so that, as the Roman hold weakened at any time, the earlier deities might be expected to reassert themselves. As far as can be ascertained, the native gods begin to re-emerge as a force in the middle of the third century, even before the beginning of the major invasions,⁹ with Teutates being particularly prominent. In the fourth century, the following correspondences are attested from a gloss on Lucan: Jupiter = Taranis, Mars or Mercury = Esus, Mercury or Mars = Teutates.¹⁰ The Druidic class also reappeared in the third century and continued into the fourth to judge from Ausonius' comments about the family of the rhetorician Attius Patera.¹¹ The names Phoebicius and Delphidius held by members of his family are significant because of their

references to Apollo, in whose temples the Druidic cults seem to have continued (perhaps under the cover of the official cult), both being concerned with prophetic medicine and divination.¹²

It is probable that in the areas least affected by Romanization, such as the Vosges, Massif Central, Normandy and Brittany, the old cults had never really been seriously affected, especially among the conservative peasantry. Although it is difficult to tell from Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* the exact nature of the cults against which Martin was fighting at the end of the fourth century (references are often simply to a *fanum* or *templum*), on at least one occasion a Celtic tree deity seems to have been the victim.¹³ It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Celtic culture was alive, albeit often under a Roman veneer, in some parts of Gaul, particularly away from the long-civilized Provence.

As for Celtic literature, if any existed it has perished as we have already observed. Its composition may well have been oral in any case, as was much Celtic lore and learning, which was possessed by the Druids and died with them.¹⁴ Indeed it is not impossible that the passion for memory evinced by Ausonius and his circle is a result of this long Gaulish tradition. Because of the oral nature of learning and literature, we should not be surprised that there was no literary composition during the third century, for there was no medium of expression available. Latin was the only language in which literature could be composed and it was only with the return of relative calm and prosperity in the fourth century that one could expect to find composition on any scale. It was the return of education then which provided the immediate catalyst.

Written Celtic literature does survive from other areas, however, and some of that from Ireland and Wales is early enough in date to have been largely uninfluenced by any Continental Romance tradition. It is to this poetry which we must turn if we are to gain any insight at all, even at one remove, into the now lost literary ideas of the Continental Celts.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of Celtic poetry, particularly in comparison with works in Greek or Latin, is a greater emphasis on nature and the outside world. Yet, as we have seen, one feature of the work of the authors in this study is a tendency towards natural description which differentiates them from their literary antecedents, whom they otherwise follow all too slavishly. Comparisons between the work of Ausonius and other writers from Gaul and the works of Celtic writers in Wales and Ireland are difficult because of the different languages involved as well as the gulf in time between the two sets of work.

With this borne in mind, let us examine two short pieces of Irish poetry which deal with birds:

"The skilled lark calls
I go outside to watch it
that I may see its gaping beak
above against the dappled cloudy sky"¹⁵

"The little bird has given a whistle
from the point of its bright yellow beak;
the blackbird from the yellow-tipped bough
sends forth its note over Loch Laoigh"¹⁶

The second of these pieces is reminiscent of the passage in which Sidonius describes the various noises made by animals and birds around his villa,¹⁷ while both may be compared with Ausonius' poem about the birds sent for his son's dinner table:

"Qualis Picenae populator turdus olivae
clunes opimat cereas
vel qui lucentes rapuit de vitibus uvas,
pendetque nexus retibus,
quae vespertinis fluitant nebulosa sub horis
vel mane tenta roscido
.... tum, quas vicinae suggessit praeda lacanae,
anites maritas iunximus,
remipedes, lato populantes caerula rostro
et crure rubras Punico."

(*Ep.* XVIII, 1-6, 11-14)

Although there is a difference in emphasis, in that the Irish view of nature seems to be divorced from man and his influence, while in Ausonius' work the poet's own presence is more obvious, the general tone of the pieces is similar. The treatment of the birds shows certain similarities in the use of colour in the descriptions, with the use of specific colours being typical of Celtic poetry,¹⁸ and also in the picking out of some anatomical detail.

In respect of the description of actual natural surroundings, as are to be found in the *Mosella*,¹⁹ similar passages are to be found in Welsh literature:

"After a space of the day they left the wood, and came to an open plain, and there were meadows on one side of them, and mowers mowing the meadows. And they came to a river before them, and the horses bent their heads and drank the water."

(*The White Book Mabinogion*)²⁰

It is on account of such "Celtic" subject matter in certain parts of his work that Ausonius uses a number of words of Celtic origin in his writings. The Gaulish fish names which are found in both the *Mosella* and the *Epistulae* would probably have had to be used by any writer on the subject, but it is improbable that any Classical writer would have attempted such compositions. To this extent the vocabulary of the *Mosella* and of other works certainly point to a Celtic influence in Ausonius' background.

Prior to Ausonius' work there is very little evidence for any Celtic influence on poetry in Gaul. The short poem by Tiberianus, praetorian prefect in Gaul²¹ in the first half of the century, may however point in this direction:

"Amnis ibat inter arva valle fusus frigida
 luce ridens calculorum, flore pictus herbido.
 caerulas superne laurus et virecta myrtea
 leniter motabat aura blandiente sibilo.
 subter autem molle gramen flore adulto creverat:
 et croco solum rubebat et lucebat liliis,
 et nemus fragrabat omne violarum <sub> spiritu"

(1 - 7)

In comparison with the *Mosella* the description is admittedly rather flat and lacking inspiration, but it is worth mention as a possible forerunner of Ausonius' work.

Apart from their use of nature, a second feature of the Latin writers in this study is their tendency to introduce personal feelings into their work to a greater extent than their predecessors had done. The description of what one sees is one aspect of this of course, as is the expression of one's thoughts and the harping upon friendship, indeed the very introduction of one's friends into one's published work. Although one does not find anything similar in the work of early Irish or Welsh authors, the characteristic may nevertheless have Celtic origins. A collection of poems such as the *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* of Ausonius especially by its juxtaposition with the *Epitaphia heroum qui bello Troico interfuerunt* has something of a cult feel to it. Similarly the reason for Sidonius' inclusion of many different addressees among his published letters is surely that this preserves their names for posterity. Older Gaulish religion had of course been notorious for its cult of the head as the essence of a man and Irish and Welsh literature are full of hero tales, so perhaps the concentration on the person in the fourth and fifth centuries is a manifestation of an intermediate stage between these two. The point can hardly be pressed, however.

A further point about the description of people also arises. As Chadwick has observed,²² there is a marked similarity in method of description and in general feel, as opposed to detail, between one of Sidonius' descriptions and a number to be found in Irish heroic sagas. Sidonius writes of Sigismer:

"illum equus quidem phaleris comptus, immo equi radiantibus gemmis onusti antecedeabant vel etiam subsequebantur, cum tamen magis hoc ibi decorum conspiciebatur, quod cursoribus suis sive pedisequis pedes et ipse medius incessit, flammeus cocco rutilus auro lacteus serico, tum cultui tanto coma rubore cute concolor."

(*Ep.* IV, 20, 1)

As Chadwick notes, the contrast of three colours is a commonplace in Irish and Welsh literature.²³ She quotes two passages for comparison with Sidonius:

"Long, curling and golden was his hair Proud and glowing were his eyes, blue and clear as crystal. Like to the foxglove of the mountain was each of his cheeks. You might fancy that a rain of pearls had fallen into his mouth, and that his lips were twin branches of coral. White as the new fallen snow of the night was his neck, and such was the fashion of his skin."

(*The Courtship of Ferb*)

"A maiden yellow-haired, curly-haired
With hawk-like, blue-starred eyes.
Like foxglove are her dark-crimson cheeks.
To the hue of snow I liken the range of her faultless teeth.
Her coral-red lips are radiant."

(*The story of Deirdre*)²⁴

It is of course possible that this particular style of description found in the Irish *retorics*, may have resulted from Gallic influence, by way of those learned men who had fled from Gaul to Ireland in the face of the barbarian invaders.²⁵ However, this does not help us in our quest for the origins of Ausonius' and Sidonius' material. It is nevertheless significant that the fleeing rhetors should have chosen to head for Ireland as a place of compatible (not just Latin, therefore, but also Celtic) culture.

The evidence points therefore clearly towards the existence of some kind of link between Celtic literature and the secular Latin literature of Gaul at this period. There had been an undoubted revival of Celtic styles in the plastic arts from the third century onwards and a re-emergence of Celtic religious practices at approximately the same time. Because of the

non-literary nature of the Celtic language, there was apparently no manifestation of Celtic ideas in written form at this period: the expression of the Celtic love of nature and of description in general had to await the return of Latin literary composition, via the schools, to find a medium of expression.

Notes

1. I exclude the anonymous *Querolus*, as we know nothing of its author and furthermore, because of its very nature, its content is not relevant to this discussion.
2. Macmullen: *Historia* XIV (1965), p. 96.
3. Hatt: *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 1949, p. 121.
4. Hatt: *op. cit.* pp. 121-22.
5. Macmullen: *op. cit.* pp. 96-97.
6. Armand-Calliat: *Gallia* 13 (1965) pp. 84 ff.
7. M^Ale: *La fin du paganisme en Gaule*, p. 308.
8. Macmullen: *op. cit.* p. 100.
9. Hatt: *Celtes et Gallo-Romains*, p. 277.
10. Hatt: *Celtes et Gallo-Romains*, p. 271.
11. Ausonius, *Prof.* IV, 7ff.
12. Hatt: *Celtes et Gallo-Romains*, p. 300.
13. Sulpicius Severus: *Vita Martini* XIII, i.
14. Caesar: *De Bello Gallico*: VI, 14, 3ff.
15. Jackson: *Early Celtic Nature Poetry*, p. 5 (undated)
16. Jackson: *op. cit.* p. 10 (ninth century)
17. Sid. Ap. *Ep.* II, 2, 14.
18. esp. vis-a-vis Greek or Anglo-Saxon poetry. cf. Jackson, *Celtic Miscellany*, p. 169.
19. e.g. *Mos.* 163 ff.
20. Quoted by Jackson, *Celtic Miscellany*, p. 177.
21. Jerome, *Chron.* s.a. 335.
22. Chadwick ed: *Studies in Early British History*, p. 236-37.
23. Chadwick ed: *op. cit.* p. 236 n. 3.
24. cf Jackson, *Celtic Miscellany*, p. 49 for another translation.
25. Chadwick: *op. cit.* pp. 237 ff.

Chapter 18

Gauls or Romans

"L'Empire est quelque chose, et l'Empereur n'est rien"

(Corneille, *Attila* I, 2)

In the last chapter we saw how the authors under discussion display various characteristics in their work which can more readily be attributed to native Gaulish influence than to any Roman one. The crucial question thus arises whether they should be thought of as Roman authors at all, or as Gaulish writers who happen merely to be using Latin (i.e. the Roman language) for their works, for want of any alternative.

In itself, the use of this, by now largely artificial,¹ language might be considered an important part of the answer (why should Gauls employ a foreign tongue?) except for this lack of an alternative; no other language in Gaul, least of all the nascent Gallo-Roman patois, was in any way fixed in orthography, let alone suitable for literary uses. However dead as a spoken language Latin might have become by, say, the age of Sidonius, it was still an indispensable means of communication, especially for letters, even if this were at the level of a shared foreign language.

Some artificiality of language was perhaps inevitable among writers in Gaul after the troubles which lasted for most of the third century and which must have made cultural development precarious. It was not just the Latin language, however, which these authors employed in their works, but much of the heritage of Latin literature as well, particularly that part central to the school curriculum. The Golden Age of Latin literature, which formed a large part of the material used in the schools, combined its high artistic standard with a consciously patriotic stance which may also have had its influence. The concept of *Roma Aeterna*, everlasting Roman power, is common to all three of our Gaulish authors and forms a major motif in their work. For example, the whole of Rutilius' poem, and more particularly the beginning of each book, consists of a celebration of Rome and Italy.

Ausonius sums up his attitude and probably that of many provincials in one line:

"Prima urbes inter, divum domus, aurea Roma"

(*Ord. Urb.* I)

Rome in this ideal guise is a running theme in his work from the *Actio Gratiarum* with its emphasis on the Roman nature of his consulship,² even though he probably never went anywhere near the city in his life, to the celebration of Roman civilisation (albeit in a Gaulish context) that the *Mosella* contains.

For Sidonius of course it was no longer a question of celebrating the Roman civilisation of Gaul, but of desperately trying to preserve it as it disintegrated around him. In his official works, the panegyrics, he could paint a fairly optimistic picture of the truth, portraying Rome as potentially strong, although currently sleeping;³ he must certainly have come to know otherwise during the sieges of Clermont-Ferrand and it says something for both his determination and his faith in Roman rule, as opposed to the barbarian alternative, that he could persuade his people to hold out for so long. Similarly enthusiastic was his promotion of the use of Latin⁴ and of literature,⁵ upholding Roman civilisation on a different level.

The author of the *Querolus* probably thought in similar vein, for his play makes a bold attempt to reintroduce Roman comedy, a largely lost literary form, and, coincidentally, to spread knowledge of Plautus.

But perhaps more than anything else the careers of these authors, as far as we know them, demonstrate their views on the preservation of the Roman civilisation in Gaul. Even if we allow that Ausonius had probably little real option as regards his entry into the imperial service as a royal tutor, the same cannot be said of Rutilius Namatianus or Sidonius Apollinaris. The first named fulfilled his aristocratic obligations as regards holding office and then seems to have been prepared to work for his native land's recovery,⁶ while the latter defended his town for Rome against the Visigoths beyond all reasonable expectations and certainly with greater vigour than the central government deserved.

The underlying patriotism in these men cannot be disputed but its precise nature is something which we must discuss. To this point we have considered it in terms of a belief in Rome and its Empire, but in reality things are not this simple. The patriotism of these men is two-layered, perhaps even multi-layered, in that their attachment to Rome is matched, possibly even outweighed, by one to Gaul or to an area even more restricted than this. Rutilius' return from his beloved Rome to Gaul illustrates this as do a number of literary points.

Ausonius' work is the most fruitful in this respect. The *Mosella*, itself the portrayal of a Gaulish river, has already been discussed at some length and mention has been made of the fact that Ausonius brings his local *patria* of Bordeaux into the poem on a rather surprising number of occasions, even closing the poem with the name of the Garonne, the river on which Bordeaux stands. Similarly the *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* concludes with a poem on the subject of Ausonius' native city, placed modestly, but climactically, in last position. The conclusion is instructive:

"utque caput numeri ROMA inclita, sic capite isto
 BURDIGALA ancipiti confirmet vertice sedem.
 haec patria est: patrias sed Roma supervenit omnes,
 diligo Burdigalam, Romanam colo; civis in hac sum,
 consul in ambabus; cunae hic, ibi sella curulis."
 (Ord. Urb. XX, 37-41)

Here Ausonius is stating his own patriotic creed, one based on both local and world values, and emphasized by the close association of his two *patriae* in the penultimate line. Finally, if one needs any further example of his local patriotism, one only has to turn to the *Professores*, the memorial of local schoolmasters, whom he clearly feels deserve greater fame than just that available in the memories of their former pupils. The fact too that a number of these men had found fame by travel, either to or from Bordeaux, is also significant for our knowledge of Ausonius' viewpoint. He is evidently in favour of the cosmopolitan nature of education achieved by freedom of movement, an unusual luxury at this period,⁷ which clearly required the maintenance of widespread Roman rule for its continuation.

By the middle of the next century, as we have seen reflected in Sidonius' work, the situation had changed. There was now a strong school of thought which believed that Gaul should declare its independence from Italy and carry on alone or possibly reach an accommodation with the Visigoths and Sidonius may be assumed to be addressing such people with the "Gaulish" section of his panegyric on Majorian,⁸ a poem which may be viewed in its entirety as a plea for unity among the various peoples of the Empire against their common enemies. This international approach does not mean, however, that Sidonius has no feeling for his native land, as we can see from his deeds as bishop. He is more interested in the preservation of Clermont-Ferrand within the Roman fold than in any abstract ideal of total unity, believing that civilisation as he knew it, and including the Christian dimension, could only be preserved by the continuation of Roman hegemony.

To sum up then, the problem is multi-faceted. On the one hand, the works of all our authors contain a Celtic and, more precisely, a Gaulish element, both in terms of inspiration as well as content, the end result perhaps of the cultural isolation of Gaul for much of the third century, which manifested itself in a return to native motifs in art; on the other hand they are not independent of Latin literature, following in a tradition going back at least as far as the Augustan Empire. The near mania for literary production which emerges in the work of Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris (both on their own behalf and also in their encouragement of others such as Axius Paulus, Burgundio⁹ and even Theon) is further

proof of a cultural tie to something wider than Gaul.

Now that we have established in what context these authors were writing, we can make an attempt to assess their achievements. It is neither correct nor just to dismiss the literature of the Later Empire as mere effusions from the schools of rhetoric; it is hard to see how any writer in the "pagan" tradition could have hoped to be read at all if he abandoned all the stylistic points, such as echoing or emulating earlier authors, alliteration and word-play, which he had so carefully learned. Therefore, even if we do not appreciate much of this side of our authors' literary production, we should at least try to understand why it is present and what it meant to the ancient readership.

Fortunately we can also be more positive. As we have seen, Ausonius in particular often achieves something fresh in his work, whether it be his use of natural description or his portrayal of his own emotions in his work. Rutilius and Sidonius (at least outside the panegyrics) are also very personal writers, being willing to allow their own thoughts and opinions to pervade their work. Furthermore, the originality of these authors should not be forgotten. There is nothing else in Latin literature which can be closely compared with the *De reditu suo*, *Mosella* or *Parentalia*, to name but three works. In a similar way, the writer of the *Querolus* brought a largely new dimension to Latin comedy with his introduction of matters of current interest into his work.

It is to these positive aspects of their work that one should look when attempting to evaluate it. To judge these authors by the standards prevailing in an earlier age does them no service. They could not write like Vergil or Plautus because they were not writing under similar conditions. Viewed against the background of the end of the Roman Empire, their achievements were, as I hope to have shown, substantial.

Notes

1. Lot: *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* Vol. 6 (1931) p. 129 speaking of Sidonius in particular.
 2. esp. *Act. Grat.* III.
 3. Sidonius: *Carm.* V, 61.
 4. Sidonius: *Ep.* IV, 17.
 5. *Ep.* IX, 14.
 6. *De reditu suo* I, 19-30.
 7. Hopkins: *Classical Quarterly* 11 (N.S.) (1961) pp. 239-48.
 8. Sidonius: *Carm.* V, 208 ff.
 9. Sidonius: *Ep.* IX, 14.
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Appendix

The origins of the medieval method of describing people

It is a stock characteristic of medieval literature that a description of a person will normally run from head to foot.¹ That this was the case was acknowledged by the writers themselves, to the extent of instruction being given in the method by technical writers such as Geoffroi de Vinsauf. As an example of this downwards description we may quote from *Le Roman de la Rose* the remarks about the character Deduiz:

"Deduiz fu biaux et lonc et droiz:
ja mes entre gent ne vendroiz
ou vos veez nul plus bel home.
La face avoit, con une pome,
vermeille, et blanche tot entor;
cointe fu et de bel ator;
les ieuz ot vers, la bouche gente,
et le nés bel par grant entente;
cheveus ot blons, recercelez;
par espauls fu auques lez
et grailles par mi la ceinture."
(799-809)²

Indeed the topos was so well-known, not to say hackneyed, as to lend itself to burlesque as in the following passage from the humorous thirteenth century French work, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, in which the description of Nicolette includes parts of her anatomy customarily omitted:³

'Ele avoit les caviaus blons et menus recercelés, et les ex vairs et rians, et le face traitice, et le nes haut et bien assis, et le levretes vremelletes plus que n'est cerisse ne rose el tans d'esté, et les dens blans et menus; et avoit les mameletes dures qui li souslevoient sa vesteure ausi con ce fuissent deus nois gauges; et estoit graille par mi les flans qu'en vos dex mains le peusciés enclorre etc."⁴

What I wish to discuss here are the origins of this method of description.

As Faral noted,⁵ Geoffroi de Vinsauf, who was active in about 1210, wrote in his *Documentum de Arte Versificandi*: 'Si tamen affectatis prosaica, recurrere ad secundam epistulam Sidonii,⁶ ubi describit regem Theodoricum quantum ad habitum corporis, quantum ad mensam, quantum ad ludam, quantum ad alia'. (II, 2, 10) As the letter in question is far too long to quote here in its entirety, I shall restrict myself to giving merely Sidonius' account of Theoderic's facial features:

"geminos orbes hispidus superciliarum coronat arcus; si vero cilia flectantur, ad malas medias palpebrarum margo prope pervenit. aurium legulae sicut mos gentis est, crinium superiacentium flagellis operiuntur. nasus venustissime incurvus. labra subtilia nec dilatatis oris angulis ampliata. pilis infra narium antra fruticantibus cotidiana succisio."

(*Ep.* I, 2, 2)

Although it is true that this description is unparalleled because of the detail given, both in terms of physical characteristics and also moral character and habits, it is not the first such to occur in Latin literature. As far as can be ascertained, however, this method of description does appear to be a Gaulish phenomenon, for the first manifestation of such a portrait seems to occur in the works of Ausonius, writing in the preceding century. Although only a few lines in length, and therefore lacking the detail of its successors, I think that the characteristic progression from head to foot is in no doubt:

"Sic certe crinem flavus niveusque lacertos
caesariem rutilam per candida colla refundis,
pectore sic tenero, plana sic iuncea alvo,
per teretes feminum gyros surasque nitentes
descendis, talos a vertice pulcher ad imos."

(*Ep.* XIV, 44-48)

As the description is part of a comparison between Ausonius' rustic friend Theon and Adonis, we should not assume that it is written with any great concentration on accuracy, in contrast perhaps with Sidonius' portrait of Theodoric, which, although probably flattering, was certainly intended to be an accurate one.⁸

As we do not seem to be able to go back beyond Ausonius among Latin sources for this method of description and both Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris wrote in Gaul, it is not unreasonable to consider the possibility that the ultimate source may lie in a native Celtic tradition. Of course, we possess very little written in the Celtic languages native to Gaul before or during the Roman period and no literature whatsoever, so the methods of description used by the Gaulish bards cannot be known for certain. We are able, however, to examine the literature of medieval Wales and Ireland, works written before the influence of mainstream European literature became dominant there.

From Ireland we have one particularly good example of the genre, the description of Édaín the fairy:

"She was loosening her hair to wash it, and her arms were out through the opening at the neck of her dress. Her upper arms were as white as the snow of a single night, and they were soft and straight; and her clear and lovely cheeks were as red as the foxglove of the moor. Her eyebrows were as black as a beetle's wing; her teeth were like a shower of pearls in her head; her eyes were as blue as the bugloss; her lips as red as vermilion; her shoulders were high and smooth and soft and white; her fingers were pure white and long; her arms were long; her slender long yielding smooth side, soft as wool, was as white as the foam of the wave. Her thighs were warm and glossy, sleek and white. Round and small, firm and white, were her knees. Her shins were short, white and straight. Her heels were even and straight and lovely from behind."⁹

The use of colour is perhaps the only feature which distinguishes the passage from many similar ones written on the Continent some three hundred years later. Although it is possible that this convention of description came to Ireland with the fleeing Gaulish *literati*,¹⁰ it seems to me to be at least as likely that it was common to both the literature of Ireland and that of Gaul.

In either case the conclusion seems inescapable that this method of description originated from a native tradition among the Celtic peoples, first coming to prominence among the Latin writers of the late Empire from where it was passed into the mainstream of the Medieval European heritage.

Notes

1. Although not always; cf Marie de France, *Lanval* 559 ff, which works up to the head.
2. The text is from the edition by Lecoy, Paris 1970. cf also the description of Oiseuse, *ibid.* 522 ff.
3. Geoffroi de Vinsauf *De poetria nova*, 594 discusses what it is proper to include in one's descriptions.
4. *Aucassin et Nicolette* (ed. Roques, Paris 1936) sect. XII. The method is also put to humorous use by Vital de Blois, *Geta* 332 ff.
5. Faral: *Les arts poetiques du XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, p. 271.
6. i.e. Sidonius, *Ep.* I, 2.
7. Auerbach: *Literary Language and its Public*, London 1965, p. 196-97. Sidonius provides other such descriptions, such as the probably imaginary portrait of Gnatho in *Ep.* III, 13, esp. sect. 6 ff.
8. The description is composed in answer to a friend's request, *Ep.* I, 2, 1.
9. Trans. K.H. Jackson, *Celtic Miscellany* p. 181-82, from a ninth century original.
10. Chadwick: *Studies in Early British History* p. 237 ff. for details of this immigration.

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I have excluded from this bibliography items of only peripheral interest, which appear in their proper place in the notes.

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