

**Prudentius` *Contra*
Symmachum,
Book II
Introduction, Translation
and Commentary**

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the work in this thesis is my own except where otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted previously at this or any other university.

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Abstract

Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum* contains a refutation of Symmachus' plea for the retaining of the altar of Victory in the Senate house at Rome which had been removed in 357 and then, after its restoration, probably under Julian, was removed again in 382. Symmachus made a plea for its return in 384 in his *Relatio* 3. Ambrose wrote two letters (*Ep.* 17 and 18) urging the emperor to reject Symmachus' plea. It is not certain whether the altar was ever returned to the Senate house. It was this debate with Symmachus which Prudentius sought to portray in verse. This he does in the second book of the poem which is the book to be considered here. The first book while mentioning Symmachus, is a routine attack on the pagan gods of Rome and an account of how paganism was overthrown by the emperor Theodosius resulting in Rome adopting Christianity.

There has been much debate over whether the two books were conceived as a single composition. This issue is examined again and the conclusion is reached, by a study of the text, that, while Prudentius had it in mind to produce a work of anti-pagan polemic as part of his compendium covering various aspects of Christian life, the work was produced as a whole in 402. It is argued, following ideas expressed by Döpp, that part of Prudentius' aim was to celebrate a Christian concept of victory which would replace the cult that Symmachus had defended. I also examine the relationship between Prudentius and the works of Claudian to show how if not in opposition to him Prudentius was at least attempting an *aemulatio* which put current events in a Christian perspective.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine the second book of Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum* and by a close consideration of the text to resolve some of the issues raised by recent research on the poem.

When I started this project I was not aware of another major commentary on this poem but as I began I became aware of the commentary by Giovanni Garuti on both books, published in 1996. I have taken account of his observations in writing this commentary. As Garuti's work covers both books I hope that my commentary on only the second book is able to go into matters somewhat more deeply. My method was to look at the poem and reach my own conclusions about its purpose and significance. I then investigated the secondary literature and have included insights I found there. In using German articles, I was helped by my tutor, Professor Philip Van Der Eijk who has provided me with a synopsis of the main points.

By close study of the text I have tried to provide an understanding of the relationship of this poem to the rest of his output, and to other late antique Christian and pagan literature, especially with regard to Claudian, the most eminent Latin poet of the age. Many times in the commentary I draw attention to passages which appear to echo Claudian either through verbal or structural similarities. Although most of these parallel passages have been noted by others and especially Bergman in his 1926 edition, I have not found a systematic analysis of their significance and this I have sought to do. It is well-known

that Prudentius often alluded to earlier authors and the significance of these passages is also examined.

I hope thus to provide an appreciation of the poem which was not available until now. I believe that the key to understanding its purpose is to keep in mind Prudentius' intended audience. In so doing I seek to show that questions about the unity and date of the poem as a whole, which have been much discussed in recent decades, can be resolved.

1) Prudentius: his life and work

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens offers us an outline of his life and career in the *Praefatio* (1-3, 24) to his collected works. He says that he is writing in his fifty-seventh year and that he was born in the consulship of Salia¹. As this was in 348, we can say that the preface was written in 404 or 405 depending on when his birthday was and how far into his fifty-seventh year he was when he composed it. He speaks of an education in rhetoric (8-9) and then a career in the law (13-15) before he was twice a city governor (16-18) and he was finally given an unspecified imperial honour which he calls *stare in ordine proximo* (21). This can be taken to mean that he was made a *comes primi ordinis*²: the emperor Theodosius was fond of relying on his fellow Spaniards in positions of influence³. Now in his retirement he has taken to writing poetry as a form of penance for his misspent years (36). That he is Spanish is assumed from references in the

¹ Flavius Salia *Mag. Equ.* 344-348 *cos* 348 Cf. *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire Vol. I* (ed. A.H.M. Jones) Cambridge 1971 p. 796

² cf. Thomson (1949) viii

Peristephanon: Bergman summarises the evidence⁴. Cunningham⁵ draws attention to Prudentius' account of how certain personal difficulties were overcome by prayer at the shrine of the martyr Cassian on his way to Rome (*Per.* 9.1-8, 101-05). This is all the biographical information we find in his works.

The poems of Prudentius are arranged under seven titles with an additional preface and epilogue to the whole collection. The *Contra Symmachum* is the only one of the titles written in hexameters to contain two books.

2) Dating of the *Contra Symmachum*

In book two, Prudentius speaks about Stilicho's battle against Alaric at Pollentia but he makes no mention of the later battle of Verona between the same opponents. Thus it is reasonable to assume that the poem was completed between the two battles. Garuti⁶ suggests that it may have been completed after the battle of Verona as there would not be much time otherwise between the two battles to write the poem. Pollentia is generally held to have taken place on Easter day 402 and Verona in the summer of 402 or possibly

³ Matthews (1975) 132-36

⁴ cf. Prolegomena ix,x. At *Per.* 2.537-540 speaking of the Roman martyr, Lawrence, Prudentius writes *nos Vasco Hiberus dividit/binis remotos Alpibus/trans Cottianorum iuga/trans et Pyrenas ninguidos*, from which it can be deduced he is Spanish. His precise town of origin is more difficult to decide as he calls three towns *nostra*: Tarraco (*Per.* 6.143), Calagurris (*Per.* 4.31) and Caesaraugusta (*Per.* 4.142). Bergman weighs the evidence and thinks Caesaraugusta (modern Saragossa) is the most likely to be his native town. Whichever of these three towns it was they are all in the Pyrenees region of Spain.

⁵ Cunningham (1976) 56.

⁶ *op. cit* p. 25

403⁷. Prudentius invites Honorius to hold a triumph in Rome (C.S. 2.731ff), something which he did in the autumn of 403, staying there until July 404⁸. If Prudentius wrote the *Contra Symmachum* for a Roman audience, it is unlikely to have been read in Honorius' presence for the reasons noted by Harries below. It also seems rather odd, despite Garuti, that Prudentius would have resisted the opportunity to mention the victory of Verona, if only very briefly. For these reasons, I would suggest that it was written and published before Honorius' visit to Rome⁹. Symmachus' death in 402¹⁰ could also have been a spur to his writing the poem: maybe Prudentius' words about fearing to face Symmachus' oratory were more than just literary convention and that he chose to write only when Symmachus was dead or at least gravely ill.

3) The issue

The *Contra Symmachum* is concerned with the dispute over the altar of Victory in the senate-house in Rome. There was also a statue of Victory, which was not involved in the controversy. After the battle of Actium, Augustus had this statue, which had been captured by the Romans at Tarentum¹¹, placed in the entrance to the Curia of the Senate. Before it was placed an altar at which every senator was expected to burn a few grains of incense before taking his place in the hall¹². Every year on the 3rd of January the senate made their vow of loyalty to the emperor and prayed for his health and for the well-being

⁷ Barnes (1976) 375-76 argues for the summer of 403. Hall (1988) proposed 403 as the year of both battles but his arguments have been refuted by Cesa and Sivan (1990) who argue for both taking place in 402. For a discussion of the issue cf. Dewar (1996) xlii-iv.

⁸ cf. Dewar (1996) xliv

⁹ For a discussion of the date of publication cf. p. 13.

¹⁰ Cf. p.7 below

¹¹ Dio Cassius 51, 22, 1-2

¹² Suet. *Aug.*35

of the empire¹³. These ceremonies continued without a break until the *adventus* at Rome of Constantius II in 357. Although he filled vacancies in the pagan priesthoods¹⁴, he also saw fit to have the altar removed from the Curia. After he left Rome, it was eventually replaced. There is no evidence of when. Although the emperor Julian had no great interest in the traditional cults of Rome¹⁵, his brief reign may have provided the opportunity for such a restoration. The prefecture of the pagan activist Praetextatus at Rome in the years 367-68 would be another likely occasion given that he was known to have restored the temple of the *Dei Consentes* and demolished private buildings which had cluttered up temple precincts¹⁶. Valentinian must have been happy for it to remain, but Gratian in 382 ordered its removal¹⁷. It was after this incident that Symmachus was despatched to Milan by pagan senators to plead for the restoration of the altar, although Gratian refused to see him¹⁸. In 383 Gratian died and, after the eastern Augustus, Theodosius, put down the usurper Maximus, he was replaced by the 12 year old Valentinian II, another son of Valentinian I. In 384 Symmachus was sent on the same mission as two years before and this time he was allowed to speak before the young emperor. The speech on this occasion is preserved as his third *Relatio*. Ambrose wrote his *Epistula 17* to the emperor to state Christian objections to any restoration. Once he had seen the text of the third *Relatio*, Ambrose wrote his *Epistula 18* rebutting Symmachus' arguments. Ambrose persuaded Valentinian not to restore the altar. In *Ep.*

¹³Boissier.G. *La Fin du paganisme Paris* (1891) cited in the Lavarenne (1948) p.85 n. 4

¹⁴ *Sym. Rel.3.7 replevit nobilibus sacerdotia* of Constantius.

¹⁵ cf Beard, North and Price (1998) 373. Smith (1995) 169-178 says that Julian took the opportunity to promote the traditional Roman gods when it was useful, although he did have an interest in promoting the cult of Cybele.

¹⁶ O'Donnell (1979) p.68 for references

¹⁷ Ambrose *Ep.* 17.5,16

¹⁸ Symmachus *Rel.* 3. 20

57.4-6, written to Eugenius, he tells of two more delegations to do with pagan worship, made to the emperor. One was to the emperor Theodosius when he was in Milan but this too was rejected. Barnes dates this to between 389 and 391¹⁹. A further appeal to Valentinian in 392 was followed quickly by the young man's death and replacement by the usurper Eugenius who, although a Christian, realised he needed the help of the powerful pagan senators. Ambrose says that after refusing twice, Eugenius gave way on the issue of making restitution to the temples²⁰. In the account of the pagan revival at Rome under Eugenius, given by the *Carmen contra Paganos*²¹, many cults are listed as being revived²² but nothing is said about the altar of Victory. A life of Ambrose written by a deacon, Paulinus of Milan, supplies more information in that he tells how Eugenius gave way to a delegation headed by the prefect Flavianus and the count Arbogast, which asked for the restoration of the altar of Victory and funds for pagan ceremonies.²³ As for Symmachus, he was careful not to be involved in supporting Eugenius²⁴. A final embassy of Symmachus to the emperor is mentioned in his letters for 402²⁵. As he arrived back in

¹⁹ Barnes (1976) 383

²⁰ Ambr. *Ep.* 57.6

²¹ This is to follow the traditional identification of the prefect of Rome mentioned in the poem as being Nicomachus Flavianus who was prefect of Italy under Eugenius. Matthews (1970) defends this identification against the suggestions of Manganaro that it is about Pompeianus, prefect of Rome in 408. Ruggini, in 1979, argued for Praetextatus as the addressee. (Cf. Beard, North and Price (1998) 386.n.59.)

²² E.g. the festivals of Cybele and Attis were revived (cf. 103f) as were the Megalensian Games (107) and the Floralia (112-13).

²³ Paulinus of Milan *Vita Ambrosii* 26. Cited in Croke and Harries (1982) 51.

²⁴ cf Matthews (1975) 243-44.

²⁵ Barnes (1976) p.382 lists letters of Symmachus which refer to this mission of 402 where he related a request of the Senate to the emperor (cf Seeck (1933): 4.9, 4.13 (to Stilicho); 5.94-96 (to Helpidius) and 7.13-14 (to his son). Symmachus says that his journey was demanded by *communis patriae sollicitudo* (5.95) Barnes writes: "*Prudentius presents Symmachus as requesting Honorius to restore the altar of Victory: it may be deduced (I submit) that the Senate's requests concerned the restoration of pagan cults*" *ib.*

Rome in bad health and produced no letters after this, it is assumed that he died about this time²⁶. Some have taken this to be a last plea by Symmachus for the restoration of the altar of Victory and have thus given the *Contra Symmachum* a contemporary context, assuming it was Prudentius' reply to the renewed request²⁷, but I agree with Harries²⁸ who rejects the idea as none of the letters mentions a request of a religious nature and one of them mentions that the embassy was to Stilicho as well as Honorius²⁹. She takes this as a hint that it was not a matter of religion Symmachus was going to discuss, as Stilicho showed no interest in these questions, but was more concerned with military matters. Thus the evidence is mixed as to whether the altar of Victory continued to be a major issue after 384. While on the one hand we have reason to believe it may have been restored under Eugenius, mention of it is notably absent in other sources speaking of religious issues at the time. That it was not as great a symbolic issue as we might assume is shown by the absence of any reference to the controversy in either Jerome or Augustine. It is particularly odd that Augustine makes no reference, given that he was in Milan in 384.

Throughout this period it seems that the statue of Victory remained in place and as such was not considered to be a problem. Claudian, writing in probably at the end of 403, speaks of it as being in the Senate house in his day³⁰.

²⁶ Seeck *op.cit* LXXII-LXXIII

²⁷ Barnes (*loc. cit*) has revived this idea but he points out that it can be traced back to A. Puech in *Prudence. Étude sur la poésie latine chrétienne au IV^e siècle* (1888) 194ff and was taken up by D. Romano in *Carattere e significato del contra Symmachum* (1955).

²⁸ Harries (1984) 82-83

²⁹ Symmachus *Ep.* 4.9 cf. Harries *loc.cit.* n. 66. Cf. Döpp (1980) who also rejects the idea of the poem as a live polemic.

³⁰ *adfuit ipsa suis ales Victoria templis*

Romanae tutela togae : quae divite penna

patricii reverenda fovet sacraria coetus (*VI Cons. Hon* 597-600)

4) The purpose for Prudentius writing the *Contra Symmachum*

The issue here is whether the poem is considered to be part of a renewed polemic in 402 over the old issue of the altar of Victory or whether Prudentius has another reason for writing his poem. This will involve some discussion of the relationship between the first book of the *Contra Symmachum*, which is an attack on the pagan gods in general, and the second book which focuses on the third *Relatio* of Symmachus, as this may offer insights into an understanding of the whole work which will throw light on its intended purpose. To deal with this issue it will be easiest to address the second point first before reaching conclusions on its nature.

5) The relationship between the two books of the *Contra Symmachum*

There are two basic possibilities in considering these two books. The first is that they were written as a unity and published as such, while the second is that they were written some years apart and finally put together as one poem although the first book may have been published some time before the second. The difficulty is that the first book speaks of the folly of pagan religion and how the emperor Theodosius cleansed Rome of these ancient superstitions. Thus, although it speaks of the danger of Symmachus' eloquence, it has nothing to say directly about the dispute over the altar of Victory. While Symmachus is introduced at 622 as a defender of pagan rites, Prudentius acknowledges at the beginning of the second book when he says that, having spoken of the origins of paganism he will now review the arguments of Symmachus, that, so far, he has not dealt

with these arguments. Since the second book could largely stand alone as a *Contra Symmachum*, it has led commentators to suggest that book one was originally an earlier poem on the follies of Rome's traditional religion and the banning of pagan cult by Theodosius which Prudentius has recycled to form the first half of this poem against Symmachus.

a) The separatist thesis

This argument was advanced most notably in recent times by Harries (1984) and Shanzer (1989)³¹. Harries acknowledges that this idea was first put forward in 1883 by A. Faguet.³² She sees the problem as being one of the conventions of panegyric. It is her conviction that Prudentius is writing a panegyric of Theodosius in book one and that it would have been unacceptable to have published a panegyric of a dead emperor in the lifetime of his successors. She writes:

The key point in the argument is that, if the two books appeared together as we have them in 402, complete with their two prefaces, the poem as a whole would almost certainly have caused offence at the imperial court. In so sensitive an area as the treatment of the emperors, not to mention the reigning *principes* at all before the opening of Book II was an error of tact surely to be avoided by even the most unconventional of poets"³³.

Harries thus assumes that the poem was a panegyric of a kind to be read in the presence of the emperor Honorius. If this was the case, then the point she makes is unanswerable

³¹ For a useful list of previous articles arguing for a separatist thesis with a brief summary of their conclusions cf. Gar. p.24 n.12.

³² *ibid.* p.74 A. Faguet *De Aurelii Prudentii Clementis carminibus lyricis* Bordeaux 1883 p.24-26

although it still leads to the difficulty of why, even if book one had been published originally in 394 as she concludes, would there still not have been the offence she speaks of if it was re-issued in 402 together with book two. I think the problem can be overcome if we see the poem as containing elements of panegyric but not conceived of as to be read before the emperor but as a part of a collection of verse for private consumption by Christians, thus removing the need for Honorius to be offended by his omission from book one³⁴.

Shanzer (1989) identifies certain passages in book one which could not have been written in 394 but must come from as late as 399³⁵. Her conclusion is that Prudentius wrote parts of book one as a panegyric to Theodosius but had no time to publish it between the battle of Frigidus in September 394 and his death in January 395, but worked the fragments into what became book one. This theory does not avoid the difficulty, raised by Harries, of producing a poem which praised the former emperor, while making no reference to the current one until book two although she writes: "It is senseless to speak of a date of a publication for *c.Symm.1* other than 402/3 when it appeared joined to *c.Symm.2*"³⁶. In fact, Shanzer is rather vague about whom she thinks the audience for the poem is meant

³³ Harries (1984) p.75

³⁴ Döpp (1986) takes issue with Harries and sees the poem as belonging to the tradition of Christian apologetic. It is in this tradition but as I shall seek to show it is more of a homage to Christian apologetic for a Christian readership than a work which is meant to convince a non-Christian.

³⁵ She identifies the phrase *Amphitheatrali spectacula tristia pompae* (*C.S.* 1.385) as an echo of Claudian's *Amphitheatrali faveat Latonia pompae* (*Manl.Theod.* 293) which in itself is borrowed from Martial's *Amphitheatrales inter nutrita magistros / Venatrix, silvis aspera, blanda domi / Lydia dicebar* (*epigr.* 11.69.1). She deduces that Prudentius borrowed from Claudian rather than the other way round as Claudian retains the link with a female hunter, which Prudentius omits. As the Claudian work is dateable to 399 then this part of the *Contra Symmachum* must date from after that. (cf. *op.cit.* 456-57.)

to be, saying only that her *proto-c.Symm* 1 was maybe written for Theodosius as he owed him a favour for being promoted by him³⁷. Shanzer's analysis provides useful information to show that the whole of book one could not have been in existence in 394 but I believe that the question of Prudentius' audience is vital to understanding the nature of the poem.

Another argument for the separatist position concerns Prudentius' statement that it is dangerous for him to step out of the safety of silence to combat Symmachus (*C.S.* 2 *Praef.* 44). Harries says: "Prudentius talks about his project as a departure from the safety of silence.....This could hardly apply if Prudentius had already spent a book attacking the *oratio* and reinforces the idea that only the second book was designed to be against the oration of Symmachus and that the first was written at a different time and for a different purpose."³⁸

As this remark occurs in the preface, it presumes the existence of the preface to book one as the prefaces form a pair and so were presumably written at the same time. From its context as part of the second preface, we have to assume the existence of the first preface too and thus book one in its final form. Shanzer admits this could be a point in favour of a unitary composition.³⁹ I take Prudentius to mean that he is stepping out of silence now, despite the existence of book one, because now he will take on directly the arguments of

³⁶ *ibid.* 457

³⁷ *ibid.* 459

³⁸ Harries *op. cit.* p. 79

³⁹ Shanzer comments: "These lines (i.e. regarding *tuta silentia*) are a strong argument either for a separate publication of a different version of *c. Symm.* 1, or for unitary publication of the whole." cf. *op.cit.* p.446.

Symmachus⁴⁰. Shanzer says that one cannot say that book one is *silentium*,⁴¹ but certainly there is a *silentium* there regarding the third *relatio* of Symmachus. Garuti⁴² takes the silence simply to refer to Prudentius' silence on this issue over the years in a general way. I think this is a reasonable assumption.

b) The unitarian thesis.

Döpp (1980), Charlet (1986) and Garuti (1996 pp. 24-25) put forward arguments for the whole work having been conceived as a unity and produced in 402. This is my conviction too. Charlet sums up his argument thus:

L'architecture rigoureuse de l'ensemble que constituent les deux livres exclut l'hypothèse d'une rédaction ou d'une publication séparée du premier livre. Le deuxième livre est la suite nécessaire du premier, puisqu'il a pour objet de réfuter les arguments du dernier représentant du paganisme.⁴³

Charlet demonstrates this by setting out the structure of the two books: he notes that the first book has discussed pagan theology according to the tripartite division of Varro of the theology of the poets (42-163), political theology (164-296) and natural theology (297-407) before presenting in contrast the figure of Theodosius who puts an end to paganism and sees Rome convert to Christianity (408-631). Prudentius then introduces Symmachus as the representative of the pagan cause. Then book two then sets about refuting Symmachus' arguments. Thus there is an overall unity to the work which suggests that it was conceived as such to begin with.

⁴⁰ Döpp (1986) p.72 makes this point too.

⁴¹ *ibid.* pp. 445-46

⁴² p.166 n 44

⁴³ *op cit.* p.381 and p.382

Barnes⁴⁴ has made two suggestions regarding its publication and unitary nature. In 1991, he suggested that there could have been a proto-*Contra Symmachum* dating from 384⁴⁵ (although as the work now exists, it must date from 402) at the end of an article where he seeks to identify the members of prestigious Roman families mentioned in book one as converting to Christianity and concludes that they were active around 376-383. On the other hand the whole of book two relies on the Roman victory at Pollentia to illustrate Prudentius' point that the empire can still be victorious under Christianity. A book two produced in 384 would have been deprived of this major point of proof which sustains so much of Prudentius' argument.

In 1976 Barnes had advanced the idea that Prudentius published the *Contra Symmachum* twice, once in 402/3 without the prefaces and then again as part of his complete works in 405 with the prefaces. He thinks the prefaces were only added at the second publication, as the second interrupts the flow of the argument. The first book ends by saying that it is long enough (656-57) whereas the second immediately begins by saying that Prudentius has spoken of the origins of the pagan gods and how their cult spread but now he will deal with Symmachus' arguments in detail. I do not see how the preface interrupts the flow here. After the preface, book two begins by refreshing the reader's mind as to the topic of the first book and introduces the theme of the second. Barnes also thinks it reasonable to assume that the embassy of Symmachus of 402 was connected with a renewed plea for the restoration of the altar of Victory. This has been discussed above⁴⁶. I believe that there is no compelling reason to say that this is so. He dismisses the prefaces from the 'original publication' because they are designed for purely Christian audiences

⁴⁴ Barnes(1976)

⁴⁵ Barnes and Westall 1991 p. 61

whereas he says the hexameters are aimed also at pagans. The evidence from Claudian, who also precedes many but not all of his hexameter poems with such prefaces, does indicate that prefaces, as one might expect, were written after the main poem and thus Prudentius may have added prefaces to the *Contra Symmachum* after the hexameters were completed, but I am not convinced by Barnes that he published the poem without them at all. In the preceding section I mentioned that the passage about moving out of silence to confront Symmachus suggests that there is a link between the second preface and the structure of the poem as a whole. The question of Prudentius' intended audience will be discussed below. Barnes is convinced that the poem can be given a context of a lively debate resulting from a pagan revival. Recent work on the nature of the pagan revival under Theodosius and later emperors suggests that it does not deserve the reputation historians have given it although that is not to say that people at the time did not think it was important⁴⁷. It is true that there was a flow of anti-pagan legislation down to 451 which indicates that paganism as such was still identifiable but it is questionable whether it posed a threat to the Christianisation of the empire. In 423 an edict proscribed grave penalties for violence against pagans or their property⁴⁸, so it would seem that the existence of pagans was not in itself a threat to the state. As Prudentius was a committed Christian, it may well have been that any appearance of a pagan revival was seen by him as a threat, but linking his poem to any specific major pagan revival seems more difficult if pagan revivals really amounted to very little.

⁴⁶ Cf. p.3 above

⁴⁷ cf. O'Donnell (1978) and (1979)

⁴⁸ For details of legislation cf. Geffcken (1920) 223-25.

A further point is made by Charlet⁴⁹ and García⁵⁰ that if Prudentius had written an anti-pagan polemic in 395 or whenever, which became book one of the present poem, it is strange that he did not attack Symmachus and the third *Relatio* on that occasion. This point is strengthened when one considers that in C.S. 2.1-4, Prudentius says that he is now going to refute Symmachus word for word (*dictis dicta*). This indicates that the purpose of the first book is not to polemicise against Symmachus' *Relatio* but to give an historical setting. Döpp draws an interesting parallel with Claudian. He cites the *In Rufinum* which is also composed in two books⁵¹. The first book gives the background and allows Claudian to show that Rufinus is guilty of treason while the second depicts the action of Stilicho against Rufinus who is eventually killed. The first book of the *Contra Symmachum* does, as Döpp points out⁵², see the reign of Theodosius as ended.⁵³ Döpp sees a similar process in the two books of Claudian's *In Eutropium* and the three books on the consulship of Stilicho. Thus Prudentius can be said to have been following a similar structure here in that the first book paints the background while the second deals with the heart of the matter.

⁴⁹ Charlet (1986) 382.n36

⁵⁰ García (1996) 107

⁵¹ Döpp (1980) p.79; (1986) p.74

⁵² (1986) p.70

⁵³ Cf. C.S.1. 9-21. After this, Prudentius uses the present tense in describing Theodosius (36-38). The question of the alternation between past and present tenses is treated by Harries (*op. cit.* 74-75) who concludes that overall they allow no conclusions to be drawn as to the date of the poem. However if Prudentius was writing in book one when Theodosius was alive then it would be ridiculous for him to have used the past tense about him.

c) Conclusion

An overview of Prudentius' output leads to the conclusion that he was attempting to provide a compendium of poetry which covered the major poetic styles and many aspects of Christian life so as to provide a worthy literature for Christians comparable to that of the pagan past⁵⁴. Exactly how closely structured this is has been debated recently⁵⁵. However, the *Contra Symmachum* is the poem in this collection which is devoted to attacking paganism just as he had attacked other enemies in the form of heresies: in the *Apotheosis* he attacked a range of Christian heresies and in the *Hamartigenia* the second century Christian heretic Marcion. The *Contra Symmachum* also sees Prudentius set out a Christian political theology as Cacitti argued⁵⁶. Cacitti calls Prudentius the Eusebius of the West in trying to formulate an imperial Christianity⁵⁷. As Döpp argues⁵⁸, the battle of Pollentia provided the opportunity for Prudentius to formulate his ideas on the victory of Christianity and Christianity's contribution to the victory of Rome. The debate over the altar of Victory thus provided a peg on which to hang this. It may have been the case that Prudentius had in mind much of the content of book one as part of this compendium but there is no evidence that it was published as a separate work.

The need to find a contemporary response to a possible renewed appeal by Symmachus in 402 to restore the altar of Victory recedes when it is considered that other polemical Christian works were written long after the original attack was made. Apart from

⁵⁴ This was a trend started with Iuvencus and his hexameter version of the Gospels. Cf Evenepoel (1993) 48-60 on the growth of Christian literary poetry.

⁵⁵ cf. Bastiaensen (1993) pp.108-113

⁵⁶ Cacitti (1972)

⁵⁷ *ibid.* 408

Prudentius' own other controversial attack, on the long dead Marcion⁵⁹, the *Hamartigenia*, Origen composed his *Contra Celsum* eighty years after Celsus wrote his *True Doctrine* in 170 and Cyril of Alexandria wrote his *Contra Iulianum* in approximately 440 when Julian had died in 363. Prudentius' attack on Marcion is not as systematic in opposing *dicta dictis* as the second book of the *Contra Symmachum*. He has two interventions by Marcion (H.111-123 and 640-649) which he seeks to refute but Marcion's works only survive in quotations in his opponents' works so it is not possible to say whether Prudentius had in mind any particular work of Marcion.

It is also worth noting that Prudentius has a section (1064-1103) ridiculing the Vestal Virgins, whose position had been abolished well before 402⁶⁰. I believe that the *Contra Symmachum* was conceived as a unity and as part of his overall project of compiling a collection of Christian verse. It was not a response to any serious threat to the place of Christianity in the empire but Prudentius' versification of what had been a well worn Christian *topos* (the folly of traditional Roman paganism) followed in the same spirit by

⁵⁸ (1986) p.79 Döpp compares Prudentius taking his inspiration from Pollentia to Augustine's writing of the City of God after the sack of Rome in 410.

⁵⁹ Lavarenne (1948 p.90) makes the point that Prudentius only attacks old heresies. Cf also Casini (1957 p.516) who makes the same point.

⁶⁰ The actual date for the ending of the cult of Vesta is not clear. The *OCD* (cf. Vesta, Vestals) says it was abolished in 394. Symmachus says that the state subsidies to the Vestals were abolished in 382 but he writes in 385 of the Vestals setting up a statue to Praetextatus (cf. n.1064) so they seem to have survived as a college even without subsidies. Zosimus has a story about the wife of Stilicho, Serena, being abused by the last of the Vestal Virgins for taking a necklace from the statue of Cybele in the Palatine temple (5.38.3). The problem is that he places this incident during the fictional visit of Theodosius to Rome in 394 after the battle of Frigidus. It is possible that he could have been thinking of Theodosius' visit to Rome of June 389. Cf. Ridley (1982) p.202 n.153 and Paschoud (1986) p.263-266 n. 88. Paschoud believes that 389 is the most likely date for this event as it would be unlikely that the cult image of Cybele would have survived with her adornments at the other possible date for this incident he suggests of 408-409. Either way, the last of the Vestals was an old woman in either 389 or 394 and so the cult had clearly ceased to function long before 402.

the setting out in verse of a celebrated incident in the debate between Christianity and paganism. The poem, unlike the rest of Prudentius' output, contains references to contemporary events, notably the battle of Pollentia, which gave him a verification of his thesis that Christianity was the destiny of Rome and that once she had accepted this faith her well-being was assured. Thus I believe that Prudentius had in mind an anti-pagan work but the victory at Pollentia provided the opportunity to discuss the idea of victory and so to include Symmachus' famous defence of the pagan cult of Victory.

6) Audience of the *Contra Symmachum*

Harries makes the point that if the *Contra Symmachum* is a panegyric of Honorius, then it would cause grave offence in that, unlike other examples of contemporary panegyric, it does not mention the reigning emperor until its second book. My response to this point is to ask whether this poem can be taken as a panegyric and thus to ask questions about its genre and its audience.

The prefaces are designed for a Christian readership who would be familiar with the stories about Paul and Peter, which they relate from the Bible. In the body of the poem Symmachus and pagans in general are addressed directly (l. 57 *desine, si pudor est, gentilis ineptia*). Elsewhere God is addressed (l. 634) as is the emperor Honorius (l. 758, 1115), the Roman army (*miles* in l. 31) and the city of Rome (l. 61 *ditissima Roma*). So, while the poem itself has a number of addressees, the prefaces make clear that the audience is a Christian one. The address to the emperor which concludes the poem may make one think that there must be something of a panegyric here but would not a

panegyric be even more offensive and unusual if it addressed many other people as it went along? A parallel may be drawn with Vergil's first *Georgic*, which is not a panegyric but which has a large variety of addressees including Augustus.

In other works Prudentius addresses or rather apostrophizes, adversaries. In the *Hamartigenia* his opponent is the long-dead Marcion, whom he addresses as if he were alive (e.g. *H.56 haec, tibi, Marcion, uia displicet*). In the *Apotheosis* he addresses a number of heretics and Jews. It thus appears to be part of Prudentius' style to address figures from whom he does not expect a response. The difference with the *Contra Symmachum* is that the appeal to Honorius to ban the gladiatorial shows at the end of book two is undoubtedly contemporary and suggests that the poem is intended to be seen by Honorius too.

However this appeal by Prudentius could simply be an example of the poet praising his subject for something he had already decided to do, a device not unknown in Latin poetry⁶¹. The gladiatorial games had first been abolished by Constantine in 325. This must have been ineffective: a law was passed for the abolition of the state gladiatorial schools in 399. Gladiatorial games were again abolished in 404. Thus we cannot exclude the possibility that Prudentius' call for the end of the gladiatorial games was made with the expectation that, given the direction of imperial legislation, this was going to happen anyway and that even this appeal may only have been an apostrophe.

Given that the rest of Prudentius poetry seems to be for a Christian audience, and given the indications from the prefaces to the *Contra Symmachum* that the same is intended here, I see no reason to think that here we have a radically different poem to the rest of

⁶¹ cf Nisbet-Hubbard (1978).3-4

his output. It is likely that the *Contra Symmachum* could have been produced for a readership in Rome⁶², given the details of senatorial families in book one⁶³ and the invitation to Honorius to hold a triumph in Rome, which he speaks of as *huc*⁶⁴.

7) Genre

Cunningham has written of the *Contra Symmachum*: “Surely the classical tradition offers no parallel for a composition of this form”⁶⁵. Cunningham goes on to show how much of Prudentius’ output breaks new ground in terms of genre. Prudentius wrote four works in the form of a hexameter poem preceded by a preface in a non-dactylic metre⁶⁶. The only parallel for this form is found in Claudian, about half of whose poems are composed in this way. However, while most of Claudian’s works are panegyrics or invectives, book two of the *Contra Symmachum* has elements of both in that it attacks the arguments of Symmachus (while insisting on his great abilities) and praises Stilicho and the emperors Honorius and Arcadius. As noted (n.33) Döpp sees it as belonging to the tradition of Christian apologetic, a category which is not confined to any particular literary genre⁶⁷ but which Prudentius makes use of in this poem where he uses a number of the stock Christian responses to pagan criticisms, most especially in book one. In that it offers teaching on the nature of the soul and the way of salvation offered by Christianity, it

⁶² cf. Cunningham (1976) 57-58

⁶³ C.S.1. 551-65

⁶⁴ C.S.2.732 *huc Christo comitante ueni*

⁶⁵ Cunningham (1976) 59

⁶⁶ This is counting the two books of the *Contra Symmachum* as one work.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the nature of apologetic and its relationship to various genres cf F. Young in Edwards, (1999) pp. 90-91 and 103-104 with reference to the Greek Apologists of the second century but the points made there apply to apologetic in general.

shares the nature of didactic poetry and the influence of Lucretius has been seen⁶⁸. Insomuch as it ridicules the pagan practice it contains elements of satire and similarities with Juvenal have been noticed⁶⁹. Thus it is impossible to fit it into any one category⁷⁰, but there is one heading, which is not a genre as such, to which all of Prudentius poetry seems to belong and that is poetry for literary Christians. I have argued above that his verse is not meant to be public in the way that a panegyric would normally be, but it may well have been read to a private Christian audience. In the range of subjects that he covers, Prudentius seems to be setting out to create a body of respectable Christian verse on a wide number of topics of interest to his contemporaries.

8) Sources

Book two of the *Contra Symmachum* clearly has as a major source Symmachus' *Relatio* 3. Another major source is Ambrose's *Ep.* 18. While Prudentius draws on some of Ambrose's ideas, most notably over the issue of human progress, it would be wrong to see the poem as a simple versification of Ambrose's letter. This will be made clear below in the section on the structure of *C.S.2*. It is particularly striking that he does not mention Ambrose by name considering his part in the debate of 384. Apart from these two major sources, Prudentius is notable for the extent to which he uses pagan authors as well as the Bible and earlier Latin Christian writers. In the *Contra Symmachum* the influence of and borrowings from Lucretius, Vergil, Ovid and Juvenal in particular are seen and noted in

⁶⁸ Cf Brakman (1920); Rapisarda (1950)

⁶⁹ Stella Marie (1962)

⁷⁰ Charlet (1988 77-78) sees this 'neo-alexandrian' mixing of styles as a defining feature of late Latin literature.

the commentary as they occur⁷¹. Many of the points Prudentius makes against paganism are found elsewhere in Christian polemical writers such as Tertullian, Lactantius, Minucius and Cyprian, although verbal echoes from these earlier Christian writers do not occur and so Prudentius' familiarity with them is difficult to establish. Among his contemporaries, the influence of Claudian is an interesting issue about which it is worth saying a little more at this point.

Prudentius' work shows the influence of Claudian in terms of its formal structure. However the relationship between the two poets goes deeper than that. Echoes of Claudian can be found in Prudentius, especially in the *Contra Symmachum*, but there is always the possibility that it could be Claudian who is borrowing from Prudentius⁷². However, given Claudian's role at the court of Honorius and Prudentius' relative obscurity, it will be more likely that Prudentius borrowed from Claudian rather than the other way round. In the *Contra Symmachum*, there are numerous borrowings from Claudian which will be noted in the commentary as they occur. Otherwise there are more general similarities, which occur given the common subject matter of the *Contra Symmachum* and the panegyrics of Claudian. Thus Prudentius' passage on the glories of the Roman empire (602ff) finds many parallels in Claudian. Elsewhere Prudentius seems to be following Claudian's train of thought in such a way that we see a similar association of ideas forming in the *Contra Symmachum*. For example, in Claudian's *Cons. Stil.* 3.130ff, there is a sequence which begins with praise of Rome as the mother of the

⁷¹ Charlet (*op. cit.* 76-77) discusses the way that such borrowings and imitations allow a 'cultural dialogue' between the past and present and are a feature of late Latin poetry. Such instances are noted in the commentary as they occur.

⁷² For a discussion cf. Cameron (1970) 472-473.

human race and guarantor of peace, which moves on to describe how Victory greets Stilicho from her temple and then has Diana also greet him and send out her maiden companions to find animals for games in his honour. The ideas here are also very much part of *C.S.2* in that victory is a major theme in the poem and it ends with a discussion of the role of the Vestal virgins and the games. One might wonder what Prudentius' purpose is in paralleling Claudian so closely. Could it be that rather than a *Contra Symmachum*, Prudentius is really more interested in composing a *Contra Claudianum*? Claudian after all was a pagan poet at the court of Honorius and it could be that Prudentius was seeking to provide a Christian alternative to Claudian's pagan account of recent events. If this is not the case, then at least we can say that Prudentius is attempting an *aemulatio* of Claudian. I agree with Döpp, as mentioned above, that the battle of Pollentia was a major influence on Prudentius' decision to write the *Contra Symmachum*⁷³, but having decided to treat the theme of Rome's victory Prudentius' work was inevitably going to be compared to the works of Claudian and especially those that also praised Stilicho and dealt with the same battle. Thus I believe that in seeking to explain how Christianity had favoured the Romans to enable them to preserve their empire, Prudentius must have had the poems of Claudian in mind and so we should look for the ways in which he reacts to Claudian's treatment of the events of Pollentia.

9) Structure

After the preface the poem divides into the following sections.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1. 1-4 | Introduction |
| 2. 5-66 | First restatement of Symmachus (<i>Rel.3.3</i>) and reply by the |

⁷³ Döpp (1986) p.79

emperors.

3. 67-90 Restatement of Symmachus` *Rel* 3.8,9, 10
4. 91-269 The response of Faith to Symmachus
5. 270-369 Progress a good thing (against *Rel.* 3.4)
6. 370-487 Reply to *Rel.*3.8 on the Genius
7. 488-772 Reply to *Rel.*3.9 on pagan cult
8. 773-909 Reply to *Rel.*3.10 on the path(s) to truth
9. 910-916 Restatement of *Rel.* 3.11-13, 15-17
10. 917-1063 Reply to *Rel.*3.15-17
11. 1064-1113 Reply to *Rel.*3 11-13
12. 1114-1132 Plea to end gladiatorial games

It is interesting to compare this structure with that of Ambrose`s reply to Symmachus in *Ep.*18.

1. 1-2 Introduction
2. 3 Setting out of three propositions of Symmachus he will refute.
 - a) Rome needs its ancient cults (*Rel.*3.8).
 - b) Vestals and pagan priests should have state subsidies (*Rel.*3.11-13).
 - c) Famine has arisen because these have been denied (*Rel.*3.16-17).
3. 4-7 Refutation of *Rel.* 3.8
4. 8-9 Refutation of *Rel.* 3.10
5. 10-11 Further refutation of 3.8

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 6. 13-16 | Refutation of <i>Rel.</i> 3.11-13 |
| 7. 17-21 | Refutation of <i>Rel.</i> 3.16-17 |
| 8. 22 | Refutation of <i>Rel.</i> 3.19 |
| 9. 23-28 | Progress a good thing |
| 10. 30 | If old rites of Rome are good, why did the pagans adopt new gods? |
| 11. 31-33 | Are Christians to be forced to attend pagan worship in the Senate? |
| 12. 34-37 | Vicissitudes of life, illustrated by the careers of Pompey, Cyrus, Hamilcar and Julian, who all met a sad end despite their worship of pagan gods |
| 13. 39 | Conclusion |

Thus it can be seen that Prudentius alters the order of Ambrose's answers, omits some points (11 and 12), incorporates some of Ambrose's material on the notion of progress and adds much material of his own.

10) Text

I have used the edition of Cunningham (1966) as my text, despite it having attracted some criticism⁷⁴. Hudson-Williams (1968) in his review of Cunningham's edition notes that it differs from Bergman's on about one hundred occasions but one third of these readings had already been suggested by Thomson and Lavarenne. The main differences occur in punctuation. There are not many textual problems in the *Contra Symmachum*. Garuti provides a less detailed critical apparatus than either Cunningham or Bergman and does at times support Bergman's preferred readings to those of Cunningham. I have used Cunningham, rather than Garuti, as his critical apparatus is much more extensive. Where the major editions of Prudentius all agree on a particular reading, I make no comment.

However, when there is a clash between them, I give reasons for my preferred reading, even if I agree with Cunningham. There are more than three hundred ancient manuscripts of the works of Prudentius. The most ancient are the two which date from the sixth century. The *Puteanus* or *Parisinus* (A) is thought to have been written in the first quarter of the century and is in rustic capitals. However it does not contain the full works and one of those missing is the *Contra Symmachum*. The next oldest is the *Ambrosianus* (B) which dates from the middle of the century and is written in uncials. Unfortunately, it only contains the first eighty-four lines of the second book of the *Contra Symmachum*. Cunningham next identified three main families of manuscripts, which are mainly ninth century. These families are identified as Γ , Δ and Θ which he then identifies by the chief manuscript of each group and so Γ becomes T, Δ becomes E and Θ becomes S. Thus he works with these five main manuscript traditions. It is worth mentioning that Cunningham notes that in *Contra Symmachum* 2, E is often at variance with T and S. There are also times when he considers readings from another fifteen manuscripts which fall outside of the traditions of these five. At times Bergman and Cunningham seem to have read a certain word differently (cf. 714) and on others Cunningham ignores a variant noticed by Bergman (e.g. 668 where Bergman notes the variant *in funere* which Cunningham does not record).

One major point on which I differ from Cunningham is his inclusion of the passages from Symmachus' *Relatio* 3 which occur in all the manuscripts, except two minor ones *H* and *Wid.* (cf. Cunningham 1966 p.xxvi §100). Cunningham includes them in his text on the authority of this unanimous tradition. He notes that Heinsius and other old editions

⁷⁴ Cf. Thraede (1968)

retained these passages but that more recently all other editors dispensed with them as they add little to the text except that they serve as a reminder of Symmachus' words⁷⁵. Cunningham has a point when he says that the prose passage is needed before 649 as Prudentius does not provide a verse version of Symmachus as he usually does. The use of *aptior* means that Prudentius supposes the reader to be familiar with the personification of Rome in Symmachus which he judges to be less fitting than the one he is about to produce.

While Cunningham says that the mixture of prose and verse is not unknown in Latin literature,⁷⁶ he does later say that there is no parallel in the classical tradition for a composition of the type represented by the *Contra Symmachum*⁷⁷ with prose quotations inserted. It is true that we find elsewhere works which are a mixture of prose and verse (e.g. Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, Petronius, and later Boethius' *De Consolatione*) but these are primarily prose compositions with some verse passages: there is no example of a verse composition with some prose passages.

Prudentius does assume the reader has some familiarity with the *Relatio* 3 of Symmachus (cf.C.S.1.648). Furthermore on most occasions Prudentius already paraphrases Symmachus' words so to insert them in prose would make the poem repetitive and clumsy. Another objection to the presence of these passages is that they occur somewhat randomly. At 71 Prudentius gives a verse summary of arguments from sections eight, nine and ten of the third *Relatio*, but there has been no prose passage of Symmachus' own words preceding it: these passages occur before the later treatment of these

⁷⁵ Cunningham (1966) xxvi §100

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

arguments at 370, 488 and 773. Prudentius' paraphrases do contain a certain amount of interpretation to put Symmachus in a worse light than his own words but they generally follow his line of thought. For example at 274-276 Prudentius takes Symmachus' idea that religions which have proved their worth through their antiquity should be preserved and interprets this to mean that Symmachus' is claiming that custom is of more value than justice or truth.

On the specific question of the prose passage before 649 this passage can still be understood without it. Furthermore part of the speech by Symmachus' *Roma* has already been paraphrased by Prudentius at 83-84

Presumably the prose passages made their way into the tradition at an early stage as an *aide de memoire*.

11) Abbreviations

Gar.	Garuti, G.(1996) <i>Contra Symmachum Testo, traduzione e commento</i> (Rome) (unless otherwise stated it is presumed that references to Garuti deal with the line of the poem that is being discussed in the commentary).
Lav.	Lavarenne., M.(1933) <i>Étude sur la langue du poète Prudence</i> (Paris)
L & S	<i>Lewis and Short A Latin Dictionary</i> Oxford (1975 impression)
OCD	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> Hornblower, S. and Spawforth A. (eds) Oxford 1996
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> P.G.W.Glare (ed.) Oxford 1982

⁷⁷ Cunningham (1976) 59

12) A note on the translation

In translating, it has been my aim to try as far as possible to keep to the verse structure and line sequence of the original. This has meant producing a somewhat literal rather than polished style at times.

In using brackets, I have used square brackets to indicate an explicative addition by me and curved brackets for a normal parenthesis.

TRANSLATION

Praefatio

Simon, whom they call Peter
the greatest disciple of God
once, at the end of the daylight
when the golden evening grew red
had drawn up the curved anchor 5
trapping the wind`s blasts in the sails
intending to cross the sea.

Night brought a head-wind
which stirred up the sea from the depths
and shook the storm-tossed boat. 10

The weeping and howling of the sailors
struck the heavens
together with the creaking of the ropes.

There was no hope for those
who were to drown and were almost shipwrecked 15
when that company, white with fear,
saw from afar Christ walking over the water.

It was as if he was walking along the dry
shore on a solid path. 20

While these wonders amazed the rest
of the frightened sailors.

only Peter was not afraid and
recognised the Lord of sky,
earth and the pathless sea 25
who by his omnipotence
treads on the sea with his feet.
Peter stretched out his hands
and asked for the help that he knew.
Christ, however, calmly nodding to him 30
ordered him to leap out of the boat.
Peter obeyed the order
but his soles began to touch
the tops of the waves
and, as he stumbled, 35
his feet slipped and began to sink.
God rebuked the man
because his faith was not secure
and because he was not able to walk on the water
nor to follow Christ. 40
Then, with his right hand, he lifted up the servant.
He stood him up and taught him
to walk on the swelling back of the sea.
Thus a garrulous tongue
carried me from the safety of silence 45

on to uncertain dangers.

I, unlike the disciple Peter,

do not trust in merits and in faith

but many sins toss me, shipwrecked, across the sea. 50

I am very rash

as, conscious of the night and living

in the shadows of life

I do not fear to trust my ship

to the flood of so great a man 55

There is no-one more eloquent than he

as he rejoices, growls, thunders

and swells with blasts of eloquence

It is very easy for him, to sink me

as I am inexperienced in handling a ship, 60

unless you, Powerful Christ,

stretch out a hand with your favourable divine will

so that the onslaught of his eloquence

will not drown me in its flood

but gradually making progress 65

I shall stand on the flowing waters.

So far I have spoken of the earliest origins of the old gods

and the reasons why foolish delusion arose in the world

and how Rome now believes in our Christ.

Now I shall bring together the accusations [that have been made]

and shall refute words with words.

From where, therefore, do they say he began or from which points did he start 5

to influence more, with his alluring skills, the pious affections of our leaders.

Masters in arms and flourishing with the flower of youth

being born in their father's military camp, brought up under the image of their

grandfather

and fired up through the examples of virtue accumulated in their family, the cunning

orator stirs them up as if he was sounding a battle-trumpet, 10

he inflames them, speaking thus

"If victory which has been gained or is still to be gained is

close to your hearts, let the virgin goddess keep her holy temple during your reign.

Is there anyone, unless he is a friend of our enemies, who would deny that she is to be

worshipped with reverence 15

by your imperial power to which she is always close and which she fills with renown?"

When the Senate's ambassador had spoken, the imperial brothers made their calm reply.

"Most eloquent speaker of the Ausonian tongue,

we know how sweet victory is to the brave, but we know by what methods 20

and by what fashion she is to be invoked.

Our father taught us this skill in our youth

and he as a boy learnt it from his father.

Blessed victory does not come through being entreated by altars and
ground grain. Diligent toil, rough courage,

outstanding mental strength, passion, ferocity, careful attention 25
and rude strength in handling weapons are what give victory.

If any of these qualities are missing in those who fight,
although golden Victory unfolds her shining wings in her marble temple
and rises on high, a work of great expense,

she will not be with them and when their spears are turned in retreat 30
she will seem to be offended.

Why, O soldier, distrusting in your own strength,
do you furnish yourself with the useless comfort of a feminine form?

Never did an iron-clad legion see a winged girl
who guided the weapons of panting men .

Do you look for the lady who conquers? It is the right hand of each man 35
and Almighty God, not a wild woman with her hair all combed,
lifted up, with bare feet, wearing a head-band,
and covering her swelling breasts with the flowing folds of her garments.

Either the hands of painters have taught you to create a divinity
with pretended prodigies by poetic licence 40
or the charming art of painting has taken from your little temple
what it has copied with various markings and with liquid wax has made into a thing of
beautiful appearance.

Strengthened by the skill of its ally, poetry, it has

dared to play with coloured paints.

Thus they follow the one path,

45

Homer and sharp-minded Apelles and Numa,

and conceive visions empty of form:

painting, the Muses and idols wish for the same thing.

The threefold power of deception grew strong.

If this is not the case, let it be declared, why do

the poets` tales lend you sacred rites from paintings

50

and wax models?

Why does the Berecyntian priest destroy his mutilated genitals

when poetry has castrated beautiful Attis ?

Why are the horn-footed horses kept away from the temple of Trivia and

the sacred groves, when the Muse in her swift chariot snatched the modest youth

on the shore:

55

a scene a many-coloured wall also represents for you.

Cease finally to imagine spiritual things in false bodies

if you have any modesty, O pagan foolishness.

Cease to cover a human back with feathers:

in vain is it said that a woman is a bird and that the same goddess is a great vulture.60

Do you wish, O wealthy Rome, to adorn your senate?

Hang up the trophies captured by war and blood,

gather together, as a victor, the crowns of slaughtered kings,

break the foul trinkets of rejected gods.

Then the victory which has been gained not only on earth 65

but above the stars will be guarded in the middle of the temple” .

When the princes have spoken these words, he continues

and blows the trumpet with great sounds.

He mentions ancient custom, he declares that nothing is sweeter

than those things which are familiar and that peoples and individuals are 70

bound by their own law. He says “Just as

different spirits fall to children when they are born,

thus the hour and its own day brings to cities,

when at first the walls rise, either its fate or protecting deity

by whose government they rule.”

He adds that the secret nature of things and the hiding place of truth 75

can be discerned by some good fortune through the proofs of favourable good

if those things are propitious which a man tests by trial.

All idol-worship brought happy and

auspicious results for our fore-fathers.

He recounts the weight of long tradition 80

and he stirs up Rome herself shining with white hair and wrinkled brow

demanding back with complaints her gods

“I am free, let me live in my own way.

Will there be anyone who will rebuke me for my thousand years?

We are all given life by the same atmosphere, 85

situated under the one sun with the same air:

there is the same air for all living beings.

But who is God and what is his nature, we explore following different paths
and we reach the same secret by paths which are far apart.

Each race has its own custom through which,

making its way, it comes to this great mystery.” 90

To these words so distinguished and flowing with such great skill

Faith, who alone is the most learned to open the first entrance court
to the secret place of the True Way has replied.

For when we discuss divine matters and we hazard

to make guesses about Him who has never had a beginning 95

and who will never have an end,

who existed before the chaos and created the world,

the strength of human intelligence is too feeble

and restricted for such a great task.

Indeed if a lesser nature tries to stretch its line of vision too tightly

and to penetrate the secrets of the supreme God 100

who may doubt that being frail it grows tired with sight conquered,

and that the force of a tired mind is disturbed under a small heart

and being dulled surrenders to weak concerns?

However the easy path of faith challenges us

to believe that it is the Almighty who not only gives good things for the present 105

but promises things to come unending throughout long ages

so that I do not totally dissolve into empty nothingness

and perish after a short enjoyment of the light.

You may consider the donor of a gift by the gift itself.

An eternal one gives eternal things, a mortal one gives what is mortal 110

God gives what is divine, one who is perishable things which will perish.

All things which time completes and which death takes away

are more worthless by their shortness of life,

nor are they worthy of an eternal donor whose own power

never ceases and that he gives to man that which never ends. 115

For if God offers anything which is corrupted or which is to be corrupted

and has nothing which is more precious than these,

He is poor, weak and unworthy of the highest esteem

and not almighty but an empty shadow of divinity.

By this reason Faith wisely conjectures, or indeed rather does not doubt 120

that He is the true God who tells us to hope that which we are

and the way we live will always be unharmed if we deserve it.

He says "If you wish to climb to heaven, cast earthly concerns from your mind.

For by how much the earth lies in its place below 125

and the court of vaulted heaven is divided from the earth,

by that much are your earthly affairs separate from mine which are to come,

ill-events from good, wicked things from the devout

and shadowy things from that which is clear.

Whatever can perish, I think you should flee, whatever

by reason of its nature has a defect and grows old 130

you should consider as nothing, since it will return to nothing.

All things which the earth produces, which it contains

in the beginning I established,

and I gave beautiful trappings to the shining world and I made the splendid seeds.

However I wished there to be moderation and I granted 135

those things to be enjoyed with restraint

in accordance with how much the mortal and sick need

of the body and of swift life asks for itself.

Not as one ensnared with passions and burning to no purpose

should a man consider all good to be located in the enjoyment

of things and their short-lived appearance which I have ordered 140

to run out in time.

I have fixed a period in which I might test noble hearts

lest excellence becoming sluggish and not used

might show its strength to be weakened

and without any praise from the wrestling school.

For seductive and deadly is the taste of these things

which while they pass hold minds entangled and defeated 145

with a wondrous delight.

Pleasure is to be conquered, the strength of the mind to be disentangled

lest with soft and tenacious cords it is oppressed, bound and caught.

The path of virtue is to be striven for with the greatest efforts

and pursued amidst misfortunes, lest [a man] loves the sweet things of 150

a fleeting condition, lest he might gather too much gold
 lest, being vainglorious, he wishes to look on the different colours
 of precious stones with desire, lest he might flaunt itself before the
 breezes of public opinion and being puffed up may swell with a
 fine reputation, lest he might extend his native soil 155
 and his family's landholding and pour out his soul on the fields of others
 and lest he abandon everything which he wants or does to the body's senses
 lest he prefer what is useful to what is just,
 and let him fix all his hope in me, what I shall give
 never will perish and my gifts are protracted for a long time." 160
 With God promising these things what brave, bold man capable of courage would prefer
 anything short-lived to what is eternal in him?
 Or what wise man would think the joys of the body more powerful
 than the rewards of a living mind?
 Surely the one difference which separates man and beast is that 165
 the goods of the beast are placed before its eyes
 while I, on the other hand hope for what, beyond eyesight,
 is preserved in eternity.
 For, if my whole life perishes with my body
 nor can anything of mine remain after my death
 what ruler of heaven, what creator of the world 170
 what God or what power now deserves to be feared?
 I shall enter with raging lust impure pleasures

I shall defile marriage beds, I shall tread on holy modesty,
 I shall deny while I possess it that which my neighbour gives me for safe-keeping without
 any other witness. In my greed I shall plunder poor clients, 175
 I shall kill the aged mother with a magic spell
 (the old woman delays the next owner by putting off death),
 nor do I fear what is bad. The rights of the state are cheated,
 Law sits armed but does not know about the secret crime;
 or if the matter is revealed, the judge is corrupted with gold. 180
 It is rare for a penalty to strike the guilty with a just blow.
 But why do I think on this? Behold, God who threatens
 with his awful majesty, calls back, He says that the importance of my deeds
 shall not perish through death. He says "The man shall not die
 who breathes within; he shall pay an eternal penalty 185
 because he has misused the limbs under his power.
 Nor is it difficult for me to surround with flames an intangible nature;
 although she is carried, being blown along like a wind ,
 yet I shall take her and apply torture to her
 being incorporeal myself and the only creator of spirits. 190
 But I shall decree a sharing of equal punishment to bodies
 since I can renew ashes into their former appearance
 nor should my power be despaired of:
 I who could create what is new shall be able to repair what has been killed.
 There is no lack of examples of my strength in the seeds themselves: 195

nature teaches all to come back to life after death.

For they dry up when their strength dies

by which they formerly lived, then dry and dead,

entrusted to the furrows and holes, they hide

and buried as if in the tomb,

they rise from their graves with renewed bud.

200

Can you then know or suppose who is this craftsman,

so skilful, who constructs this or what force acts inside them?

Do not let the teachings of the natural philosophers deceive you, wretched men.

Behold I am the Lord of bringing to life and powerful to restore what

has perished and decayed, all that is dried up I bring back

205

to its previous form with either flower or branch.

At some time I shall do this for man, so that he may rise from ash

and his original structure may stand firm,

which may either repay to me its crimes in accordance

with its deserts through punishment or may shine in the stronghold

210

of highest virtue never to perish in whatever lot it will remain.

Meanwhile, so long as the combined substance lives in a single being

let it be mindful of its own creator, and let it humbly

worship and entreat its maker. It was not one who created

the being of a breathing soul and another who made that of the body

215

nor do a host of gods govern the good things of this present life :

there is not one god who supplies the corn and the ears of grain

while another gives wine from grapes and pours the red liquid
from the heavy branch.

It is I who make the green olive trees grow fat with their fruit 220
which you imagine were born from Greek Pallas,
and it is I who grant the hours of Lucina to those being born.

The two-fold sex loves to produce offspring by my law
through shared agreement and rejoices in the offspring of their race.

This passion you desecrate with wanton lust 225
and you cover up your debauchery with the protection of the goddess Venus.

I alone rule the elements, nor am I exhausted with the weight of toil
like someone wretched, weak and frail.

I possess immeasurable light, a life which cannot be destroyed
and age which cannot be understood by your senses. 230

Thus I do not need attendant servants for all these governings of the world
nor do I seek helpers or allies.

Rather it is my concern to know the legions of angels
which my right-hand made, what nature exists
in that which I have created and to what kind of use they are kept by me. 235

You pass by me and think of a thousand gods
which you pretend appear with my attributes
so that you diminish me into various parts
for whom no part or shape can be reduced, since I am a pure substance,
nor can I be a part. Division is only part of those things which 240

are manufactured and created. No-one created me

so that, as the one creator of all, I could be divided.

Believe that what I created out of nothing is no part of me.

Come then, you mortal, build a temple to me alone

and adore me as the one God. I reject the quarried stones 245

and the rocks which both Paros and Punic cliffs cut

and which green Sparta and mottled Syna have.

Let no-one dedicate to me the rock of natural purple.

I love the temple of the mind, not of marble: golden

foundations of faith endure in it; its structure rises, 250

shining with the brilliant white of Piety, justice covers the roof on high,

inside generous Modesty scatters on the ground the glowing flower of purity

and guards the door.

This is the house which is suitable for me, this most beautiful throne receives me

and is worthy of an eternal and heavenly guest. 255

Nor is this place new; my glory and the true light of God

has flown into limbs. God has enlightened the matter which he nourished,

and, as father, has made a habitable body

so that he can rest in a temple which is pleasing to him.

I had made man to be complete; I ordered him, 260

when he had turned with all his senses to me, to look at heavenly things

being upright in deportment and raised in posture;

but he looked to the ground, bent down to the world's riches, and drove my presence
from his heart.

He needed to be restored to me. My Spirit being lowered down on him 265

Went down and filled with divine strengths the flesh

brought forth from the earth,

and now the most high God has transferred into the godhead the human nature he
assumed

and taught him to warm again to our service."

I would like to know with what ears you receive 270

these teachings of the Father, O most learned censor of the Italian race.

Do you choose only ancient custom, while you abandon reason,

and does the shrewdness of a wise man and a manly character

allow this to be said: "Ancient custom is more powerful for me

than the path of justice, than the devotion which

has come forth from heaven, than faith in what is true 275

and than the discipline of the true way."

If it is necessary to preserve and carefully attend to whatever custom was

when the world was in the early years of its life,

let us turn back the whole of time through its stages

back to the beginning, may we take pleasure to condemn step by step 280

whatever anyone who came later found to be of use.

When the world was new no farmers worked the soil:

What was the use of ploughs? For what was the unnecessary labour of the hoe?

The belly is better filled with the acorns of the holm-oak.

The first men split wood with wedges; 285

let the raging mass of iron melt our axes into a lump again

and let the vein of iron drip back again into its own original state.

Let slaughtered cattle provide clothing and cold caves small homes.

Let us return to the caves, let us put on hairy clothing with skins sewn on. 290

Peoples once wild with their savageness overcome and conquered

now let them howl harshly, again return to their wild ways

and revert to their ancient practices.

Let the young man, with Scythian piety hurl his wrinkled father

from the votive bridge (thus was once the custom) 295

let the sacred rites of Saturn smoke with the slaughter of infants

and the grim altars resound with the tearful howlings of children.

Let the race of Romulus weave huts with fragile thatching:

thus they say Remus lived. Let them spread regal couches with hay 300

or let them wear on their hairy bodies a cloak

made with the fur of the Libyan bear .

Such things the Sicilian and Tuscan leaders used to have.

Ancient Rome does not remain like herself, having changed down the ages

and being transformed in her rites, her apparel, her laws and her military equipment.

She devotes herself to many things which she did not in the reign of Quirinus. 305

She has brought in certain things for the better, some things she has shunned;

she has not ceased to change her custom and she has changed to the opposite

the laws she had established long ago.

Why, senator of Rome, do you use against me traditional observances
when the changed opinion of fickle sentiment has often altered 310
the decrees of the senate and people?

Now as often as it is of advantage to turn away from what is customary
and to reject outmoded attitudes for a new way,
we rejoice that something is discovered and that what was hidden
is at last revealed; human life grows being always increased 315
by slow progress and benefits from long experience.

This is the way of the changing scheme of human life,
thus nature varies her alternations: infancy creeps,
the weak step and character of the boy staggers,
strong youth rages with hot blood, 320

soon the steadied age of developed strength comes;
the last is old age, better in wisdom, but weak in strength,
which, having cleansed the mind, is overcome in the body .

The human race has led its changing age on these tracks
through different times, thus dim-witted at the start 325
and sunk on the ground, as if a four-footed creature it lived;

soon, gentle, with a mind ready to learn and now
suitable for learning skills it has been improved by a variety of new experiences.

Then puffed up with vices it matured into its hot years 330
until it strengthened its power having boiled off its hardness .

Now the time is present for it to understand divine matters,
 being skilled to seek out mysteries in a more lively fashion
 with the advice of an unclouded mind, and at last to pay attention
 to its eternal welfare.

Although, if there is such great zeal and concern for the antiquity of custom 335
 and it is not agreeable to leave the ancient usage behind,
 there is a celebrated example in the ancient books
 that already at the time of the flood or before that the race
 which first lived on the new earth and inhabited its empty sphere
 served one God. 340

From there the long lineage of our race takes its origin
 and restores the laws of native piety.

But since we are talking about Roman ways, I show
 that the people of Hector's blood for a long time
 did not worship many gods and was content with a few small temples 345
 and set up few altars on the hills.

Afterwards then, Rome acquired for herself innumerable gods
 when she had conquered cities by her strength and after outstanding triumphs.
 Among the smoking ruins of temples the armoured right hand of the victor
 seized the statues of enemy gods 350
 and took them home as captives revering them as if they were divine.

One image she snatched from the fall of Corinth by the two seas;
 another she took for booty from burning Athens;

defeated Cleopatra gave some statues with a dog's head.

Amongst African trophies, when the sands of Ammon were conquered 355
were certain horned faces.

As often as glorious Rome received with acclaim
the chariot of a triumphant general, she added to the altars of the gods
and made new gods for herself from the spoils,
gods who being uprooted with their native walls 360
could offer no protection to their own temples!

Do you see how the footsteps of ancient custom
may always be proved to have staggered in different ways with uncertain steps
by taking on gods unknown to our ancestors,
that they also dedicated themselves to foreign religion 365
and did not look after their own rites? Whatever kind of sacred rite
there is lives in exile and has come as a foreigner into the enemy city.

In vain, therefore, O mistaken respect, do you cling to what is customary:
the custom which you love, O wicked allegiance, is not that of our fathers, not indeed.

But the skilful orator says that a city is allotted, 370
according to fate, a certain guardian spirit under which it may live out its life.

"To all peoples or cities there is given" he said
"either a fate or guardian spirit in the manner of our souls
which enter new bodies with a different destiny."

Now in the first place, I do not know what a genius is 375
or what condition belongs to it, what it can do or whence it arises,

whether it is a formless spirit without a body or a form or any kind of shape
and what it knows and what duties it undertakes.

On the other hand I understand that the souls of men are spread within
through the life-giving veins, so that the blood may receive 380

from them swift movement and gentle warmth
from whence it quickens the innards having travelled through
the limbs: it warms what is cold, moistens what is dry and loosens what is hard.

Thus the living soul regulates and governs the life of a man
which you try to compare to the imagined genius of the walls 385
which is nowhere and never existed.

On the other hand, the living mind reflects on the best guidance for the ruling of bodies,
so that it provides a trusty defence for them being weak and naked,

it avoids fearful dangers, looks for what is useful,
is moved to develop various skills, 390

takes care to what lord it submits itself,
and whom it thinks is creator of the world whom the whole of creation follows.

But this genius of the city of yours, please say, when
did it begin to first pour itself on the still little Rome?

Did it flow from the she-wolf's udders in the wooded valley 395
and feed the twin infants while it was being born?

Or did it flying with the vultures as an unknown shade
drag a sudden shape from a cloud?

Does it sit on the roof-tops or guard the inner secret chambers?

Did it establish customs and found the laws of the forum 400

or enter the camp`s ditches, drive brave men to arms,

stir them with war-trumpets and push them towards the enemy?

Which wise man would not see that these things are worthy of laughter?

Let us however pretend that that there is some shade or spirit

which takes care of such things through whom the state has drawn its fate 405

and is given warm life throughout its whole being.

Why does this spirit not take the same care about the practice of religion?

Why does it not look up to heaven in freedom?

Why does it think that it is assigned an unchangeable fate

as if it were a prisoner? Why does it imagine it is bound by its horoscope? 410

Now it is allowed not to want what before it was allowed to want, to abolish its errors and change its mind.

Thus it wandered around for seven hundred years

slipping and always uncertain what form of government it wanted,

what power of ruling would be fair. 415

As soon as the city came into being a royal constitution held sway,

not without the assistance of old men with a share of responsibility.

Soon we see the leading men from the stock of elders

took in hand the helm of policy; afterwards the throngs of the commons

gathered, mingling with the senators, ruled for a long time with equal authority 420

directing both war and peace.

The nobility flourished with the consul while the people relied on the tribune.

Suddenly this arrangement fell out of favour and ten offices were created for the greatest leading men, each of whom surrounded twelve fasces and each his own axe. 425

Again the whole state gave itself back to twin rulers
and gave to the consuls to establish the *fasti*.

A bloodstained member of the triumvirate disturbed the last age.

On these waves once the public fate or guardian spirit or soul wandered.

Finally having learnt to take the right path, he surrounded an august head 430
with the diadem calling him the father of his country,

guide of the people and senate, who is the leader of the army and at the same time
dictator, good censor and master of morals,

protector of the poor, punisher of the wicked and distributor of public honours. 435

If with so many stages of affairs and with ideas being changed so often,
at length with difficulty it reached that state

which public respect approves and protects

with a sacred treaty, why does it hesitate to recognise divine laws

unknown to it before and at length revealed? 440

Let us rejoice, now it does not hesitate; for subject to Christ

Rome serves God, hating her former religious practices.

Rome I call the men whom we believe are the soul of the city,

not a guardian spirit whose image is represented in vain.

Although, why do you imagine, tell me, a single *genius* of Rome? 445

when to doors, houses, baths and stables you are accustomed to

attribute their own guardian spirits and through all the parts of the city

and through its localities you imagine many thousands of guardian spirits,
so that no corner is free from its own ghost?

It remains so that a similar madness may place a fate on all buildings 450
so that each wall founded and laid out under its own star
receives in its first hours by what fate it should remain
and when it might fall.

They ascribe to the stones the weak threads of Lachesis,
they believe that roof-beams depend on her rotating spindles 455
and they attribute decrees to the small-beams themselves,
as if it made a difference under the birth of which star the ash-tree
was dug up, which being lifted would ascend to the highest roof-top.

Finally there is no human affair, no public function in the world
to which they do not say there falls a destiny assigned by fate. 460

Since they establish things [thus], let them say why the law is established
on the Twelve Tables or why a law makes threats
which prevents criminals doing wrong, whom iron fate
forces to the evil deed and inevitably overwhelms .

Indeed, it forces them to wish for evil, introducing the desire, 465
lest it be permitted for the wretches to not wish to do what is forbidden.

Yield, if shame exists, and make blunt your sword.

You harsh laws, who punish the undeserving with penalties,
destroy the prison cave in which you hold the bodies
of an innocent multitude while it is fate that offends. 470

No-one is guilty if the fates determine what is lived and done:
 rather he is guilty who of his own free will, dares what is not allowed
 since to wish one of the two is within his power nor do the fates
 place guilt on a man but he is made guilty by his own decision
 and he pays for the crime which pleased him and his wicked deeds: 475
 he is ruined with punishment which comes through his deserts
 rather than through fate.

Whoever thinks that there is a place for fate, let him know that
 to know God, the father of all, is forbidden to no-one by the stars of fate,
 nor are devout prayers driven away by some decree of astrology.

For the soul aspires to greater things and lifts itself higher than 480
 the stars and passes over the paths and clouds of fate
 and squashes with its feet all the movements which
 are thought to fix the predestined fate at the time of birth.

Come here, you whole race of men, run here, you cities!

A measureless light calls you, recognise your creator ! 485

A free path lies open: the things of fate are nothing:

or if they are something, being worthless they disappear when Christ
 stands against them.

“But many gods led Rome through prosperous days

whom she worships on account of their merit

 since she has been endowed with great triumphs by them.”

Therefore come and declare, warrior city, what force subdued 490

Europe and Africa to you. Speak the names of the gods

Jupiter gave with a favourable omen, that you might rule Crete,

Pallas, Greece, Apollo, Delphi.

Isis gave up the natives of the Nile, Venus, Rhodes,

the virgin huntress yielded Ephesus, Mars the Hebrus, 495

Bacchus abandoned Thebes, even Juno herself conceded

for her Africans to serve the descendants of Phrygia,

and that city which the goddess even then nourished and supported,

if fates allowed, to be the mistress to subject nations

she ordered to live subject to the control of Romulus. 500

Did so many cities fall through the treachery of their native gods

and do their altars lie destroyed with the gods themselves betraying them?

O devotion, O holy faith ! Treacherous sovereignty has handed

over the places it once nourished and those gods are trusted

who earned their cult by desertion. 505

Did that system of belief wish to save its own people

and having fought for a long time, try to repel hostile squadrons

struggling against the Roman forces, but a braver strength

broke it in the doleful dust of the plains ?

Yes, indeed it is so: superstition, which lacks truth, was overcome 510

by weapons and force and glory fled from what is empty.

But it was neither a difficult nor a particularly troublesome victory

for a race which was born ready for battle, to break the weak with victory

and to bend low the soft necks of gods of every type.

Was it a war that the harsh Samnite and Marsian waged with the 515
Cretan Corybants with only a gentle sweat ?

Did the Etruscan soldier *fight* with policemen and with
boxers, smeared with oil for the art of the wrestling-ring ?

Nor could Mercury, famous for his broad-brimmed hat,
when Sparta was captured, protect his wrestling schools from disaster. 520

Could the enemy who followed Cybele, receiving in battle
the foot-soldier of the Apennines, defend Asia and Ida
when a priest of Cybele was driving the troops into battle?

unless perhaps it was a difficult task and a huge labour
to hand over to slavery the roses of Ida, the laurel of the prophet 525
who sings to the cithara, the arrows and bow of the girl

who lives in the woods and to tame their sacred rites when they were trampled
under foot.

It was music that had given the signal for war to Egypt
on the waters of Actium, while on the other side the trumpet was sounding.

The lightly-built boats and frail wicker skiffs had pressed forward, 530
Egyptian rams amidst the turreted galleys.

The god Serapis and the dog Anubis could achieve nothing.

The fervent army, with its leader of Julian stock,
whom snow-capped Algidus had sent from his cold clime prevailed.

No armed Venus and no Minerva, with her shield, then 535

came to their help, no ignoble rank of gods, exiled from their native land,
 was present with the Roman forces,
 being conquered themselves beforehand, they did not help the enemy troops
 if, however, they knew [how] to hold on to their ancient animosity.

But you say that the gods selected the place where a more inviolable 540
 use of their temples with venerating crowds would remain forever,
 and that they followed willingly the victorious standards of the
 soldier-descendants of Aeneas, for the love of king Numa,
 with no-one forcing them.

Did then Pallas of her free-will choose the tents of Diomedes
 the camp of fierce Ulysses when the guards of her citadel were slaughtered 545
 where, sad, she might perspire from her dripping statue ?

Or as often as the most brave leader of the Macedonians
 piled high the ashes of temples when Amyclae was conquered
 did the captured deities long to be included in the booty of the lord
 and to be dragged to the city of Assyrian Babylon ? 550

I cannot endure the Roman name, the wars they sweated over
 and the honours they gained at the cost of so much blood to be disparaged.
 He detracts from the unconquered legions and he belittles the exploits
 of Rome, who attributes to Venus whatever has been done bravely
 and takes away the prize from the victors. 555

In vain, therefore, we admire the four-horse chariots
 on the top of the arch and the generals standing in high chariots

the Fabricii, the Curii, here the Drusi, there the Camilli
 and under the feet of the generals prisoners on bended knee
 bent to the yoke, with their hands tied behind their backs 560
 and the pieces of their weapons hung on a weighty tree,
 if Flora, Matuta, Ceres and Laurentina have subdued
 Brennus, Antiochus, Perses, Pyrrhus and Mithridates.
 “With these auspices, propitious omens have given
 joyful successes and the bird of good-fortune was present” 565
 What does courage or glory mean, if
 a crow of Apollo helped Corvinus with its wing or throat ?
 But why, however, was this crow by chance absent on that
 fatal day when dead men covered unlucky Cannae
 and a consul fell on the piled-up corpses? 570
 Why on the plains of Cremera, by means of a crow or raven,
 did none of the gods warn that three hundred of the Fabii
 were about to perish in an unfavourable battle, with their stock
 scarcely surviving in one man ?
 Did no owl of Minerva flying about at doleful Carrhae,
 being clairvoyant, reveal to Crassus that the goddess was nearby 575
 or did the snowy doves bring Venus, before whose gilded girdle
 the Persian race trembles ?
 But I see what kind of examples of ancient courage move you.
 You say that the world was conquered on land and sea,

you relate joyful matters and every favourable occurrence, 580

you recall a thousand triumphal processions in succession

and the barrows of spoils which were carried through the middle of Rome.

Do you want me to say, O Roman, what cause it was

that lifted to such greatness your endeavours? What encouraged your glory

when it had increased to become famous so that it might bridle the world 585

with the reins it had imposed?

God, wishing to bring together peoples at variance in their languages

and kingdoms with different manners, determined that

whatever was open to civilised values

be subject to one power and to bear his soft bonds

by which the love of religion might 590

hold together the hearts of men with a harmonious yoke.

Nor is a bond worthy of Christ

unless a single understanding joins nations which have been closely united.

Only concord knows God, she alone worships in quiet

the kind Father with due religious observance : a most calm agreement of

human consensus renders Him favourable to the world, 595

by civil discord it drives Him away, by savage wars it irritates Him,

with the gift of peace it nourishes Him and with peaceful devotion it holds Him.

In all the lands which the western ocean surrounds

and which Dawn brightens with her rosy rising,

raging Bellona used to shake up all mortal affairs 600

and armed wild hands in mutual slaughter.

To restrain this madness God taught nations

everywhere to bow their head under the same laws

and all to become Romans, whom the Rhine and the Danube,

whom the gold-bearing Tagus and whom the great Ebro flood, 605

those through whom the horned river of the West glides

and whom the Ganges nourishes and the seven mouths of the warm Nile wash.

A common law has made them equal, has bound them with the same name

and has brought them, conquered, into bonds of fraternity.

Life is conducted in regions of every race not otherwise than as if 610

a native city with the same walls enclosed citizens related by birth

and we are all united in an ancestral home.

Regions far distant in their boundaries, shores separated by seas

now come together and make appearances in one common law-court

now through trade and skills come to a crowded assembly, now through 615

the marriage-bed gain the right of marrying a foreigner,

for one stock is woven by the mixing of blood from

alternate races.

This has been achieved by the great victories and triumphs of

Roman rule: believe that the path has been prepared for the coming 620

of Christ which the public harmony of peace among us, a short while before,

laid out under the rule of Rome.

For what place can there be in a wild world

and in the warring hearts of men watching over their own rights
with different justification, as once was the case? 625

Emotions thus disordered in the human heart
and parts of the soul torn apart with disturbed peace
neither does serene wisdom visit nor does God enter.

But if the highest part of the mind having gained the right of control
restrains the impulses of a fierce anger and rebellious innards 630
and keeps under control every passion with one plan,
the condition of life becomes stable and a fixed determination
draws God into the heart and it is subject to one Lord.

Come then, Almighty One, pour yourself into lands which are in harmony:
now the world grasps you, Christ, which peace and Rome hold in a close bond. 635

These things you order to be the heads and summits of affairs
nor is Rome pleasing to you without peace
and peace ensures that the superiority of Rome which at the same time
represses by its authority and contains by fear
various disturbances, is pleasing to you. 640

Nor deprived of the vigour of her former excellence
has she grown old nor has she felt her age
nor does she take up weapons with trembling limbs when war calls,
nor does she beseech venerable princes with so an ignoble voice
as that celebrated senator who is masterful in the skill of oratory 645
well-versed in making cunning comments,

and in putting on the false weight of a serious personage
 as the tragic actor covers his face with hollowed wood
 through whose large mouthpiece he breathes some wickedness.

If I am permitted to impersonate a voice, indeed this voice is more
 fitting to Rome, which I shall now produce in her name. 650

She who because she thinks it disgraceful to weep for the overthrow of the temple
 and to say that the aegis fought for her in perilous circumstances,
 and to admit that she is weighed down with crippling old age
 having embraced her leaders thus joyfully speaks:

“Greetings glorious leaders, honourable offspring 655

of an unconquered emperor, under whom, being reborn,

I laid aside all my old age and I saw my grey hair grow golden again:

for while age diminishes all that is mortal,

length of days produces another life-time for me

who has learnt by living a long time to despise death. 660

Now, now suitable reverence is due to my years,

now deservedly am I called venerable and the capital city of the world,

when I shake my helmet and its red crests under the branch of the olive

hiding the fierce sword-belt with a green wreath

and, armed, I worship God without the offence of slaughter. 665

For it was to offences, terrible offences, (alas it revolts me) that

Jupiter had persuaded me so that wet with the holy blood of the just

I might desecrate the sword, which is accustomed to wars, with their death.

At his prompting, Nero first, having killed his mother,
 drank the blood of the apostles and defiled me with the slaughter of the devout 670
 and cruelly branded me with his own misdeed.

After him Decius, making merry among slit throats
 fed his mad frenzy; and soon a similar thirst
 of many others raged, burning to stretch outstanding souls
 through harsh wounds and to mock them with torments, 675
 and to pour into my lap a flood of deaths
 and to cut through innocent necks according to the law of the forum.

Only your times have cleansed me, who was guilty, of this stain.

I live a godly life under your rule, I admit I was ungodly before
 through the cunning of Jupiter; for what blood-thirsty thing was there that 680
 he did not pass over to me? Or what did he ask for that was gentle or peaceful?

So long as he feared beforehand that the worship of Christ would grow
 he raged and polluted the wretched age with blood.

And there are those who do not hesitate to blame us for unfavourable wars
 after we have rejected the altars of the temples 685

and who insist that Libyan Hannibal was repulsed from the
 hinge of the Colline Gate by the command of Jupiter and Mars,
 and that the victorious Senones were driven from the Capitoline citadel
 since the divine powers were fighting from the high rock above.

Let those who repeatedly impress on me past defeats and old sorrows 690
 see that I now have suffered no such thing in your time:

no barbarian enemy makes my walls tremble, nor with unfamiliar
 weapons, garb and hair does he wander
 here and there around the captured city

snatching my young ones into slavery beyond the Alps 695

The Gothic tyrant tried recently to destroy
 Italy, coming from his native Istria, having vowed
 to raze these citadels to the ground, to destroy with flames
 golden roofs and to cloth toga-wearing nobles with sheepskins.

Now rushing forward he had crushed the fields of Venetia with his cavalry, 700
 laid waste the wealth of the Ligurians and was pressing down on
 the pleasant countryside of the deep Po, and the Tuscan soil,
 when he had crossed the river.

No unsleeping goose, a revealer of hidden danger on a dark night
 drove away these clouds of horsemen,
 but the rough strength of men and the shattered breasts of warriors 705
 and a spirit not afraid to surrender to death
 on behalf of its fatherland and to seek, through wounds, honourable praise.

Did even that day confer such a great reward for manliness
 through the favour of Jupiter ? The leader of our army and empire
 was a young man strong in Christ and his companion
 and father, Stilicho and the one God to both was Christ. 710

When worship was performed at his altar and the cross was
 imprinted on the forehead, the trumpets sounded. The spear

which carries higher the standard of Christ, goes before the military banners.

There a race deadly to Pannonia for thirty years 715

at last was destroyed and paid the penalty

Bodies once made rich with notorious plundering

lie piled up in heaps ; you may wonder,

Posterity, in later years at the widely-scattered unburied corpses

which covered with their bones the fields of Pollentia. 720

If, being cut down by the hands of the Gauls, I could raise

my head from the filth of ashes,

if, with the return of Camillus, although still smouldering

I received back with smiling face my standards,

if I could gird my wretched ruins with garlands

and dress my towers, which were ready to fall, with laurel, 725

with what embrace shall I receive you, most brave prince ?

What flowers shall I scatter? Which garlands shall I put into my

halls ? What hangings shall I drape from my festive gates,

I, who am unscathed by so great a war and who am free while you are

standing under arms and have experienced the Gothic uprising 730

only with what I have heard ?

Climb into the triumphal chariot, and having received the spoils,

come here with Christ as your companion. Grant that I may remove

the chains from captive bands ; lay aside the manacles

worn out through long use, you throngs of mothers and youths.

Let the old man, an exile from his ancestral home, forget
735
to be a slave

and, since his mother has returned to his father`s house,
let the boy know himself to be free-born. Let all fear be far away;
we have been victorious, it is good to rejoice. What such [victory]
occurred when once the Punic leader was driven back ?

He after he had destroyed the shaking bolts of the gates
740
he had been seeking,

being undone by the waters of Baiae
he abandoned most stern strength through loose living
and broke the sword with his lust.

On the other hand our Stilicho fought hand-to hand and forced
the armoured enemy to flee from the battle.

In this case, Christ our God was close to us as was real strength;
745
in the former case it was your delights, fertile Campania, which
overcame a lustful enemy; it was not Jupiter that protected the bold Fabius
but the charms of Tarentum which allowed him
to trample down the tyrant , conquered by her allurements.

For these favours I do not have a reward I might give
750
you which is worthy : it is worthless to fashion limbs into statues;
nothing worthless befits manliness; for what time snatches away
is worthless : bronzes fall either tawny gold passes away
or the brightness of silver fades if it is not used

and its natural quality grown dark with dirt, its colour
755
is destroyed.

Living glory is your due O prince; gain a living reward for courage, immortal glory.

As ruler of the world , you will be joined to Christ for ever

and with his leadership you draw my kingdom to the heavens.

I beseech you, do not let the voice of the great orator move you at all
760

who, using the appearance of an ambassador, weeping for dead rites

dares, alas, with the weapons of his intellect and the power of his oratory

to attack our faith and does not see that you, Augustus, and I

are devoted to God for whom we have closed the foul temples

and we have thrown down the altars soaked with bloody matter.
765

Let Christ alone rule and protect our palaces;

let not a single evil spirit any longer know the citadels of Romulus

but let my court serve the lord of peace alone.”

Thus speaking, Rome persuaded her loyal progeny

to spurn the ambassador who was asking for what was illicit,
770

the ambassador sent from the innermost sanctuary of Jupiter

by a soothsayer, but not by his native land : the glory proper to the country is Christ.

However he continues to insist asserting that the path of travel is

manifold and various when the one God is sought

that some from this way and others from that hurry in their own way
775

that each goes along his own twisting paths but that coming together

they narrow at the same time to the same goal and run together into one

and that indeed the sky and earth, the winds, the sea, the clouds
 are given to all in common, whether we who worship you,
 Christ, or those who offer decomposing entrails to carved stones. 780

I do not deny that the benefit of the air, the stars, the sea,
 the earth and the rain is common to all living beings.

Furthermore, the unjust and the just likewise live
 under the one sky, the pious and impious breathe the same air,
 the pure and the lustful, the harlot and the married woman 785
 and the breath, which controls life with an intake of air,
 that comes from the mouth of the priest is no different
 than that from that of the gladiator.

The cloud in spring rains down with the west wind driving it on,
 but it makes fertile the fields of the thief and the innocent farmer alike.

Thus the traveller, just as the robber, when tired approaches the 790
 pure waters of the summer stream ; thus the sea is useful for pirates
 as for the merchant, nor otherwise does the wave yield to an enemy
 than when it carries the rowing bench of a lawful galley.

Therefore, nature, accommodating to either side, offers
 herself for the creation of peoples and is not able to distinguish 795
 the unequal merits of the living, whom she has only been ordered to feed.

For the world serves but does not judge; the supreme Lord
 of nature keeps this for himself at the prescribed time.

Now the gifts given to man are present under the same laws

by which they were once granted : the spring flows, the river overflows 800

the sail-flying sea is ploughed by ships, the rain pours forth

the insubstantial breeze flies about, the swift air is stirred up,

and the essence of nature is made common and accessible to all,

while the elements which serve us keep to their path.

Thus the upright man and the one guilty of a capital crime 805

enjoy the same stars and the goodness of the generous heavens.

Life is common to all but merit is not.

To sum up, the Roman, the Dahan, the Sarmatian, the Vandal, the Hun,

the Gaetulian, the Garamantian, the Alamannian, the Saxon, the Galaulian,

all walk on the one earth, for all of them there is the same sky 810

and there is the one sea which surrounds our world.

I have another thing to add: the animals drink from our springs;

the same dew which gives me corn, gives grass to the wild ass,

the dirty sow swims in our river, our air enters

the very dogs and gives life to wild bodies with its light breathing. 815

Yet the difference between the Roman and barbarians is as great

as that which separates the four-legged and two-legged creatures

or the mute from those able to speak

or even those who rightly obey the commands of God

are separate from empty cults and their errors.

Sharing of air and sky does not, therefore, 820

make equals in the observance of religion : it only produces, nourishes,

and restores bodies and protects the returning generations.

Nor does it matter of what race or of what shape

or of what worth they are: as long as they are bodies

produced from the earth whose strength comes from earthly elements, 825

because the work of the Father creator pours without distinction

into the midst of all and runs on with no miserly beneficence

being given before the first man, Adam, became defiled.

It neither fails being restricted by the failings of the users nor

does it withdraw itself from the unworthy, nor does it avoid what is foul or filthy. 830

In the same way the ray of the sun, when it illumines all places

when its brightness is scattered around, strikes golden roofs

but it also strikes roofs dirtied by black smoke.

It enters the Capitol bright with its marbles, but it also enters

the cracks in the prison wall and the foul holes of the covered 835

dung and the dirty chamber in the stinking brothel.

However, the dark workhouse will not become the same

as the royal ceilings yellow with jewel-encrusted metal.

No more will they who seek the divine in funeral urns and tombs

and placate ghosts with blood 840

be the same as those who worship the high Lord of heaven,

who satisfy justice and adorn the temple of the heart.

“But the great mystery of hidden design cannot

be sought except if the way is multiplied with scattered paths

and the path to seek the hidden God must tread a hundred ways 845

with different kinds of exploration.”

The truth is far different; for much twisting of paths
produces ambiguous windings and strays more confusedly;
only the single way, which knows nothing of turning into a
by-way and is hesitant over forks in the road or cross-roads 850

avoids wandering.

However I do not deny that a double path always confronts us,
that human affairs go with two-fold portions
when they wonder where ignorance is taking their step.

One divides into many ways, the other is undivided and single;
one follows God, the other worships many gods. 855

As many are its divisions in the road as there are
statues in the temples or as many apparitions fly about in transitory
and strange shapes.

It either takes some to the Dionysian rites of Bacchus carrying his staff
or it entices others to the festival of Saturn
or it teaches the rites which the hidden infant, Diespiter, 860
asks to be performed for him amongst the jingling of bronze.

And now the whips and running about of naked young men
at the Lupercalia is looked for; on this side the Megalesian eunuch
stirred up with horrid fury is called to give dark replies.

There are those who ready to go by shorter crossroads 865

worship nasty small vegetables in the gardens of the Nile,
 having dared to place as gods from the clouds, the leek and onion
 and to place among the stars of heaven garlic and mustard.

Isis and Serapis and the monkey with a big tail

and the crocodile are the same as Juno, Laverna and Priapus. 870

You, O Nile worship the former, you O Tiber adore the latter.

It is the same superstition although the error is of a different hue.

From this side another path, covered with shadowy shrubs,

along which travel the beasts and dumb animals, which hide

in the woods : ignorant of heaven, 875

the mind of man is covered over and a living hostage to a cruel tyrant.

It thinks that God is nothing, for all things are overturned by chance

and that the ages turn with no-one to oversee them.

There is no great difference between this path and these other ways

which you tread who think the most high God 880

consists of many gods and numerous monstrosities.

God therefore is the guide of the simple path, He orders our mortal race

to go by a single way which He himself sets on high in a straight line

by a hill on the right to the high summits.

At first the way appears to be neglected, somewhat rough, gloomy, 885

difficult but is most beautiful at its end both endowed with abundant riches

and overflowing with ever-lasting light

which can compensate for past labours.

On the multiple path the devil is the guide who is present, who, on the left-hand side
 confuses the path into a hundred parts ; on one side he drags 890
 the bearded sophists, on the other those who are powerful

through wealth or office;

he allures them with the tongues of birds and deceives them through the soothsayer,
 he stirs them up with the ambiguity of the raving old Sibyl,
 he overwhelms them with astrology, he forces them into magic skills,
 he vexes them with an omen, he enslaves them with augury, 895
 he terrifies them with entrails.

Do you see how there is one way, wandering through many bends,
 which endures such a guide who does not allow you to go to the
 Lord of salvation but shows you the path of death by-ways,
 wildernesses adorned with short-lived benefits but which at the end
 are gloomy and sunk headlong into an unexpected Charybdis ? 900

Go far away, you pagans! There is no sharing of paths
 for you with the people of God. Depart far away
 and enter your chaos to which he calls you
 who leads through the tangled pathless ways of hell`s night!
 But for us who seek the one Lord of life 905
 the way is light and bright day and pure grace.

We follow hope and walk by faith and enjoy the things to come
 to which the joys of the present life do not attain
 nor does pleasure which has been taken and that which is to be taken

run together.

The last sorrowful and weeping complaint of the ambassador 910

is that grain for the altar-fires of Pallas and contributions

for the virgins themselves and food for the pure choruses are denied

and the Vestal fires are cheated of their customary income.

For this reason, he says, the barren fields produce food more rarely

and a gloomy famine rages and throughout the whole world 915

helpless mortals grow pale and lack bread.

What so great and so hateful a famine has existed at the present time,

which the anger of Triptolemus and Ceres has caused, to avenge

the food-supply of the virgin,

I do not recall nor indeed does rumour whisper about any such thing. 920

I hear that the Nile in its usual way runs through the plains of Egypt

and inundates the crops of green Canopus.

Or a messenger would come with the river being dry who

relates that hungry Memphis under the dust is dry with thirst

and that the mud of Pelusia's swamp does not sweat. 925

Has the spring covered by the hidden secret place of nature

dried up and does the water-course scarcely drip a thin flow of liquid ?

Does the river, fleeing away, hate to rub against our shores

and turn its course towards the sun-burnt Ethiopians?

Does the thirsty river-bed swallow up in mid-course the river's water 930

and with a sudden opening its waters are gulped down

so that it cannot cover the furrows with its waters nor
 be drawn over the dry plains of Egypt and
 soften the stiff clods to a rich mud through the pouring of water
 whence the corn-field rises in waves far over the long-haired fields 935
 and the flat land clothes itself more thickly with pregnant ears of corn ?
 See whether the farmer of the Libyan countryside ceases
 to load ships with produce and to send to the Tiber's port
 heaps of wheat to feed the people,
 does the plough-man of the Leontine plain cease 940
 to release the corn-bearing ships from the shore of Lilybaeum
 or whether the fleet bringing the packed granaries of Sardinia
 does not spread its sails on the sea and burst the store-houses of Rome ?
 Does, therefore, the Carthaginian farmer load his tables with wild pears,
 does the Sicilian feed on snatched herbs 945
 and does Sardinia now supply acorns from oak trees for the people of Remus
 and are stony cornel-cherries the food of Roman citizens ?
 Who comes hungry to the shows of the great circus?
 What district of Rome endures terrible hunger
 with the Steps being empty ?
 Or what mill rests in quiet on the Janiculum ? 950
 How great are the products each province brings and how
 the fertile world flows far and wide with fruitful richness
 is shown by the yearly produce which the state gives to your people, Rome

and which feeds the long leisure of so great a multitude.

Perhaps one year is a little less prosperous: 955

nothing is strange or new in the world. Our ancestors learnt,

[this] having suffered with patience many a famine

if the wasting air dried up the thin clouds under a burning sun

and very heavy rain did not pour the spring waters

when the crop was new and green , if the harvest, having matured before 960

it might strengthen with gentle milk the grains it had conceived,

and having restrained the sap, being blasted by the warm east wind,

produced barren stalks and the sterile forest of stubble

deceived the prayers of the farmer, made in vain.

The land, unless I am deceived, was blighted by these problems 965

and subject to them even before the Palladium, before Vesta guarded the

household gods under a Trojan roof with her fire restored,

before the father of Priam built his walls with hired workmen

before the virgin Pallas founded her Athens;

since in these cities, as they say, the Vestal flame first took 970

its beginning from the kindling-wood

and the Phrygian and Greek made holy the hearths they had tended.

The elements are unstable through ancient faults and,

being shaken from their proper boundary, often they are carried

into situations other than the law or the path of the year holds. 975

Sometimes the destroying rust devours the crop through the fault

of bad air, sometimes in a warm spring after the west winds
 ice of the cold north wind burns in a fault
 and paints the scorched head of the stalk black;
 or while the swelling green crop of the tender seed sprouts forth 980
 being held back by constant and excessive frosts, it dies
 and cannot fix to the earth its thin fibre;
 soon thrown from the earth, with the ice sinking down it is left
 and the bare root is pulled up from the soil taken away from beneath.
 Dangerous thorns and bristling thistle come from underneath; 985
 dry thirst produces the former, the latter soaking moisture brings forth.
 When the temperature is released either too much or too little, it starts those
 diseases of the land and wounds a sick world.
 In the same way the functioning of our body, being corrupted,
 often falls into decay, does not continue in its correct structure 990
 and afflicts the limbs with an aberration of moderation.
 For the condition of the world and of this body
 which we carry about is one ; the same nature sustains both.
 Produced from nothing, they grow and about to become nothing
 either they stagger with sicknesses or conquered by time, they grow old, 995
 nor does nature lack defect for whom an end threatens.
 Always, believe me, the heavens have woven the years
 with differing yields : it enriches some which are flowing with many a crop
 others, the unlucky, it has blighted under hostile stars

with empty and sterile hope making useless the farmer's labour. 1000

But if this curse, which arises from a treacherous world,

avenges the Vestal virgins,

why does it not only devastate the little fields of Christians

through whom the appointed gifts are denied to your virgins?

We make use of the proceeds of the countryside and the method of cultivation, 1005

we are not ashamed to do manual labour : and if a stone

has stood there, which ancient error had been accustomed

to gird with little ribbons or to inquire of with the lung of a hen,

it is broken and Terminus is desecrated by no entrails being offered,

and the garlanded tree which used to protect the smoking lamps 1010

falls, cut down by the avenging axe.

However, neither on that account is the produce of the little plot any less

nor the cheery mildness of the clear weather

nor the wind which moderates the cultivated meadow-land with rains.

But those who lively modestly have no need of much, and when 1015

the greatest [plenty] appears we do not relax with joy because of great wealth

nor rejoice in our profit with greedy enthusiasm.

For to those whose hope is shaped for eternal life

every good which the present age gives is insubstantial.

O exceedingly happy is the man who is both wise and rustic, 1020

who devotes himself to the land and to his soul, expends on both

unsleeping care, such as those whom Christ, our teacher, instructed,

and gave these instructions to the workers on the land whom he took on:

“ When you commit the seeds to the furrows, beware of fields

hard with the barrenness of pebbles, lest what is sown 1025

falls there, since, at first, the shoot, being very fertile,

runs riot, soon with the sap failing under the heat of the fiery

sun, thirsty, it is burnt up and withers;

do not let the seeds fall in with prickly thorn bushes,

for their rough bonds weave through the rising corn 1030

and the bramble bush restricts the frail stalks with sharp knots ;

and do not let the grains which you have thrown be scattered

on the mound on the side of the road,

since as they lie exposed for the birds, everywhere they are eaten up

and lie for the horrible amusement of the filthy crows”.

God encourages the farmer with these rules. He 1035

understands the heavenly law of the Father not with superficial hearing,

but he, at the same time, sets in order the produce of his heart and of the field

so that his heart may flourish no less through attention to what is interior

than when his joyful acres show forth their harvest.

For we eradicate rough thorn bushes from the heart, 1040

lest their bad shoots kill the life-giving seed

lest the thorny dog-rose of bad deeds impedes the fruits

and produce of the soul with frequent sinning,

lest thin gravel with barren sand dries up faith

withering under the heart, lest the heat of the breast 1045

blazes and burns up the grace in the exhausted veins

and lastly, lest poor consideration abandons God to a worn-out part

of the heart, lest it abandons the hope on which we feed interiorly

and leaves it to be devoured by foul birds

and faith, being cast aside, is plunder for the winged enemy. 1050

Such skill which it applies itself to them eagerly

returns the produce of our fields a hundredfold, and does

not fear lest the corn-worm lays waste the accumulated heap

or the black ant hides it in hole.

There are most beautiful rewards also for our virgins 1055

as well as modesty and a face covered with a holy veil

and private honour and an appearance not known nor public

and infrequent and poor banquets and an always moderate spirit,

and a rule of chastity completed when life ends.

From this, produce sixtyfold is brought into the granary, 1060

a granary which is never subject to nocturnal theft

for no thief approaches heaven, the things of heaven

are never destroyed by deceit; deceit is plotted on the earth below.

I shall now discuss what is the character of the Vestals` virginity

(and) by what law it governs all the dignity of chastity. 1065

And so in the first place as small girls they are taken in their formative years

before the free working of their own will ,

glowing with praise of chastity and love of the gods,
 may reject the lawful bonds of the sex they are to marry .

Captive chastity is dedicated to ungrateful altars 1070

The delight of an unsullied body does not perish for these poor girls
 by being rejected but by being taken away. The mind is not kept unsullied-
 nor is any rest given to beds in which an unmarried woman
 sighs over a random blow and lost wedding-torches.

Then, since their hope is still intact, it does not kill the whole fire- 1075

for at some time it will be lawful to light the idle torches
 and to draw the joyful bridal-veil over ancient gray hair.

Demanding chaste bodies for a fixed time,
 finally Vesta is revolted by a virgin old age.

While the vigour which made them suitable for marriage was ready to burst forth, 1080
 no love made fertile their useless wombs by giving birth as a mother.

As an old woman, a veteran, who has fulfilled her sacred task, she marries,
 and having left the hearths which her youth has served,
 she brings her well-earned wrinkles to the marriage couch
 and learns as a new bride to grow warm in an icy bed. 1085

Meanwhile as the twisted fillet binds her roaming hair
 and the unmarried priestess tends the burning coals of fate,
 she is carried through the middle of the streets as in a solemn public procession,
 sitting in a pleasant carriage, unveiling her face, she,
 a virgin to be admired, puts an astonished city in her debt. 1090

From there this uplifting modesty and piety free of blood
 goes to the assembly of the amphitheatre to see bloody battles and deaths
 of men and to watch with her holy eyes wounds bought for food.

She sits, notable by the venerable adornment of her priestly head-band,
 and delights in the trainers of gladiators. 1095

O what a gentle and tender soul! She rises at a blow
 and, as often as the victor pushes his sword into a throat, she says
 that he is her darling, and the modest virgin orders the chest
 of the one lying on the ground to be broken by turning down her thumb,
 so that no part of the breath hides in the lowest vital parts 1100
 while the gladiator pants with the sword being thrust in more deeply.

Is this their great service that they are said to
 maintain a constant watch on behalf of the grandeur of Palatine Latium,
 that they save the life of the people and the well-being of the nobles
 since they bestrew their necks nicely with their hair or nicely 1105

they surround their heads with little ribbons and they add threads to their hair
 and since under ground they cut the throats of sacrificial cattle in the midst of
 the flame with ghosts as witnesses and they mingle in their mutterings ?

Or is it since, sitting in the better part of the balcony next to the arena
 they watch how often the weapon-shafts shatter 1110

the face covered with a bronze helmet with the trident driven in,
 and how the wounded man bestrews part of the arena with his open wounds
 when he flees, and with how much blood he marks his track ?

That golden Rome may no longer know this type of wickedness

I beg you, most august ruler of the Ausonian kingdom, 1115

and that you may order such a grim ritual to removed like the others.

Look, is not this place of your father`s merit empty

which God and the kindly affection of your father

has reserved to be made good by you ? Lest he alone might

take the rewards of such great virtue, he has said:

“I reserve a part for you, my son, 1120

and have left the glory whole and untouched.

Snatch the reputation kept back for your time, O ruler

and as successor of his glory have whatever is left over from your father.

He forbade the city to be stained with the blood of bulls:

Forbid the deaths of wretched men to be offered in sacrifice. 1125

Let no-one fall in the city whose punishment is for pleasure,

nor may virginity delight its eyes with massacres.

Now let the notorious arena, content with wild beasts alone,

not take pleasure in murder with bloody weapons.

Let Rome be faithful to God, let her be worthy of such a great emperor 1130

and powerful in her bravery, and a stranger to wrong-doing

let her follow in loyalty the leader she follows in war.

COMMENTARY

Praefatio.

The preface is a feature of the poems of Prudentius and of late Latin poetry in general. Iuvencus and Proba had preceded their hexameter verses with a preface in the same metre. Claudian introduces his major hexameter poems with prefaces in elegiacs. Prudentius uses a wide variety of metres for his prefaces. Thus the use of prefaces in a different metre would seem to be a later development. Later, Sidonius has prefaces in a different metre to his hexameter verses. There is a discussion of the possible origins of these prefaces in Dewar (1996) p.47.

The preface to the second book of the *Contra Symmachum* is in glyconics. For a precedent in Latin verse for an extended piece in glyconics we have to look to the tragedies of Seneca (e.g. second chorus of *Thyestes* 336-403).

Prudentius' *Apotheosis*, *Hamartigenia*, *Psychomachia* and *Contra Symmachum* all begin with prefaces. Except in the case of the *Apotheosis* these prefaces centre on a biblical figure or figures. The preface to the *Hamartigenia* is about Cain and Abel, while that of the *Psychomachia* is about Abraham. Such prefaces are reminiscent of the major works of Claudian, whose preface which sometimes centres on a particular character, as for example the preface to the *In Rufinum* which makes allegorical use of the story of Python or a particular theme such as dreams (in the preface to the Panegyric on the sixth consulship of Honorius). Sidonius in his panegyrics also uses this kind of mythological preface.

The preface of the first book of the *Contra Symmachum* deals with an incident in the life of St Paul and this book has an incident featuring St Peter. They thus give a unity to his work and a Roman flavour as the two Apostles were believed to have been martyred in Rome under Nero. The preface to the first book had told the story of St Paul being shipwrecked and then attacked by a poisonous snake whom he drives away in the name of Christ. This story is found in the Acts of the Apostles (27.9-28.6). Prudentius compares this adventure of the apostle Paul to the situation in his own day when the Church, after a stormy existence, has reached the safety of the shore only to find herself attacked by the hidden viper which is the eloquence of Symmachus. Prudentius prays (80-89) that Christ will have mercy on Symmachus so that unlike the snake he will not be tossed into the fire.

In this preface Prudentius compares himself unfavourably to Peter who tried to walk on the water trusting his own merits and faith (48 *fidentem et merito et fide*) only to find he sank until Christ stretched out his hand and rescued him. Prudentius too will try to walk on the waters of the storm of Symmachus' eloquence but feels that he cannot trust in his own merits and faith as he is more sinful than Peter and appeals directly to Christ to save him by his power. Charlet (1989 p.243) has pointed out the verbal parallelism of the two sections of the preface by which Prudentius seeks to compare himself and his situation to that of Peter trying to walk on the water. Thus *naufragum* of 50 picks up *naufragis* of 15, *noctis* of 52, *nox* of 8, *puppem credere fluctibus* of 54 *puppi* of 31 and *fluctibus* of 33 and so on.

This incident is described in the Gospel of Matthew 14: 22-33, where Peter leaves the fishing boat and the other disciples to walk on the lake after spotting Jesus walking towards them on the water. Prudentius refers to this incident a total of seven times: cf. *C.*9.49-51, *A.*650-666 and *Per.*5.4473-480; 7.56-65; 10.947-950 and *Tituli* 137-140. For analysis of how Prudentius uses the story in differing contexts cf. Charlet (1989).

This same story is also recounted by Iuvencus in his versification of the Gospels (3.97-129) but there are no verbal echoes here of the earlier account, although there may be a reference to the Iuvencus passage later in the poem. (Cf. n.737.)

1. Simon quem uocitant Petrum This is the only place in his works that Prudentius refers to Peter by his original name of Simon. The Gospels relate how Christ gave Simon the name Peter in return for his acknowledgement of Christ as the Son of God. Simon thus became the rock on which the Church of Christ would be built. (cf. Mat. 16. 13-20). In the account in Matthew of Peter's intervention (the only Gospel which records this) he is not called Simon but Peter even though this is before he is given the name by Christ. However the Gospels on occasion refer to him as Simon Peter (e.g. Mat. 16.16 Jn.13.6;18.25; 20.6).

2 summus discipulus Dei, This title parallels the treatment of Paul in the praefatio to part one (*C.S. Pref.* 1) where Paul is given the title *praeco Dei*. Prudentius calls Peter the greatest disciple of God, presumably on the basis of the commission given by Christ in Matthew 16. 13-20 where he receives the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

4 uesper croceus rubet *Croceus* is more usually associated with the dawn (e.g. Ovid *A.*2.4.43 *placuit croceis Aurora capillis* *M.*3.149-50 *altera lucem/ cum croceis inuecta rotis Aurora reducet.*) I can find no precedent for Prudentius' use of *croceus* in this

context. The phrase *uesper rubet* is more common: cf. Vergil *G.* 1.251 *rubens ..Vesper*. Prudentius is thus describing the golden sun dipping below the horizon and the red glow of evening that follows.

13 cum stridore rudentium. This is reminiscent of Vergil's *stridorque rudentum* (*A.* 1.87). The genitive form favoured by Prudentius, which is more properly that of the participle of *rudere*, to roar, is also attested in Vitruvius (10.19). Whether it means the noise of ropes or men crying out is not very clear especially since Vergil also uses *rudentum* as the gen. pl. of the participle at *A.* 7.16. Vergil speaks in *A.* 1.87 of the *clamorque uirum* and that might be echoed in Prudentius' *clamor nauticus* in l. 11. With so many famous storm scenes in the Aeneid it would be surprising if Prudentius did not echo them here. Gar. notes that *clamor nauticus* is found in Vergil at *A.* 3.128 and 5.140-41 *ferit aethera clamor/ nauticus*. These allusions serve to give a general sense of continuity with the tradition of Latin poetry.

19 ac si Lav. § 842 notes that it is unusual to find *ac si* without *non secus* or something similar in the main clause. He gives as parallels *Bell. Hisp.* 13.5 *ab oppidanis, ac si suarum partium essent, conseruati* ; Tert. *Marc.* 4.29 and *Hermog.* 35

21 Haec miracula... the plural is odd here as there would seem to be only one wonder: Christ walking on the water. Maybe the storm is also meant to be included among the things that strike the sailors dumb.

23 solus non trepidus Petrus/agnoscit The *summus discipulus* justifies his title by being the only one who can see the true significance of Christ's identity. Here as Gar. p. 165 points out Prudentius has used poetic license in that in the Gospel version we are told that all the disciples were afraid until Jesus tells them to have courage. (cf. *Vulg. Mat.* 14.26 *Et*

uidentes eum super mare ambulanti, turbati sunt dicentes: Quia phantasma est. Et praetimore clamauerunt)

24. dominum poli.... *Dominus* is the Christian Latin transliteration of the Hebrew *Adonai* to mean the Lord or God. Here the sense of *poli* is that of the visible sky rather than heaven as the dwelling place of God. Elsewhere he speaks of *summum caeli dominum* (2.841). In Christian Latin *caelum* comes to mean more specifically heaven as the abode of God (e.g. *Vulg. Apoc.* 4.2 ; 11.15). There are examples of Prudentius using *caelum* to simply mean sky (e.g. *H.*70-1 *una per immensam caeli caueam reuolutos/ praebet flamma dies* or *C.* 11.9 *caelum nitescat laetius*) but *polus* always refers only to the sky (e.g. *C.* 2.3 *C* 5.6; *H.*86; *H* 681; *Per.* 3.63) whereas *caelum* can mean heaven (*C.S.*2.875 *operitur nescia caeli/ mens hominum saeuo uiuens captiua tyranno*). This may seem a false distinction if one has a world picture where Heaven is in the skies above, but the distinction can still be made between the sky visible to the human eye from earth and the *caelum* which is the abode of God. Claudian does use *polus* to refer to heaven too (Cf. *Rapt. Pros.* 3.273 *leges....poli*). Gar. points out that Prudentius often qualifies his use of *Dominus* with a genitive: e.g. 204, 768, 798, 841, 897, 905.

29. notum subsidium At the stage when Matthew describes the incident of Jesus and Peter walking on the water, he has already described many miraculous cures performed by Jesus and at 8.23-27 he has described the miracle when Jesus calmed a storm while they were in their boat on the lake. Thus while the disciples had not seen Jesus walk on water before Peter knew that Jesus had power over the elements.

placide. In a discussion of Vergil's use of *placidum* (*A.* 1.127) to describe Neptune rising from the waves to calm the storm in *Aeneid* 1, Austin (1965 p.64) shows how the word

can mean more than just calm but is often associated with rulers or gods even when they are *grauiter commotus* (as Vergil describes Neptune in the same passage A. 1. 126). It is quite possible that Prudentius intended its echo here as the context is so similar. There are echoes of Vergil throughout the poem.

37 Mortalem deus increpat The use of *mortalis* to refer simply to a human being is largely an early Latin usage. (cf. Plaut. *Truc.*5.57 *lepidus ecastor mortalis est Strabax*) but the word is more common in the plural (cf. Plaut *Trin.*1,2,175 *omnes mortales hunc aiebant Calliclem uiuere*) although it also occurs in Cicero (cf. Rosc. Com 34.95 *qua in re nihil aliud adsequeris nisi ut ab omnibus mortalibus audacia tua cognoscatur et impudentia.*) It can be found in other Christian writers used in the same way as Prudentius uses it here (cf. Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 23 *Interea minuebantur animalia et mortales obibant*). In this line Prudentius highlights the contrast between God and man by stressing the frailty of mankind as represented here by Peter.

41. famulum In the Psalms the word servant often came to mean a pious person (e.g. *Ps* 26.9 *Ne avertas faciem tuam a me; ne declines in ira a servo tuo*; 30.17 *Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum* and 88.51 *Memor esto, Domine, opprobrii servorum tuorum*). It is also used especially to refer as here to the leaders of God`s people as in *Vulg.*4 *Kgs* 18.12 where it refers to Moses (*omnia quae praeceperat Moyses, servus Domini, non audierunt, neque fecerunt*). St. Paul refers to himself as *servus Jesu Christi* *Vulg. Rom* 1.1. The word *famulus* is also found (cf. *Vulg. Jud* 2.8 *Mortuus est autem Josue, filius Nun, famulus Domini*)

44f sic me tuta silentia. Prudentius now compares Peter`s situation to his own. The subject of this sentence is *lingua*. Prudentius, by speaking, has brought himself into a

dangerous situation, as he must face the eloquence of Symmachus but he contrasts himself with Peter who in a dangerous situation trusted his merit and faith but Prudentius in a similar dangerous situation to Peter does not have that trust and his position is undermined by his sinfulness.

For a discussion of *tuta silentia* and its possible meanings see the introduction above.
(p.11)

The construction is interesting here as *egressum* takes the accusative where one might expect the ablative. L & S quotes examples of this construction from Caesar (*fines B.G.* 1. 44, 7), Livy (*urbem* 1.29) and others, where it means to go beyond, to pass out of or to leave.

For a detailed account of the advantages of silence from a Christian perspective cf. Ambrose *De Officiis* 1.2-3.

49 culpa frequens In the autobiographical Preface which is at the beginning of his collected poems., Prudentius speaks of the sins of his youth (10-12) and of his sinful soul (*peccatrix anima* 35). Christian writers from St Paul (e.g. I *Tim.* 1.15) onwards often accuse themselves of being great sinners and so Prudentius should not be thought as having been particularly bad but simply having a sensitive conscience.

51. Sum plane temerarius..... Prudentius compares Symmachus (55) to a storm into which he has launched his boat. Prudentius ends the preface with a plea to Christ to lend him the strength he needs to be able to walk on the waters of the storm of Symmachus' eloquence. The comparison between trusting oneself to a sea journey and setting out on a literary endeavour is familiar in Latin poetry. Lyne (1995 p.79) gives some parallels such as Vergil *G.* 2.41, Prop. 3.3.22-4, 3.9.3f and Hor. *C.* 1.3, 4.15.3f). Prudentius may be

recalling this tradition in his depiction of himself setting out on a rather unusual type of voyage.

52. qui noctis mihi conscius.... There is no clue to what kind of spiritual darkness Prudentius was passing through here, nor in the autobiographical Preface. He may just have been influenced by the story of Peter walking on the water which takes place at night and so wants to draw as many parallels as he can to the story and his own similar situation.

55 tanti non timeam uiri i.e. Symmachus. Prudentius is unfailingly courteous towards his opponent whose eloquence he holds in high esteem. Thus this poem is certainly only an argument *contra orationem Symmachi* and not a *Contra Symmachum*. Ambrose who always refers to Symmachus as *clarissimus* (*Ep.*18:1,3; 57:2), which was his title as a member of the senatorial order, makes reference to Symmachus' eloquence (*ep.*18.2 *uerborum elegantiam*) although Matthews (1975 p.205) thinks that this is an insincere rhetorical ruse to arouse suspicion about the content of Symmachus' *Relatio*. Ambrose makes no criticism of Symmachus himself and Prudentius not only imitates him but goes further by praising Symmachus. It is hard to believe that Matthews' conception of Ambrose's insincere praise of Symmachus would also apply to Prudentius' attitude. That such an approach was not always the norm with Christian controversialists can be seen for example from Jerome, in his debate with a fellow Christian (cf. *Adv. Jov.*1.4 (where he calls Jovinian a *uoluptuosissimus concionator* and describes his book as vomit); 2.36). For the origins of such a polite approach, Brakman (1920 p.437) suggested that this may be one of similarities between Prudentius and Lucretius, who is very polite towards Democritus (3.370-371) and Empedocles (1.729-741), while disagreeing on some points.

Epicureanism was indebted to Democritus' ideas on atomism, so the praise of Empedocles is perhaps more relevant: Lucretius probably admired him for his hexameter poem on nature although his work influenced atomism (cf. *OCD* Empedocles). However, as Brakman points out, (p.438) Prudentius is generous in his assessment of the emperor Julian too (A. 450-452), but Prudentius can also be less charitable to other opponents: he calls Sabellius *profanator Christi* (A.178), Marcion, *perfide Cain, diuisor blasphemae Dei* (H. 1-2), and the emperor Galerius *inmitis, atrox, asper inplacabilis* (Pe.10. 33). It can only be concluded that Prudentius feels real respect for Symmachus.

59 cui mersare facillimum est It is curious that Prudentius should be so convinced that Symmachus' oratory could overwhelm him given that Ambrose had made his famous reply in *Ep.* 18. All Prudentius had to do was to use Ambrose's arguments and yet he prefers to present himself as being the first to confront Symmachus over this issue and makes no reference to Ambrose throughout the whole poem. However it is clear that Prudentius was not as interested in historical accuracy (as is seen in his imagined visit of Theodosius to Rome in book one) as in providing a general poetic version of the whole struggle against paganism.

61 Christe potens *M* records a compound adjective, *Christipotens*, made out of the vocative *Christe potens*. Such a mistake is interesting as the word *Christipotens* is used by Prudentius only in this poem (C.S.2, 710). However it is clearly Christ whom he is addressing here and not someone made powerful by Christ.

1-4 Introduction

Prudentius says how he has spoken of the the origins of the pagan gods of Rome and how she has now converted to belief in Christ and that now he will refute the arguments of Symmachus. At the end of book one (C.S.1 622ff), Prudentius addressed Symmachus for the first time. He says that he admires Symmachus` eloquence, that his talents are wasted on defending old gods and that he would be better off praising the one true God (*ib.* 632-642). While Prudentius says he has no intention of attacking Symmachus` remarkable work, he will defend himself against its attacks (*ib.*643-655). Thus he recalls that intention now.

1-4. Hactenusnunc legam Prudentius begins his second book with a quotation from the beginning of the second book of the *Georgics* (G. 2.1-2 *hactenus.....nunc canam* as noted by Bergman p.463). There are many allusions to the *Georgics* in this book, especially between 281-298 and 921-1053 where the subject is agriculture. Since Symmachus had claimed that crop failures had arisen since the state had stopped subsidising pagan worship (*Rel.*3.16), agriculture is bound to be a topic in the poem. Prudentius uses Vergil`s poem to give authority to his arguments as when he argues that Symmachus` position leads to a primitivist outlook (270-369) and when he discusses Symmachus` claim that the crops have failed (917-1064). With this introduction we are made to understand that the *Georgics* will be an important text for the poem.

1-2 cunabula prima deorumin orbe est In book one (42-244) Prudentius wrote an attack on traditional pagan beliefs as many Christian writers had done previously (cf. Arnobius, Firmicus Maternus). He claims that the gods were mortals who were later thought to have been gods (C.S. 1. 145-244) Tertullian (*Apologeticus* (esp. 10-11)) makes

the same claim. This idea was taken up by Christians from the line of thought of Euhemerus (c.280 B.C.) who in his Ἱερὰ ἀναγραφὴ wrote of how all the great gods had once been men, kings or warriors. (Minucius Felix in the *Octavius* 21.1 makes a direct reference to Euhemerus.)

Thus Prudentius writes how Saturn was a stranger who taught rustics how to make pruning instruments (ll.42-58), Jupiter his son tricked the simple inhabitants of the land to take advantage of their women (ll. 59-83) and Venus was nothing more than a high-born woman who married below her status (172-173) etc. He gives examples of how famous people in Roman history were later worshipped as gods (e.g. Augustus (ll.245-250 and Livia (l.251)). As for Trivia, he claims that she is a demon (a claim also made by Tertullian about the gods *Apol.* 23.11).

3. nostro..... Christo The expression “our Christ” seems strange at first but *noster* can simply be a term of affection (e.g. Ter. *Ad.*5,5,2 *O Syre noster, salve, quid fit ? Quid agitur ?*) Prudentius is quite fond of this expression (cf. *C.S.* 1.36 *felix nostrae res publica Romae/ iustitia regnante uiget:: C.S.* 2.742 *noster Stilicho: Per.* 2.171 *noster Deus/praediues in sanctis habet: Per.* 4.141 *Hunc nouum nostrae titulum fruendum/ Caesaraugustae dedit ipse Christus*

4. Nunc obiecta legam, nunc dictis dicta refellam

Prudentius gives an explicit statement of what this book will seek to do. Despite the tone of the preface, Prudentius seems quite certain of himself in this line. This is the point that book one has been leading to. He had spoken at the beginning of the first book about an outbreak of pagan activity again in Rome, which he had believed to have been overcome (*C.S.*1. 1-7) This point he had illustrated by the preface to the first book where St. Paul,

recovering from a storm at sea, pressing a bunch of twigs onto a fire made on the shore, found himself bitten by a snake which had been resting there and which was revived by the heat. Prudentius compares the attack of the snake to the words of Symmachus (*C.S. 1 Praef. 74-78*). As explained above (p.15), most of book one consists of an attack on the folly of pagan religion, which provides the background to the attack on Symmachus which begins in book two. However, the end of book one contains lines which bridge the gap between the two books, when Prudentius starts speaking directly about his intention to defend the Christian faith against the eloquence of Symmachus (*C.S.1.632-655*). Now after the preface which speaks again of a storm at sea and the power of Christ to save him from drowning, Prudentius is ready to face Symmachus.

For the structure of Prudentius' reply to Symmachus' points and a comparison with Ambrose's reply in his *Ep.18* cf. the introduction above (pp.22-24).

5-66 First restatement of Symmachus (Rel.3.3) and a reply by the emperors Honorius and Arcadius

5 Unde igitur coepisse ferunt aut ex quibus orsum Symmachus is understood as the subject of *coepisse* although he has not yet been named in this book.

6. sancta ducum corda At the time Symmachus composed his *Relatio* it was addressed notionally to both Valentinian II who ruled in the West, Theodosius and his son Arcadius who was Augustus in the East (*Rel.3.1 ddd.nnn. imperatores*). He uses the second person plural throughout, although in other letters to emperors he uses the plural as well as the

singular when addressing only one emperor (e.g. *uestra clementia Rel.1 2* written to Valentinian in 384). However the appeal was made before Valentinian. (Ambrose mostly addresses Valentinian but also at times uses the plural and addresses emperors (*Ep. 18.22 fidelissimi Principes, 32 imperatores*) In this poem Symmachus is made to address the brother emperors Honorius and Arcadius. When he speaks of the emperors “*inter castra patris genitos, sub imagine auita eductos.*” (l.8) this clearly shows he is thinking of Honorius and Arcadius, the grandsons of the general Theodosius who died in 376, and not Valentinian and Theodosius I who were not related. As mentioned in the introduction a renewed appeal by Symmachus on behalf of paganism in 402 does not seem to have taken place. Steidle (1971 p.280) makes the point that Prudentius had to have Symmachus address an emperor as the issue concerned religion and the state. Given that the theme of the poem is the victory that Christianity has brought to Rome at Pollentia and the rebuke that this gave to pagan claims that Christianity was bad for the state as it meant her traditional gods who had brought her success were neglected, then it would be appropriate for the emperors under whom the victory was won to respond to Symmachus’ arguments.

Gnilka (1991 p.41) insists that 5ff. must refer to an actual plea by Symmachus before the emperor and that if this was a literary fiction it would turn Prudentius into a hypocrite. In 40, Prudentius speaks of a *ius poetarum*. Just as in book one he uses this *ius* to devise an imaginary visit to Rome by Theodosius (C.S.1.408-505), so here he imagines Symmachus before the emperors. Baldini (1987-88 p.156) points out that the story of a visit to Rome by Theodosius may reflect an *oratio principis* which was sent by the victorious emperor to the Senate. Despite Gnilka, I believe that Prudentius imagines this

scene for the reasons given by Steidle above. Döpp (1997 p.281) also argues that the meeting between Symmachus and the emperors is fictional.

Post 6 For the question of the prose quotations from Symmachus' *Relatio* 3, see the introduction. The manuscripts all include here the first of a number of quotations from Symmachus' *Rel.*3. The text included in the manuscripts here is from *Rel.*3.3 and is quoted here below at n.12-16

7 armorum dominos uernantes flore iuuentae Bergman (p. 463) cites Statius (*Sil.*5.5.18 *tenerae signatum flore iuuentae*) for the last two words here. Statius writes in the context of mourning the death of his adopted son. The same phrase is also noted as occurring in Claudian (*Con. Stil.* 2.351 *signatus flore iuuentae*). Since Prudentius does not have the verb *signare* it is more likely that he has taken the phrase from Claudian than from Statius. The two words *flore iuuentae* may seem fairly conventional and thus unremarkable but given that they occupy in each poet the same position in the line, it is possible to see an intended allusion by Prudentius here.

Claudian uses the phrase to refer to Eucherius, the son of Stilicho: Prudentius uses it to refer to the sons of Theodosius, but by making the allusion draws attention to Stilicho's son. It may be that he wishes to draw attention to Stilicho's relationship with the imperial family, although Eucherius himself may have been an embarrassment to Prudentius as he was rumoured to be a pagan (cf. Cameron (1970) p. 46).

Gar. notes that *Armorum dominos* may be derived from Claudian's *armorum procures* (*IV Cons. Hon.*5) where it refers to generals who now put on the toga for the ceremonies for the beginning of the consulship. I can find no particular resonance between that idea

and this passage where it is the young emperors who are the subject not the generals who serve them.

8 inter castra patris genitos This aspect of Honorius' upbringing is also mentioned by Claudian (*III Con. Hon.* 14-62) in more colourful language (e.g. *reptasti per scuta, regumque recentes/ exuuias tibi ludus erant III. Con. Hon.* 22-3). Claudian devotes part of the *III Con. Hon* to a description of Honorius' upbringing in the camp of Theodosius (*III Con. Hon.* 7-62) He also devotes many lines to Theodosius' words of advice to the young Honorius (*IV Con. Hon.* 214-352, 370-418)

9 calentes] *caelestes T ut vid.*, *colentes Tc*, *tenentes T2 u.l.E* Bergman Cunningham and Garuti prefer the majority reading of *calentes*. Bergman only records the alternative *tenentes* in *CPE* and in the margin of *V*. While *tenentes* makes the easiest sense by saying that the emperors adhered to the examples they found at home but it is very bland. Cunningham records that *T* seems to read *caelestes* which would not work being an adjective where a participle is needed. *T* has a correction of *colentes* which would be better, less bland than *tenentes* and smoother than *calentes* but it only occurs in one manuscript in a correction and so lacks the authority of *calentes* which is found in the remaining manuscripts. *Calentes* is unusual in this kind of construction as it is normally intransitive, but I think *calentes* must be retained. It is certainly the *difficilior lectio* in that *exempla congesta* would then have to be an accusative of respect. The *TLL* lists this passage as a unique example of *caleo* with a Greek accusative (*caleo* II.2 *cum acc. graeco*).

10-11 ceu classica belli clangeret This is another of Lav.'s examples (*ibid.*) of Prudentius using the accusative after an intransitive verb. The verb is used in the same

way by Prudentius at C. 5.48 (*iubet acies clangere classicum*). It is interesting to note that while *clangere* is used frequently in the Vulgate it is always with the ablative (e.g. *si clanget tuba in civitate et populus non expavescet si erit malum in civitate quod Dominus non fecit. Amos 3.6*). The Vulgate never uses *classicum* to mean trumpet either so we can see that Prudentius was not greatly influenced by it.

12-16. Prudentius begins to dissect the arguments of Symmachus. The original passage which Prudentius is paraphrasing reads: *Quis ita familiaris est barbaris ut aram Victoriae non requirat? Cauti in posterum sumus et aliarum rerum ostenta uitamus. Reddatur saltem nomini honor, qui numini denegatus est. Multa Victoriae debet Aeternitas uestra et adhuc plura debebit; auersentur hanc potestatem, quibus nihil profuit; uos amicis triumphis patrocinium nolite deserere. Cunctis potentia ista uotiuu est; nemo colendam neget, quam profitetur optandum.* (Rel.3.3) Cunningham includes this quotation, as he does others, in his version of the text of Prudentius since it is in the ancient manuscripts. However, it is clear that these passages could not be part of the original otherwise why would Prudentius have paraphrased Symmachus' argument as soon as he had quoted it? (Cf. Intro. pp. 26-28 for discussion about the prose passages.)

17-65. Prudentius puts a speech into the mouths of the emperors, Arcadius and Honorius. They say that it is military ability and strength rather than the presence of a statue of Victory which enables wars to be won. They go on to condemn the alliance of painting, sculpture and poetry which has allowed men to believe that it is important to have such an image in the Senate house. The only symbols of victory they should have are the crowns of defeated kings. The images of the gods should be destroyed. In the first book of the C. S., Prudentius records Theodosius as making a decree that the statues of the

gods should be preserved as works of art (*C.S* 1.502-05). Theodosius had issued orders for pagan statues to be preserved as works of art (*CTh*.16.10.8 issued in 382 regarding the temple at Edessa). Arcadius and Honorius issued a decree in 399 for Spain and Gaul (*C.Th* 16.10.15) ordering the preservation of statues: *Sicut sacrificia prohibemus, ita uolumus publicorum operum ornamenta seruari*. The decree even uses the same word, *ornamenta*, as the emperors' command in Prudentius which calls for their destruction. A law of Honorius and Arcadius calling for the destruction of statues is not found until 408 (*CTh*.16.10.19.1).

Solmsen (1965 II) had noticed this contradictory attitude between the two books too and concluded that the end of the speech by Theodosius in book one where he calls for the preservation of pagan statues for artistic purposes is meant to reflect the law of 399 passed by Arcadius and Honorius (and thus points to this part of book one being composed no sooner than 399 or at least edited at that date to reflect the new imperial policy). Döpp (1986 p.67-69) resolves the contradiction by claiming that the command of Theodosius in book one is for the statues to be preserved as works of art, while the command in book two is for statues to be destroyed is a theological statement, calling for the rejection of *res incorporeae* as representations of the divine. Prudentius is interested in preserving those parts of the pagan past which are not incompatible with Christianity. His own use of pagan literature shows this. His attitude reflects that of the legislation seeking to preserve the art of the past while abandoning the cult it served.

Malamud (1989 87-91) sees a contradiction here in the emperors' rejection of art, sculpture and poetry and believes that Prudentius is distancing himself from the words he puts into their mouths.

It is clear that Prudentius is not against art. Malamud (p.85) writes about his depiction of the martyr, Hippolytus, where he describes the picture of the martyr in his shrine, which owes much to traditional depictions of the mythical Hippolytus. The emperors are simply against art in the service of pagan religion. However their condemnation of the threefold conspiracy of art, sculpture and poetry is rather severe and Malamud says that this speech should not be taken as representing Prudentius' own thoughts on the matter. So long as the distinction made by Döpp (1986) is kept in mind, a thread of logic can be maintained against what appears to be contradictory attitudes between Theodosius and his sons in the poem. Especially interesting, given the emperors' views on pagan poetry, is their quotation from the *Aeneid* (cf.n.53-54)!

17. legatus Symmachus had described himself as a *legatus* of the senate in the original *Relatio* of 384 (*Rel.* 3.1) He did so again in *Ep.* 4.9 (one of the six letters that he wrote which relate to his visit to Milan of 402). These letters do not actually state the nature of Symmachus' mission except to say that it was *communis patriae sollicitudo* and a *causa publica* which led him to undertake it (*Ep.* 5.95; 7.13). For discussion of this embassy cf. Intro. pp.6-7.

It is interesting to note the terms of address Prudentius uses for Symmachus. He calls him *legatus* three times (17, 770, 910), *censor* once (271), *senator*, once (309), *orator* once (370) and *Romane* once (583). Such terms are at best respectful and at least neutral. (Cf. n. *Praef.* 55)

reddunt placidissima fratrum/ ora ducum. Prudentius continues the idea that Symmachus is addressing Honorius and Arcadius and that they reply to the points he raises. It does seem rather extraordinary for Prudentius to depict the brother emperors

replying in unison to Symmachus. It is an indication of his relaxed attitude to historical realities such as is seen in his depiction of Theodosius in book one as visiting Rome after the battle of Frigidus, an event that most commentators think was unlikely to have occurred (cf. Baldini (1987-1988) p.145-157). The image that may have been in his mind is that of the reverse of Roman coins of the period which regularly showed two emperors sitting side by side. For example such a *solidus* was issued in Milan in 396 to mark the joint consulship of the Honorius and Arcadius (cf. Carson (1981) p. 77). It may be significant to note that earlier versions of the same image from previous reigns often had a figure of Victory between the two emperors, as is the case with coins from the 380's (cf. *ibid.* p. 68-71). Claudian also refers to the brother emperors as *unanimi fratres* (*III Con. Hon* 189) and addresses them both at the same time.

For all we know the brother emperors may have got on extremely well on a personal level, but there was much tension between Rome and Constantinople during their joint reign. Both emperors were dominated by their ministers who dictated their policies. Stilicho claimed that Theodosius had left him as guardian of both emperors (Ambrose supported this claim: cf. *De Obitu Theodosii* 5 *non communi iure testatus est* (Theodosius) ; *de filiis enim nihil habebat nouum quod conderet, quibus totum dederat, nisi ut eos praesenti commendaret parenti*) but he never established real influence in the East, over Arcadius.

19 Ausoniae uir facundissime linguae Prudentius continues his compliments to Symmachus' ability as an orator. He uses a similar phrase in A. 380 (*pangit et Ausoniae facundia tertia linguae*) where he speaks of how Christ is now being praised in works written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Ausonia derives from the ancient name for the

inhabitants of middle and lower Italy and in poetry came to be a synonym for the whole of Italy (e.g. Ver. A. 10. 54 *Karthago premat Ausoniam*). The Ausonian tongue was thus a poetic way of speaking about Latin. (Cf. Mart. 9.87).

21 pater. There is no way of telling whether the emperors are speaking about any father teaching his sons about how to achieve victory or whether they mean Theodosius specifically. I think the latter is more likely as the passage also speaks of how the boys' own father learnt about victory from his father: Theodosius I and his father were both renowned as successful generals.

23. Non aris, non farre molae uictoria felix/ exorata uenit. This is the beginning of a section which has as its theme the idea that the Roman success in war is not due to divine intervention but to the strength and courage of Roman soldiers. While no Christian would ever subscribe to Epicurean views, this poem does have passages which have echoes of Lucretius. (Cf. Brakman (1920); Rapisarda (1950).)

This idea sounds as if it ought to have an Epicurean pedigree. Lucretius never discusses the role of the gods in war but their general lack of influence on human affairs is made clear from the start of the *De Natura Rerum*. At 1.44 he writes:

omnis enim per se diuom natura necessest
inmortali aeuo summa cum pace fruatur
semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;

Cicero, in the *De Natura Deorum*, has the sceptic Cotta refute the Stoic notion of divine providence (*De. Nat. Deorum* 3.79-93) but does not mention any lack of interest by the gods in the military affairs of Rome. The tradition certainly existed which attributed Rome's victories to the prowess of its soldiers. Ennius' lines quoted in Cicero's *De*

Republica (5.1) voice this tradition (*Moribus antiquis res stat Romana uirisque*). Livy provides further material for this line of thought e.g. 9.17.3. *disciplinam militarem, qua stetit ad hunc diem Romana res*. However the idea that the gods, or at least Fortune, favoured the Romans in their military successes was very much part of the tradition. Propertius sums this thinking up in the line *quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes stamus* (3.22.21). Cicero in the *De Haruspicum Responsis* (18ff) makes the claim that all Rome's success is due to her careful observance of religious duty and her understanding that all things are under the direction of the gods. The advocate of paganism in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, Caecilius, makes the same case for the success of Rome being linked with her devotion to the gods and he gives examples of how neglect of the cult of the gods led to the disasters Rome suffered in the past (*Oct.* 7.) Claudian is not averse to using the idea of the gods fighting for the armies of Rome. When he refers to the victory of the Christian Theodosius over the pagan usurper Eugenius at the battle of Frigidus in *III Con. Hon.* 96-98 he speaks of Theodosius as *nimum dilecte deo* but goes on to tell of how it was Aeolus who freed the winds to fight for Theodosius.

Ambrose had made the same point that Prudentius makes when he has *Roma* say “*Non in fibris pecudum sed in uiribus bellatorum tropaea sunt*” (*Ep.* 18.7) However Prudentius in 24-26 makes more of the point and he makes the same point again when his *Roma* speaks at 705-6. Thus we see Prudentius following Ambrose in distancing himself from the idea that battles were won through divine intervention.

26 robur in armis This is one of the passages identified by Cameron (1970) p.473 which echo a passage of Claudian. In this case the parallels are in *III Cons.Hon.* 144 (*bellipotens Stilicho, cuius mihi robur in armis/ pace probata fides*) and *Stil.* 1. 31 (*hunc forma*

decens, hunc robur in armis). In the first passage the phrase appears (also at the end of the line) in a speech by Theodosius in which he entrusts his sons to the guardianship of Stilicho after the victory of Frigidus. It is thus about Stilicho Theodosius speaks when he refers to him having *robur in armis*. In the second passage, again the phrase occupies the end of a line and it is one of a list of attributes which men enjoy but all of which, Claudian says, are possessed by Stilicho. Thus the phrase is again associated with Stilicho. In the Prudentius passage it again forms part of a list. This time it is a list of the virtues given by Honorius and Arcadius, which are necessary for victory in war. Given its context in a list it is likely that Prudentius intended to recall the Claudian passage and maybe also to allude to Stilicho's military prowess. He certainly is full of praise of Stilicho later in the poem (l. 743-44).

28 rutilas...pinnae Although red would be the most literal translation it is more likely that the whole statue was made of gold and so *rutilas* here means shining or glittering. For another reference to the golden wings of the statue cf. Claudian *VI Cons Hon* 598 (*diuite penna*).

30 non aderit Dewar (1996) p.395. suggests that this a deliberate echo of Claudian's *adsis* and *adfuit ipsa* (*Stil.* 3. 212, *VI Cons.Hon.* 597) when he is speaking of the goddess Victoria. Certainly, as Gar. comments (n.16), *adest* is a technical term used for the presence of a god (*Verg.G.* 1,18 *adsis, o Tegeaeae*, *A.5.578*). Thus, while it is certainly a swipe at pagan belief, there may also be a specific reference here to Claudian's defence of the cult of Victoria.

33-4 A legion may never have seen a winged girl directing the course of battle but appearances of divine beings during battle were, as we might expect, not unknown. The

most famous example that comes to mind is the appearance of Castor and Pollux at the battle of Lake Regillus where they were seen fighting on horseback for the Romans (Cic. *N. D.* 2.6.) In Prudentius' own time Zosimus (5.6) records how Alaric was astonished by the sight of Athena Promachos on the walls of Athens when he started to besiege the city, while Achilles appeared to lead Athens' soldiers. The appearance of the Angel of Mons in the first World War provides a more recent example of this phenomenon.

35 Vincendi quaeris dominam ? Sua cuique dextra est Prudentius often tries to sum up his thoughts in a memorable phrase which sounds like a proverb. For other examples from this poem mentioned by Lav. (§ 1619) cf. l.315, 471 & 807. Other examples from Prudentius' output mentioned by Lav (§1617) are *Pe.* 10 388, *Pe.* 10 515, *Ps.* 396, *Ps.* 763 & *H.* 257.

Sua...dextra...../ et deus omnipotens Gar. draws attention to a Vergilian precedent for this combination. At *A.* 11.118 Aeneas speaks of how a combat between himself and Turnus would be decided either by the will of god or by their own strength (*cui uitam deus aut sua dextra dedisset*). Thus Prudentius backs up his argument here by an appeal to the Vergilian text.

sua cuique dextra est This is the reading favoured by Cunningham. Bergman prefers *sua dextera cuique est*. Cunningham's reading is that of B and T. Bergman's is an emendation which takes *dextera* from E (whose reading is *sua dextera forti est*) and the word order from S which has *sua dextra cuique est*. Cunningham examines the five occurrences of *cuique* in Prudentius (§ 129) and shows that it is scanned as – uu for certain at *H.* 105 (*adsignare deos propios sua cuique iura*) where there is no textual variant and so this is the only possible scansion. It also occurs in this poem a few lines

later at l.89 (*suus est mos cuique genti*) (cf n.89) although there is a textual variant at this point. Lav. calls this scanning of *cuique* astonishing (Lav. §185). Prudentius may also have used the traditional scansion (-u) at H.888 but Cunningham (*ibid.*) also suggests that he may have read it as uuu. Given that the only advantage of Bergman's emendation is to allow a traditional scansion for *cuique* and it can be shown that Prudentius was known to scan it as a dactyl, then I think that Cunningham's version is to be preferred here.

40 iure poetarum Prudentius seems here and a few lines later to be attacking poets for conniving in the creation of pagan worship. This raises interesting questions about Prudentius' own view of what poetry meant. Did he believe in a *ius poetarum* for himself too? There is another reference to the role of the poet in creating pagan myth in *Per.* 10 on the martyrdom of Romanus which has a close relationship with C.S as they both deal with questions of the nature of pagan religion. In *Per.*10 Prudentius again attacks poets for creating stories about the gods (*Per.* 10. 216) and sculptors for making statues of the gods (*Per.*10. 266-95). However Prudentius does not believe all poets to be bad: he classes himself as a *poetam rusticum* in *Per.*2.574.

For parallels to *ius poetarum* cf. Gnilka (1991 p.17.n.60), especially Horace's *pictoribus atque poetis/ quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas* (A.P. 9-10). Gnilka shows that the *Ars Poetica* is very much in Prudentius' mind in this section. Cf. n.57-60.

42 ceraque liquenti Wax could be used as a binding agent for paintings in the encaustic process. (cf. Henig (1983) p.97) There is a reference in Statius to this process which links it to Apelles whom Prudentius is about to mention (S.1.1.100 *Apellae cuperent te scribere cerae*).

42-44 ceraque....coloratis....fucis Ambrose has a passage (*In Psalm. 118.15.36*) where he links these three items: *imago caelestis non fuco expressa, non ceris, non coloribus*. This Ambrose passage does not throw any light on Prudentius' thinking here.

45. Sic unum sectantur iter.... Honorius and Arcadius now begin an attack on the work of Homer, representing poetry, Apelles, representing art, and Numa, representing pagan religious traditions which Prudentius sees as combining in an alliance of deceit. This section of the reply to the first point of Symmachus ends with Honorius and Arcadius claiming that the figure of a woman covered in feathers is not an appropriate symbol for Rome's senate house to mark its prestige (60-62). This idea is not taken from Ambrose. Here Prudentius seems to have strayed from the original debate which was about the altar of victory and its removal from the Senate and not the statue. However an attack on the gods of paganism as depicted in poetry was standard Christian fare. Tertullian in the *Apologeticus* attacks pagan rituals and the stories of the gods in poetry (*Apol. 14.*) and Minucius Felix praises Plato for excluding Homer from his Republic because his depiction of divine beings is not compatible with the divine nature. (cf. *Oct. 24.2-4* where he writes : *Et Plato ideo praeclare Homerum illum inclytum laudatum et coronatum de ciuitate, quam in sermone instituebat, eiecit. Hic enim praecipuus bello Troico deos uestros, etsi ludos facit, tamen in hominum rebus et actibus miscuit, hic eorum paria composuit, sauciauit Venerem, Martem uinxit, uulnerat, fugauit.*) The pagan Caecilius had also distanced himself from the poets' stories about the gods and said that instead one should look at all the temples in Rome which are evidence of the gods' care for the city (*Oct.7.5*). Of course the incompatibility of the gods of poetry with those of philosophy

was not an invention of the Christians. The criticism started with Xenophanes who was active between 550 and 478 B.C. He wrote:

παντα θεοῖς ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ' Ἡσίοδος τε
 ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστί,
 καὶ πλεῖστ' ἐφθέγγοντο θεῶν ἀθεμίστια ἔργα,
 κλέπτειν, μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεῦειν.(B. 11)

(Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods everything which in mankind is disgrace and reproach, since they have uttered many lawless deeds of the gods: stealing, committing adultery, deceiving one another)

Prudentius also attacks the power of statues of the gods in *Per.* 10.266-300 where he has the martyr Romanus ask: *Quid inprecabor officinis Graeciae/quae condiderunt gentibus stultis deos?* (*Per.* 10.267)

Malamud (1989 p.89) here raises the question of why do the emperors say that these three arts all follow a single path, when in Prudentius' world, it is truth which has a single path while the path of error breaks into many winding roads? For example at 849 he will declare *sola errore caret simplex uia*. While Malamud raises an interesting point and the difficulties of interpretation probably derive from an inner conflict in Prudentius himself about the legacy of pagan art and literature, I think Malamud goes too far in saying that Prudentius is seeking to undermine this speech of the emperors and indicating his disapproval of their stance on pagan art. He is simply arguing against the use of statues in pagan worship.

45. sic cassa figuris] *sic probat Heinsius, sic inania rerum BTc (inani T) ZEQ, edd. plerique metro obstante, sic inania rerum cassa figuris t* Here we have an unusual

divergence in the tradition.. *Cassus* with the ablative to mean something is lacking in respect to a particular thing is not rare (e.g. *cassum anima corpus* Lucr. 3. 562). Bergman prefers *inania rerum*: Cunningham prefers *cassa figuris*. With *inania rerum* then *sic* must be scanned as a short syllable which is unusual, especially as it has already occurred as the conventional long syllable earlier in the same line (cf. Lav. § 181). Bergman records that *U* has the words *inania rerum* in the margin but deleted with *cassa figuris* in the text, while *D* has *inania rerum* in the text but deleted with *cassa figuris* written in. *Cassa figuris* is certainly the *lectio difficilior* in terms of meaning and *inania rerum* is unacceptable for metrical reasons and thus Cunningham's choice is to be preferred.

47 Numa The second king of Rome and the founder of Roman religion is credited here with the invention of idolatry, which is what one might expect a Christian writer to say. Tertullian had spoken of *Numa qui Romanos operosissimis superstitionibus oneravit* (Tert. Ap. 21.29). Augustine speaks of the peace during the reign of Numa and of his laws but is dismissive of both (*Civ.Dei.*2.16;23.9;7.34-35) saying that, if peace came about through the ceremonies instituted by Numa, then why did that peace not extend beyond his reign? Augustine sees Numa's communication with the other world as contact with demons. Claudian makes conventional references to Numa as peace-loving (*IV Cons. Hon* 493 *placido... Numa*) and wise (*In. Ruf.*1. 114 *sitNuma grauior*). However Prudentius elsewhere seems to think Numa is a figure worth saving as he speaks of how even Numa may come to recognise Christ, along with Romulus (*Per.* 2.444).

cognatumque. The sense must be that painting, the Muses and idolatry wish for something that is of a similar nature or connected. The *TLL* lists this passage of *cognatum* as a neutr. subst. and has only one other example of the same usage, from Symmachus'

Rel. 31.1 moribus scaeuus familiare atque cognatum est armare spiritus. However the *TLL* has many examples of *cognatus* meaning ‘of a similar nature or kindred’ most of which are from Claudian (e.g. *In Ruf.* 2.5. 360; *III Cons. Hon.* 14; *Cons Stil.* 322 etc.). Lav. (§ 895) notes that the use of a neuter singular as a substantive, especially for adjectives of the second declension, occurs in the classical period but much more after that. He gives many examples from Prudentius. However with Cunningham’s reading of *malum* in this line rather than *uolunt*, *cognatum* becomes an adjective and easier to construe. Gniska (1991 p.6) does comment that it is daring to have *cognatum* as a neuter substantive.

uolunt] *malum B2St, uolunt BTQ, uocant Tc u.l.E.* Cunningham here chooses *malum*. With *malum*, the verb *concupiunt* must be understood in this clause too. Gniska (*loc. cit*) makes the point that *malum* is the easier reading and a plural verb here would follow on from the previous two in the sentence. I agree but it is really very difficult to know which reading is the best here.

camenae The Camenae were goddesses with a shrine outside the Porta Capena with a spring from which the Vestals drew their daily water supply, and the Latin name for the Muses. Servius tells how when their shrine was struck by lightning they were removed to the temple of Hercules Musarum (Serv. A 1.8). Although a pagan concept, elsewhere Prudentius is happy enough to speak of the muse in the conventional way of Roman poetry (cf. *C.9,3 hunc (Christum) Camena nostra solum pangat, hunc laudet lyra* or *C.3.26 sperne, Camena, leues hederas* and finally *Per. 6.153 reddamus paribus pares camenas*).

48. idola Prudentius scans *idola* as a complete dactyl: the second syllable is usually long.

convaluit fallendi trina potestas. This could mean either that the the power of deceiving grew three-fold (as Thomson takes it in the Loeb translation) or that the threefold power of deceiving grew strong. It depends on whether we think Prudentius believed in a pre-existing power of deception which grew into a threefold form of art, poetry and idolatry or whether he thought that deception was always found in these three forms and that through Homer, Apelles and Numa they became stronger. The notion of a *potestas fallendi* or *decipiendi* does not occur elsewhere in Prudentius' work. Given that Prudentius would believe in Satan, the father of lies (*Jn.* 8.44), then I think it more likely that here the meaning should be that the power of deception grew three-fold.

There is also a question with *convaluit*. The verb can mean either to recover strength or to gain strength. The sense here must be to simply grow strong as there is nothing in the context to suggest that it recovered strength which had been lost.

49 Prudentius sees a conspiracy of art and poetry to create the pagan religion. This section explores whether art inspires imitation among its viewers and is somewhat reminiscent of modern debates on the effect of "video nasties" on young minds. The two examples of Attis and Hippolytus make the same simple point that pagan art and myth had a profound influence on actual behaviour. Yet, Malamud (1989 p.92) notes that Prudentius' own depiction of a painting of the martyrdom of St Hippolytus (*Per.* 11.123-44), bears a striking resemblance to pagan depictions of the mythical Hippolytus. (Cf. Malamud (1989) pp.86-7) for a discussion of the similarities with the painting of the mythical Hippolytus described by Philostratus the Elder in his *Imagines*.) While Malamud chooses to see implied criticism of the emperors in this, it is simpler to take it as an example of Prudentius taking pagan art and using it for a Christian purpose.

50. cerisque In 42 wax referred to the encaustic process used in painting. Here it seems to refer to something else as the plural is used and it is in conjunction with *tabulis*. It could thus mean wax figures but the Romans only are known to have used wax as a material for making the *imagines* at funerals and not for normal cult statues. The word occurs in the passage of Ambrose (*In Psalm.* 118.15. 36.) mentioned above (cf n.42-44). There *ceris* is in a list which indicates that its usage is that of a decoration rather than a figure. I think this is how Prudentius uses it here too.

It is not clear here whether the *poetica fabula* comes *ex tabulis cerisque* or whether the *ex* phrase goes with *sacra*. However common sense would indicate that the fable came before the painting or the statue, otherwise no-one would know what the painting was about or whom the statue was meant to represent. Plato had identified poets as the main culprits in bringing the gods into disrepute by attributing to them stories unworthy of divine beings (*Rep.* 379b ff).

51.cur Berecyntiacus Berecyntus was a mountain on the banks of the river Sangarius, in Phrygia sacred to Cybele. Attis was her young consort and the model for her eunuch devotees. The story is told among other places in Arnobius in his attack on pagan religion (*adversus nationes* 5.5-8). Prudentius is making the point that the priests castrate themselves because of the story told by poets. Minucius Felix made the same point in relation to the cult of Attis (*propter hanc fabulam Galli eam et semiviri sui corporis supplicio colunt. Oct.*22. 4.). Prudentius also explores the link between art and paganism in *Peristephanon* 10.

dicis licenter haec poetas fingere

sed sunt et ipsi talibus mysteriis

tecum dicati, quodque describunt, colunt. (*Per.*10.216-218)

This poem describes the martyrdom of one Romanus and in the course of his trial he launches into an attack on paganism which is reminiscent of passages in the *Contra Symmachum*. Given Prudentius' interest in the etymology of the names of the martyrs included in the *Peristephanon* (cf. Malamud (1989) 81-83 (Hippolytus), 147 (Cyprian), 174-177 (Agnes)) it may well be that Romanus has an extra significance as representing the true face of Rome, now she has accepted Christ, and that it is this which leads Prudentius to include an attack on pagan Roman religion and art in this poem. The poem is also important for containing the only known description of the *tauribolium*: the slaughtering of a bull which was part of the rites of Cybele (*Per.*10. 1006-1050). References to Cybele and Attis are to be found in the works of Prudentius exclusively in these two poems. Cybele is important in a discussion of Rome and Victory because the introduction of the cult statue of Cybele to Rome from Asia Minor in 204 B.C. on the advice of the Sibylline books (as recorded in Livy 29.10.4ff) and the oracle at Delphi, was considered to have brought victory against Carthage. It may also be relevant because according to the *Carmen contra Paganos* the pagan revivalist Nicomachus Flavianus, prefect of Italy, in 394 oversaw the reintroduction in the city of the rites and festivals of the *Magna Mater* (*C.C.P.* 103ff.). Macrobius enters into a detailed account of the cult of Cybele and Attis from a neoplatonist perspective in about 400 A.D. (*Sat.*1.21.7-11). In this passage Prudentius points to the eunuch priests of the cult. In the next example on Hippolytus the same point is made: that the stories of the poets influence real life. In the case of the eunuch priest, they would seem to have a profound influence, but it is difficult to imagine the practice of keeping horses away from areas sacred to Diana could be held

up as an example of the dangerous influence of the stories of the poets in the same way as the castration of the priest. Thus the link between the two examples is tenuous.

53-54 In these lines we find a passage lifted straight from *Aeneid* 7.778

unde etiam templo Triuiæ lucisque sacratis
cornipedes arcentur equi, quod litore curram

Other examples occur throughout Prudentius (e.g. *C.S.2.* 498 and *Aeneid* 1.17). Here Prudentius is following the account of the Hippolytus story given by Vergil at that point in the *Aeneid* where Hippolytus, after being thrown from his chariot and killed when his horses bolted with fright at the sight of the sea monster Poseidon sent for that purpose, was restored to life by Diana and looked after by her at her grove at Aricia in Latium from which horses were then banned because of their part in Hippolytus' death.

Malamud (1989 p. 92n.18) points out, there is irony in the emperors quoting Vergil to condemn pagan art. She writes "if they conformed to their own standards of proper speech, they would effectively silence themselves". Yet surely Prudentius is only here showing how pagan art has a proper place in the Christian world order. Prudentius is vindicating his belief, expounded later in the poem, that Rome's pagan past was a preparation for her Christian present and as such cannot be simply dismissed.

54 pudicum Hippolytus was renowned for his chastity. In 57 Prudentius asks the pagan reader to cease depicting mythological scenes *si pudor est*. The modesty Prudentius asks for consists in refraining from depicting pagan scenes. This indicates that while Hippolytus lived a chaste life *pudor* must also mean an uprightness of life which avoids propagating pagan myth.

55 raptarit. Lav. § 1397 sees here an example of a brachyology, or shortening in that the meaning is that the poetic Muse describes how Hippolytus has been dragged along the shore : she does not do it herself. He finds another example at *H.pr* 29 *Deumque rerum mortuarum deputans* where the meaning is “believing that God *is the god* of dead things”.

57-60 Prudentius mocks the traditional representation of the goddess Victory who was depicted as a winged woman saying it is ridiculous to depict her as both a woman and a bird. Cf. Claudian *VI Cons. Hon.* 597 *ales Victoria*. Gnilka (1991 p. 22) suggests that Horace’s *Ars Poetica* may be behind Prudentius’ thinking here with *plumis obducere* echoing Horace’s *inducere plumas* (A.P. 2). The *iure poetarum* of 40 finds a parallel in Horace’s *pictoribus atque poetis/ quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas* (A.P. 9-10)

57 Desine The emperors address *gentilis ineptia* appealing to its sense of *pudor*. Since they have just referred to Hippolytus as *pudicum*, they now appeal to the pagan who values *pudor* in Hippolytus to apply it to this situation and refrain from making cult images. Thus Prudentius shows that real *pudor* leads to Christian truth.

gentilis ineptia In Christian authors *gentilis* moves on from its possible meaning of foreign to mean pagan or non-Christian. Cf. *Per.*10.464 *gentile uulgus*.

58 res incorporeas Prudentius attacks the pagans for making representations of spiritual things. By *res incorporeas*, Thomson (p.11) and Gar. assumes he means representations of virtues such as *Fides*, *Mens* and presumably *Victoria*, which can be said to exist as ideas. Prudentius’ argument here seems to be purely for rhetorical purposes as in the

Psychomachia he has no compunction in creating a world peopled by allegorical representations of virtues and vices.

64 frange repulsorum ornamenta deorum For a discussion of the problem of the attitude of the emperors here and that of Theodosius who asks for cult statues to be saved as works of art (C.S.1.501-505) cf. n. 17-65.

ornamenta deorum Bergman (p.463) notes the allusion here to Juvenal 3.218 *Asianorum uetera ornamenta deorum*. Juvenal is speaking about the treasures that are offered to a rich man after his house has burnt down. Thus the *ornamenta deorum* are valuable items. For Prudentius they are *foeda* and to be broken. The allusion to Juvenal here makes clear the scorn Prudentius feels for these trappings as far from being sought after he says they are to be destroyed (cf. Sr. Stella Marie (1962) p.43).

65 Tunc tibi This line contains remarkable alliteration with the letter `t` to drive its point home.

66 sed super astra The victory that can be won beyond the stars is presumably the spiritual victory of Christ over the devil with which Rome can then be associated.

67-90 Restatement of Symmachus` Rel 3. 8, 9 & 10

67- 90 The speech of the emperors ends and Symmachus resumes his plea for the restoration of the altar of Victory. Prudentius takes Symmachus` *Rel.* 3.8-10 and restates the argument in lines 69-90. His refutation of these points occupies Prudentius until l.909. It is interesting that whereas on later occasions many manuscripts contain direct quotations from Symmachus` third *Relatio* here they do not. The points raised by Symmachus are the importance of custom in human society (*Rel.* 3.8), the role of the guardian spirit or genius of each city (*ib.*3.8), earthly success as a proof of divine favour

(*ib.*3.9), the personification of Rome pleading for the maintenance of her ancient ways (*ib.*3.9) and the idea that there are many different ways to find the one God (*ib.*3.10)

68 tubam Symmachus is not literally blowing a trumpet but Prudentius uses it as a metaphor to mean his speech is elevated. The same usage is found in Sidonius (*Ep.*4,3) Claudian is fond of the metaphorical use of the trumpet to mean epic poetry (*Cons. Prob.et Olybr.* 197 *Latiae cecinere tubae*) or just a loud noise (*Gigant.* 60 *tuba nimborum*).

69 Adlegat morem veterem Prudentius will deal with Symmachus' argument from custom at l. 270-369. Symmachus said he was defending the *instituta maiorum* and tells the emperors that they may not do anything contrary to the *morem parentum* (*Rel.* 3.2). He pleads that the religious situation may continue which had benefited the state so much (*Rel.*3.3 *Repetimus igitur religionum statum qui reip. diu profuit.*).

ueterem] *ueterum* E1 (-u- in ras.) S. Bergman and Cunningham prefer *ueterem*. There is nothing to choose between them from a metrical point of view. The reading *ueterum* resembles the well-known phrase *mos maiorum* but Prudentius is not speaking here of a particularly Roman custom, but an aspect of mankind in general in that it prefers to stick with that which is familiar. Echoing of an ancient Roman idea here would not be particularly appropriate. Although *ueterum* might echo Symmachus' *morem parentum* in *Rel.* 3.2, on balance I think Bergman and Cunningham's choice is thus to be preferred as it conveys the notion of a general aspect of human nature.

nil dulcius esse/ adfirmat solitis Symmachus' words are paraphrased by Prudentius. The nearest to this sentiment we find in Symmachus is *Rel.*3.4 *Consuetudinis amor magnus est.*

70-71 *populosque hominesque teneri/ lege sua*. This is Prudentius' version of Symmachus' *Suus enim cuique mos, suus ritus est* (*Rel.* 3.8) As a statement it sounds reasonable and acceptable. Ambrose does not mention this argument of Symmachus.

71-74 Prudentius paraphrases Symmachus' *Rel.* 3.8 which reads: *uarios custodes urbibus cultus mens diuina distribuit; ut animae nascentibus, ita populis fatales genii diuiduntur*.

71 “*sicut uariae nascentibus.....*” This idea of a spirit being allotted to each child at birth need not have sounded exclusively pagan as the Gospel of Matthew speaks of angels being allotted to children as guardians (*Matt.* 18.10).

The Roman *genius* began as a simple animistic idea as the spirit of a place and so of a household associated with the paterfamilias. Later it came to be thought of simply as a guardian spirit for each man, attached to a man at birth: a woman also had such a spirit, known as a *juno*. Censorinus wrote: *Genius est deus, cuius in tutela ut quisque natus est vivit* (3.1). Ovid believed that it had some existence after death as when he speaks of Aeneas (*ille patris Genio sollemnia tura ferebat F.* 2.545) while Horace's famous definition (*Ep.* 2.2.183-89) is not clear as to whether or not it is mortal but may at least indicate that after death a man's *genius* may live on but as that of someone else. (Cf. Brink (1982) Appendix 19 p.441 for the discussion over how to construe Horace's use of *mortalis* in his description.) Servius goes further and indicates that everyone had two *genii*, one to persuade a person to do good works and another to persuade one to do bad. (Serv. A. 6.743 *nam cum nascimur, duos genios sortimur: unus est qui hortatur ad bona, alter qui deprauat ad mala.*) More strangely gods too had their own *genius*. We know this from an inscription of 58 B.C. (*CIL* i. 166) but it is also mentioned in other sources such as the *Genius Priapi* mentioned in Petronius (*Sat.* 21) and the *Genius Junonis* in

Martianus Capella (1.53). Presumably gods qualified because they were born, even if they did not die. By extension corporate bodies were also said to have a *genius*. Furthermore every place could be said to have its *genius*. Servius tells us *nullus locus sine Genio* (Serv. A. 5.95) and so it was that every gate, baths, market and such like places had its *genius*. Servius tells us of the *genius* of the city of Rome (Serv. A. 2.351). He says there was a shield on the Capitol with the curious inscription *Genio Romae, siue mas siue femina*.

Greek ideas on the *daemon* were to influence traditional Roman religion in this area. Plutarch in *De Facie Lunae* 28, 943A wrote of how the soul is not a simple substance but is made of many layers, each raising nearer to the divine. Thus above what we normally call the human soul is another soul which he says is as superior to the soul we know as the soul is to the body. Above this is the personal *genius* or *daemon* which had the care of the person and was intimately linked with him because it is another upward extension of himself.

Ammianus Marcellinus includes a digression on the *genius* (21.14.3f), where he explicitly links it with the Greek idea of the *daemon* as a guardian spirit. He writes:

Ferunt enim theologi in lucem editis hominibus cunctis, salva firmitate fatali,
huius modi quaedam velut actus rectura numina sociari, admodum paucissimis
visa, quos multiplices auxere virtutes

Claudian in the *Panegyricus De Sexto Consulato Honorii Augusti* speaks of the Empire's *genius* bowing to Honorius (l.611-612) in a passage before which he has spoken of the statue of Victory stretching her wings to protect the senators in the Curia (l.597-602). He also speaks of *Victoria* having her wish granted in seeing Rome's armies triumph. He

says that she will now always be the guardian of Rome. This passage in Claudian is remarkable given the controversy over the altar of Victory in the previous decades. It would seem that the idea of Victory and Rome's *genius* are closely linked in Claudian and this may explain something of Prudentius' attention to the question of the *genius* of Rome.

It is interesting to compare Prudentius' treatment of the *genius* with the treatment given by other Christian writers. Tertullian says that the *genius* is the same as the demon (*Ceterum daemones, id est genios* Ap. 32.3). Where Prudentius says the *genius* has no real existence outside of the imagination, Lactantius (*Inst.* 2.15) has an elaborate theory that the angels that God sent to guard the human race sinned by having sexual relations with women and thus came under the sway of the devil. The off-spring of these women were half-angelic and half-human but became wicked beings who, while pretending to be the guardians of human beings, are really their destroyers. He makes a link with the Greek *daemon* and explicitly with Socrates and his demon. These beings cling to human beings and to places and take the name of *genii*. (cf. Nietzsche (1975) 38-41) While Prudentius speaks regularly of *daemones* (e.g. *Per.*10. 920) he never confuses them with the *genii* nor does he make a link between the demons of the Bible and the Greek idea of the *daemon*, in the way the other Christian writers quoted above do. The nearest he comes in making a link between the supernatural world of the Bible and that of paganism is when he says that the gods of the underworld are devils from Hell (cf. C.S.1.369-70 *si verum quaeris, Triiviae sub nomine daemon/ tartareus colitur; Per.*5.92 *diuique et idem daemones*).

Another line of thought is that seen in Roman writers who combined the idea of the Greek *daemon* and the Roman *genius*. Symmachus has said that the *genius* is given to a people or city at their birth in the same way as a soul is given to a person. It was not unknown for the *genius* to be thought of as the soul. Thus Apuleius, in *De Deo Socratis*, merged the Roman idea of the *genius* with the Greek idea of the *daemon* (cf. Nitzsche (1975) 30-32) which Plato had spoken of as the highest part of the soul (*Tim.* 89E-90A). Thus Apuleius writes: *animus humanus etiam nunc in corpore situs daemon nuncupatur* and says the *genius* is *deus, qui est animus sui cuique, quamquam sit immortalis, tamen quodam modo cum homine gignitur* (15.150-51)

Theodosius, in 392, had forbidden the sacrifice of wine made to one's *genius* on one's birthday, under punishment of death (*C.Th.*, 16.10.12). Peter Brown writes: "... whether in times of crisis, or in the day-to-day search for protection and inspiration, the religious sensibilities of late-antique men had long been molded by an intense dialogue with invisible companions" (Brown 1981 p.53). The Christian idea of a city's patron saint served a similar purpose (as Prudentius acknowledges by introducing Peter and Paul in the prefaces to the two books of the *Contra Symmachum*: this work is about Rome and her new allegiance to Christ and introduced by her new invisible guardians.) Prudentius treats the subject of the *genius* in more detail in 370-449.

72-74 sic urbibus adfert/ hora diesque suis...../aut fatum aut genium

Gradually, the Roman concept of the *genius* had broadened, under Greek influence so that, as Nitzsche (1975 p.13) says there arose the idea of "a *genius urbis* and a tutelary spirit of legions, schools, colonies. It was attributed to the Senate, the plebs, granaries, storehouses, market places, treasuries, even to a particular tax". The idea of the *genius*

was always connected to the life force of whatever it protected. The *genius urbis* had a long history. Livy mentions sacrifices to the gods Juno, Fortune and Hercules and the *genius urbis* in the winter of 218-217 B.C. when Hannibal was threatening Italy (21.62).

Suis *T* (“*quod mehercules amplectendum videtur*” Heinsius) *suus* *BZ* (*cum VNJd*)*ESQ*, *suum* *BcSct*. *Suis* is more natural. Bergman prefers *suus* which has more manuscript authority but it is rather forced but the corrections in *B* and *S* show it is problematic.

73 primum moenia surgunt Bergman sees here an echo of A. 1.437 *iam moenia surgunt* where Aeneas says how lucky the Carthaginians are to be building their new city. Maybe Prudentius uses this reminder of Carthage as a reminder to the reader that protection by a *genius* is not always that effective. The phrase *moenia surgunt* occurs later in Avienus, also at the end of a line, (*Descr. Orb* 382) when he is describing Egypt.

74 aut fatum aut genium Symmachus had spoken of *fatales genii*. The relationship between the *genius* and fate was not simple: they are not synonyms. Horace had said that the *genius temperat astrum* (*Ep.* 2.2.187) and the interplay of the *genius* and the horoscope was used to explain how twins could have different characters since their *genii* were different (*Ep.* 2.2.183-87). Persius also addressed the same problem (*S.* 6.18-19 *geminos, horoscope, uaro/producis genio*). The *Genius* was thus held to influence character and so had a connection with fate. Prudentius is not very interested in the niceties of pagan ideas on fate and the *genius* and so equates them as the same thing. Symmachus’ *fatales genii* maintains the link between the two ideas without saying how exactly they are related.

75-79 Prudentius recalls Symmachus' empirical argument for devotion to the ancient gods: their worship had brought happy results. Symmachus puts this argument in the mouth of *Roma* (*Rel.3.9*), who tells of how this worship of the old gods has subdued the world to her laws and also served to drive away the Senones and Carthaginians from her walls. This is the first point Ambrose had picked up on in his *Ep.18.4*. Ambrose asked why the gods, if they were fighting against the Carthaginians, allowed them to get as far as the city walls in the first place. This is an example Prudentius saves to the end of his poem when he will speak about the Roman victory at Pollentia against the Goths in either 402 or 403 (729-730). Ambrose makes the point also that both Carthaginians and Romans worshipped the same pagan gods and so if the gods brought victory for the Romans the same gods were defeated in their support for Carthage (*Ep.18.6*)

79 pede dextro L. & S. explains "*pes dexter* because it was of good omen to move the right foot first; temples had an uneven number of steps that the same foot might touch the first step and enter the temple" cf. *pes I*

80-90 In this section Prudentius gives a summary of *Roma*'s speech in Symmachus' *Relatio 3*. Whereas Symmachus simply says that he will suppose *Roma* is present and speaks, Prudentius elaborates the scene by telling us that this *Roma* is "*crinibus albentem niueis et fronte uietam*" (81). Symmachus does make clear that *Roma* is old in that she speaks of her old age but Prudentius is alone in providing a description: Ambrose adds no such extra detail. The inspiration for this detail may have come from Claudian, especially his *De Bello Gildonico* where there is a picture of *Roma* with grey hair, sunken cheeks, limbs wasted by hunger and rusty shield, complaining about her fate to Jupiter (*B.G.* 17-25). However Dewar (1996) 355-6 says that this picture of an old *Roma* is very common

in late antique literature. Later *Roma* will say that she has regained her youth under Honorius and Arcadius (655-658). Cameron (1970 365 n.2) finds the earliest use of this idea of Rome rejuvenated in Mart.5.7.3. *taliter exuta est ueterem noua Roma senectam* and mentions coins bearing a ROMA RENASCENS motif. In the *De Bello Gildonico* (ll.208-212) Claudian also has *Roma* regain her youthfulness in a dramatic way.

83-90. Prudentius closely paraphrases Symmachus' *Rel.* 3. 9-10. Symmachus has: *Romam nunc putemus adsistere atque his uobiscum agere sermonibus: Optimi principum, patres patriae, reueremini annos meos, in quos me pius ritus adduxit! Utar caerimoniis auitis; neque enim paenitet. Viuam meo more, quia libera sum! Hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit, haec sacra Hannibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Senonas reppulerunt. Ad hoc ergo seruata sum, ut longaeua reprehendar? Videro, quale sit, quod instituendum putatur; sera tamen et contumeliosa emendatio senectutis. Ergo diis patriis, diis indigetibus pacem rogamus. Aequum est, quidquid omnes colunt, unum putari. Eadem spectamus astra, commune caelum est, idem nos mundus inuoluit. Quid interest, qua quisque prudentia uerum requirat? Vno itinere non potest perueniri ad tam grande secretum. Sed haec otiosorum disputatio est. Nunc preces, non certamina offerimus.*

Thus we see that Prudentius provides a faithful summary of the Symmachus passage, although he adds a sentence from *Rel.*3.8: *Suus enim cuique mos, suus ritus est.* Prudentius will give his version of what *Roma* has to say about the whole issue in 655-768.

83 proprio The use of *proprio* is interesting here. It would be more usual to say *meo* as Symmachus himself did. Lav. § 513-514 notes that the use of *proprius* instead of *meus*, *tuus* and *suus* is a characteristic of later Latin although it has its roots in the classical

period (cf. Hor. *Ep.* 1.7,51 *Cultello proprios purgantem leniter unguis*). Lav. gives many examples of this from Prudentius in this poem: he quotes occurrences at 213,371 & 776.

85-90 Prudentius` replies to Symmachus` assertion that all mankind shares the same sun, breathes the same air but finds different paths to the one God in 773-909.

91-269 *The response of Faith to Symmachus.*

As a preamble to dealing with the points raised by Symmachus in 67-90, Prudentius, after introducing Faith (91-93) has a long section (94-269) on the inability of human reason to fathom the ways of God, on the omnipotence of God and the benefits he offers to those who are faithful to his laws. He first speaks about the unfathomable nature of the Godhead (94-104) and then says that it is Faith which provides access to God and the eternal gifts he offers man (105-119). To gain these gifts, Man has to lift his heart from the pleasures of this world to the things of heaven, which can involve a moral struggle with the possibility of eternal loss as the price of failure (120-186). The section ends with a reflection on the omnipotence of God and how all he looks for in Man is worship to the extent that when Man turned away from him, God had to come to his rescue (187-269).

91. his tam magnificis tantaque fluentibus arte. Prudentius is unfailing in his recognition of Symmachus` skill as an orator. Cf *Praef.* n. 55

92 uel On its own *uel* can be taken with a superlative to mean `to the highest possible degree` (L.& S II B.1) or it can have a concessive sense with a superlative and so mean `perhaps` (L.&S II. D 1). Since *sola* can be considered as a kind of superlative and *uel* normally is beside the word it qualifies, I think it has to be taken with that rather than

with *doctissima*. To take it in the sense of ‘perhaps’ would be odd here, since the tone of the passage does not suggest that there is any doubt about *Fides* having the ability to give an answer to Symmachus. Thus I think it has to go with *sola* in the sense of *Fides* is uniquely qualified to give an answer to this problem.

sola Fides.... Prudentius says that *Fides* has given the answer to *Roma*’s claim that *tam grande profundum* must be approached by each nation in its own way. *Roma* has spoken of different nations seeking for God in their own way. Prudentius’ answer is to say that faith (by which of course he means Christian faith) is the solution to this. Faith succeeds where reason falters and only by faith is the truth about the one God known.

The allegorical figure of *Fides* is used by Prudentius throughout his work. Prudentius does not give her a speaking part in this poem. This section is not the reply of *Fides* but Prudentius’ reflection on faith. She occurs once in the *Hamartigenia* (l.853) but is a major figure in the *Psychomachia*, which is an account of a battle fought between many allegorical figures representing virtues and vices, where she is mentioned nine times and where we are given a description of her appearance. Prudentius describes her as

.....Fides, agresti turbida cultu,

nuda umeros, intonsa comas, exerta lacertos” (*Ps.* 22-3)

The point of this description is that *Fides* is that she is so keen to fight that she does not have time to put on any armour. She is successful in battle. Her first victim is *Veterum Cultura Deorum* whom she strikes on the head and tramples under foot (*Ps.* 30-3). At the end of the battle she shares a platform with *Concordia* to address the victorious forces of the Virtues. *Concordia* speaks first and then *Fides* follows (*Ps.* 799-822). In her speech

Fides calls for a temple to be built for Christ (*Ps.* 809-819). If the reader had read the *Psychomachia* before this poem, his contemporary readers would have been familiar with the figure of *Fides* and come to know her character and remember her as delivering a victory speech in that poem. For Prudentius she is a Christian version of *Victoria*.

Livy (1.21.4) records that Numa established the cult and temple of *Fides* at Rome. Vergil speaks of *cana Fides* at *A.* 1.292. Thus Prudentius takes an ancient Roman idea and uses the concept in a Christian way.

Claudian had made much use of such allegorical figures alongside pagan gods. An impressive list of such figures can be seen in at *In Rufinum* 1.25-36 when Allecto summons a meeting of all her forces to disrupt the world's peace.

93 penetralia. Prudentius has no difficulty adopting *penetralia*, which often means the sanctuary of a pagan temple, to Christian usage. Ambrose had used the word too in the broader meaning of a secret place (*penetralia animi*. Ambros. *In Luc.* 1,1,12).

ueraesectae By this Prudentius means Christianity. *Secta* means a way of life or a school of thought (cf. *omnis natura habet quasi uiam quandam et sectam quam sequatur* (Cic. *N.D.* 2,22,57). In matters of religion, the word comes to have the same meaning as the English `sect` (cf. *plurimae sectae et haereses* Lact. 4.30,2). Thus in the preface to the *Apotheosis* (cf. n.104 below) Prudentius asks whether Christianity is the *uera secta* before going on to argue that it is. Prudentius also speaks of the *generosa Christi secta* (*Per.* 10.125). He distinguishes the *uera secta* from other forms of religion such as the followers of Marcion (*hanc tua damnat/secta fidem dominis caelum partita duobus H.* 56-7).

95 uel....uel.... At first reading it appears that Prudentius is here saying that God either lacks a beginning or will lack an end. Christianity has generally held that God has neither beginning nor end (e.g. St Paul *Col.1 17*, Aristides *Apol.1*). It is not unusual to find *uel....uel....* coming to mean almost the same as *et.....et.....* (e.g. *quemadmodum ille uel Athenis uel Rhodi se doctissimorum hominum sermonibus dedisset* Cic. *de Or.2,1,3*) Lav. (§ 514) comments: *C'est un tour du latin de basse époque, que nos trouvons* SII.95 (referring to this line).

98. ..tantoque angusta labori. i.e. the great task is to speak of divine things. Here *angusta* takes the dative to express aptitude (cf. Sen. *Suas. 1.3 Alexandro orbis angustus est* ; Tac. *Ann. 15. 33 Tantaue uoci angustos*)

99 Prudentius says that human reason unaided cannot penetrate the mystery of the godhead. This is different to saying that the existence of God is discoverable only through faith. Christian writers often stated that God's existence was knowable through reason (cf Aug. *Serm. 141.2.2 Interroga mundum, ornatum caeli, fulgorem dispositionemque siderum....interroga omnia, et uide si non sensu suo tamquam tibi respondent: Deus nos fecit. Haec et philosophi nobiles quaesierunt, et ex arte artificem cognouerunt*). However God in Himself is beyond understanding (e.g. Min Felix *Oct. 17.8 Nobis uero ad intellectum pectus angustum est, et ideo sic eum digne aestimamus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus*) Pagan writers had said as much too (e.g. Cicero *N.D.3.39*). The image of the flagging soul used here is reminiscent of Plato's *Phaedrus* (248) where he discusses the difficulty of the soul's ascent to the vision of God. Rapisarda (1954 p.4) sees an emphasis in the prefaces to the poem on the difficulty of human thought reaching the truth, in the depiction of St Paul and the snake and St Peter and the storm, and

believes that the prefaces are integral to the poem as a whole. This passage confirms that argument.

99-100 aciem...../ acrius Prudentius uses alliteration to emphasize his point

103 inualidisque Lav. § 1340 lists this as an example of a rare or new usage and quotes Claudian (*Cons. Mal. Theod.* 170 *invalido ueneno*) as a parallel. However L & S has plenty of examples of *inualidus* meaning inadequate or inefficient both of which would fit here. Lav. says the meaning here is *impuissant*. For a classical example cf. *Ov.Tr.* 5.2,4 *corpus laborum impatiens inualidumque*.

104 facilis fidei uia Prudentius often refers to paths or ways. The path of faith is straight and clear while that of error twists and is dangerous. Later in the poem at l.852f he contrasts the straight path of truth with the many branched path of pagan error. An example of this imagery can be found in the *Praefatio* to his *Apotheosis* (*A. Praef.* 1-16)

Est uera secta? Te, magister, consulo.

rectamque seruamus fidem?

an uiperina non cavemus dogmata,

et nescientes labimur?

Artam salutis uix uiam discernere est

inter reflexas semitas.

tam multa surgunt perfidorum conpita

tortis polita erroribus

obliqua sese conserunt diuortia

hinc inde textis orbitis.

Quas si quis errans ac uagus sectabitur

rectum relinquens tramitem
 scrobis latentis pronus in foueam ruet
 quam fodit hostilis manus
 manus latronum, quae uiantes obsidet
 iter sequentes deuium.

Malamud (1989) p101-9 discusses Prudentius' use of path imagery.

The phrase *uia fidei* occurs in Lucretius (5.102) when he says that it is difficult for people to accept what he is teaching (about the destruction of the universe) but that *uia qua munita fidei/ proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis* (102-103). Thus given the similar context in Prudentius about the difficulty the human mind has in approaching God, it appears likely that Prudentius has the Lucretius passage in mind here but now sets Lucretius sentiment in a Christian context.

prouocat There may seem to be an oxymoron here if *prouocat* is taken to mean to challenge "the easy way of faith challenges men to believe". How can something that is easy be a challenge? Lav. (§ 649) translates *prouocat* here as *pousse à* meaning it drives men on to believe. He quotes in illustration a passage of Pliny, which Kuehner-Stegmann says is a unique usage of *prouocare*, (*M. Apicius e iecore eorum alecem excogitare prouocauit*. Plin. 9.66) which he translates as 'Apicius invited (them) to invent a condiment from the liver of those animals'. It is certainly an unusual use of *prouocare* by Prudentius. The use of *credere* is also noteworthy: there must be an *esse* understood with it. It could be taken to mean to trust rather than to believe but the context is that of trying to understand the ways of God and the contrast is between the difficult lines of thought pursued by philosophy and the easy understanding of eternal truths granted by faith.

Interestingly he uses *prouocat* again in the context of faith in *Ps.* 27. This is where *Fides* makes her appearance on the battlefield and we are told that she, wearing no armour but trusting in her own strength, *prouocat insani frangenda pericula belli*. Here the sense is not to invite but to challenge. It would seem that for Prudentius faith is something for which *prouocat* is an apt word to describe how it acts. Faith is something active and challenging to the pagan world.

105 ...bona non tantum praesentia donat. Symmachus' argument has only concentrated on *bona* for the present age. Prudentius counters Symmachus' argument by putting it in an eternal perspective.

106 intermina. A fairly rare, post-classical word, which the TLL first records in Apuleius (*mund.1 caelum agens stellarum choros intermino lapsu finem nulla aevi defectione factura*). Prudentius uses it only twice: here and at *C.* 12.39. Symmachus uses it in *Rel.* 15.3 *interminus annorum recursus*, where he writes a letter accompanying new-year's gifts to Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius for the year 384. Since this is such a rare word and occurs both here and in Symmachus in connection with the idea of the giving of gifts, it is possible that here we have an allusion by Prudentius to the Symmachus passage to enable him to say how much more significant are the gifts of God than the lavish gifts of gold dishes that Symmachus had sent to the emperors.

107-8 eam...../ peream Prudentius makes his argument very personal here. Prudentius often speaks in the first person in his poems where he is arguing for the Catholic faith (e.g. *A.* against Sabellius (e.g. *A.* 1,533, 598ff,) *H.* against Marcion (*H.* 80, 342) and *S.* against Symmachus (*S.* 1.1 *S.* 2.166, 182 750).

109 Muneris auctorem ipso de munere pendas An example of the second person subjunctive imperative, often found in poetry and colloquial speech but not used in prose. This line is an example of Prudentius' liking of proverbial phrases. (Cf. n. 1.35). This phrase owes much to Ovid especially *M.* 8.430 *illi laetitiae est cum munere muneris auctor*) (cf. Ewald (1942) p.134). Ovid is speaking of the joy Atalanta feels on receiving the skin and head of the Calydonian boar from Meleager who has just killed it. The catalogue of death that results from this incident in Ovid would be recalled by a reader familiar with Ovid and thus extra emphasis is given to Prudentius' point about mortal gifts being given by mortals but eternal ones from God.

110-111 Aeterna aeternus tribuit, mortalia confert/ mortalis; divina Deus, peritura caducus. This is an example of the word play that Prudentius likes. Lav. (§1542-45) quotes other examples such as *Quos feminarum prima primos procreat H. pr.2* or *Quietum/ suscepit iam diua Deum Ps. 812* although this is the most spectacular example.

113 uilia sunt breuitate sui A post-classical usage (cf. Lav § 512.). In classical usage *sua* would agree with *breuitate*.

114 propria cf.n.83

116/120 deus. Thomson adopts a capital d here but Bergman and Cunningham both take *deus* without a capital d. Prudentius is asking whether if a god gives something decayed or decaying then is he worthy of being called divine. He is making a general point about divine beings rather than one about the Christian God as shown by the use of indicatives rather than subjunctives.

120 Hac ratione fides sapienter conicit. The *ratio* referred to here is that in the preceding lines: i.e. if a divine being can only give a gift which is less than eternal then

that god is not worthy of the title. Thus the true god is the one who gives gifts which are eternal and especially eternal life. Here Prudentius touches on the mechanics of faith. It is because it is reasonable to make the assumption that he has made, that faith believes in a god who promises eternal life. The relationship between Christian faith and reason is a huge subject which can only be summarised here but it was first treated extensively by St. Justin martyr (d.165), who developed the theory, following the teachings of Stoicism, that it was the reason or the *logos* which united God to man and gave man knowledge of God. This *logos* was taken to be the *logos* or divine Word of St John's gospel, which took flesh in Christ. However *logos* or reason was present in fragmentary form before the coming of Christ and so those who sought to live by the *logos* or reason, were Christians before the coming of Christ (cf. Justin *1 apol.*46,3). Thus Prudentius follows in this tradition in asserting that reason and faith are compatible.. He makes the point that Symmachus has claimed that reason is clouded and so authority in divine matters should reside in what has proved favourable in the past. (cf. *Rel.*3.8. *nam cum ratio omnis in aperto sit, unde rectius quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio uenit numinum?*) Thus since Symmachus has abandoned a claim to reason as part of his defence, Prudentius is insistent in his claim that Christianity follows reason and that paganism is blind superstition (cf. *C.S.*1.79-81). *Ratio* prepares the ground from which *fides* can grow. For a treatment of the issue of the relationship of *fides* and *ratio* in Prudentius cf. Evenepoel (1981).

Conicere has the meaning to conjecture and as such is used elsewhere by Prudentius. In *H.*13 he writes *qui talia cernens/conicit esse duo uariarum numina rerum* in regard to the existence of good and evil which might lead one to conjecture that there are two gods,

one good and one evil. To believe this is to follow the error of Marcion, which he sets out to discredit in that poem. Thus it is possible to make a false conjecture on the basis of the external evidence although Prudentius then uses arguments based on reason to show that such a conjecture would be unsustainable. However it is interesting to note here that at first *Fides* makes a conjecture and then with *immo* we see that it makes a stronger statement in that it does not doubt. In l.92 *uel* could be taken in a concessive sense to say that perhaps *Fides* alone is the best qualified to answer Symmachus' objections although I think the sense is probably that of another use of *uel* to reinforce a superlative. Nonetheless in this instance *Fides* seems to be at first less than certain about the object of her knowledge.

122 mereamur. *Mereri* can mean to be deserving, often with *bene* or *male* to indicate what kind of reward is to be expected (L.&S *mereo* II. D). A major debate of the early fifth century was that between Augustine and Pelagius over whether one could be said to deserve salvation through one's good works. The debate began when Pelagius arrived in Carthage in 409 with other refugees, fleeing from Alaric. However Pelagius had been active in Rome since the year 384, disseminating his views to educated lay Christians. Before the debate between Pelagius and Augustine, Christian opinion on whether one could merit salvation was unclear. The idea that one's good works could count for merit in the eyes of God is found in the Fathers (cf. Justin Martyr *Apol.* 1 43, Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 4.37.7). Ambrose would make clear many times that God's grace would only be active in those who co-operated with it, and so by their own effort could have been said to have won salvation, while at other times he writes how man can never win grace because of his merits (cf. Kelly (1958) p.356 for references to Ambrose). Prudentius may

here show some influence of the ideas of Pelagius' optimistic view of human nature, as seems to happen elsewhere (cf. n. 459-60), but that would not make him heterodox as the Church's teaching on this subject had not yet been defined and would not be until after the debate between Augustine and Pelagius. Pelagius and his followers pushed the idea to such an extent that they ended up denying other doctrines that Christians had always held such as the need for God's grace to help one fulfil the requirements of the Christian life. Augustine was to provide the counter-blast e.g. *Ep.* 194.5.19 *Quod est ergo meritum hominis ante gratiam quo merito percipiat gratiam, cum omne bonum meritum nostrum non in nobis faciat nisi gratia, et, cum Deus coronat merita nostra, nihil aliud coronet quam munera sua*. The dispute rumbled on until the Council of Orange in 529 came down largely on the side of Augustine, while dropping some of his extreme views on predestination (cf. Kelly (1958) 353-72). Of this debate Prudentius appears innocent.

123 God, not *Fides*, is the subject of *inquit* as becomes clear in 1.133. God speaks to the person who has faith. Although it is God speaking, Prudentius is happy to put words into God's mouth, words which are true from a Christian point of view but which are not found in the Bible. Prudentius does occasionally give God the Father a speaking part. Sometimes he uses the Bible for God's words (*C.*3.106; *A.* 42) but at other times, as here he puts words into his mouth (*H.* 697). This is a bold move and not found in previous Christian Latin poets whose work was mainly versifying Bible stories.

“caelestia si placet” inquit / “Scandere..... uobis is understood with *placet*.

125 Nam quantum subiecta situ tellus ... This idea is based on Isaiah 55.9: *Quia sicut exaltantur caeli a terra, sic exaltatae sunt uiae meae a uis uestris, et cogitationes meae a*

cogitationibus uestris. Prudentius does not have any verbal echoes from the Vulgate version.

129-131 quidquid/ naturae ratione capit uitium atque senescit/pro nihilo, in nihilum quia sunt reditura, putetis A rather odd construction here as the singular collective subject *quidquid* later becomes a plural in l.131 with *sunt reditura*.

131-160 God speaks about the relative values of the temporal and the eternal. This theme is found elsewhere in the poem (cf.907-09) but the message of the *Contra Symmachum* is that Christianity is good for the temporal well-being of the Empire too. He speaks of the rewards that Christian faith has for this life e.g. at 172-180 where he comments on the corruption in a society which has no fear of God and how Christianity can overcome this, or at 690-768 on the victory at Pollentia. This is not an unknown theme in Christian authors. For example Tertullian said that Christians prayed that the emperor might have *uitam ...prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum* (A. 30.4) but until Constantine it was impossible to know whether adopting Christianity would bring temporal advantages to the empire. Prudentius is of the opinion it did with the proviso that the things of heaven were of more importance (cf. 123-24). It was left to Augustine to make the case for a more nuanced approach after the fall of Rome in 410, with the *City of God*, where he says that no emperor should be a Christian because of the temporal advantages he hopes to gain. (cf.*Civ.Dei.* 5.25 where the good fortune of Constantine is contrasted to the misfortune of the Christian emperor Jovian.)

134 speciosaque semina Thomson translates this as `the beauteous things that grow`. Gar. comments that *speciosa* here is used in terms of a prospective function. Thus the

seeds are not necessarily beautiful but what they will grow into is. However *semina* is used here in the sense of the component parts of matter as he uses it also at A.265 *cum sit difficilis uia noscere principiorum/semina*.

135-6 parcisque fruenda/ moribus indulsi . The use of *indulgere* with a direct object is a post-classical Latin usage with the sense of to grant or concede. (e.g. *alicui usum pecuniae* Suet.Aug.41, *insignia triumphi indulsit Caesar*, Tac.A.11,20).

141 aeuum statui The idea that God, as almighty, has determined a fixed life-span for each person is quite plausible but not one that is found in the Bible. Psalm 89 speaks of the power that God has over human life but does not say that this span is fixed. In the Old Testament a long life was taken to be a sign of God's favour so the length of one's life depended on the moral choices a person made. The idea of life as a time of testing one's virtue by God is found in Hebrews 12.5-13. The idea of a fixed life-span is found more readily in pagan literature: e.g. A.10. 465 *stat sua cuique dies, breue et irreparabile tempus*.

143, Cunningham notes that in *E* line 143 is replaced by two lines which read:

eneruare suum corrupta per otia robur
posset et in nullo luctamine pigra iaceret

The sense of the two lines are much the same as the other version, although the latter contains the strange ending "*sine laude palaestrae*". *Palaestra* is a word which occurs five times in Prudentius and is used simply to mean a struggle in *Pe*. 5.213. Here it recalls I Corinthians 9.24-27 where St Paul speaks of the Christian life in terms of an athletic contest. In the absence of any other criteria, I think the two line reading of *E* is to be rejected as the other reading is the more difficult and the reading of *E* may have been a

gloss to explain it. The scansion of *eneruatum* is unusual here as the first syllable is short: Prudentius also reads it as short elsewhere too (cf. C.8.64). Cunningham (1968 p. 133) suggests that the gloss may have been included in the margin as an example of the usual prosody of *eneruare*. He also suggests the scribe may have included the gloss as a passage which Prudentius adapted or which adapted Prudentius. Cunningham, Thomson and Bergman all omit the extra lines.

145-8 Images of binding and loosening are important in the work of Prudentius. Normally binding is a positive force in Prudentius as is seen in *H.* 236-240, 244-250 where there is a description of the discord in creation caused by the breaking down of the limits set by God for creation. Binding or weaving is taken as an image for the divine order of things, even if this is to be sometimes a cause for regret as in the introductory *praefatio* to the whole work where he writes:

....et diem

uicinum senio iam Deus adplicat

(*Praef.* 4-5)

Later in the same poem, however, he wishes he could break free of the chains of the flesh and free his tongue

haec dum scribo uel eloquor

uinclis o utinam corporis emicem

liber, quo tulerit lingua sono mobilis ultimo

(*Praef.* 43-45)

Malamud (1989), who discusses many of these examples of binding and weaving (cf.pp.75-78), comments: "Prudentius, a poet clearly fascinated by names and

etymologies and fond of bilingual Greek and Latin puns, would hardly have overlooked the fact that his own name *Prudentius* (foresight) is a good Latin translation of the name of the Titan *Prometheus* (foresight).” (p.176). Thus ideas of binding and unbinding would have had particular importance if Prudentius was as interested in word play and association of ideas as Malamud claims. However it is difficult to see very much significance here in the use of imagery of binding, especially as here it is a negative force as men are bound by the pleasures of this world and he goes on to say that this must be overcome.

146 uincenda uoluptas Cf. n. 909 for nature of *uoluptas* in Prudentius.

147 elaqueanda . A word first found in Ambrose (*epist.*73.2 *lege quae implicauit atque innodauit magis humani generis infirmitatem quam elaqueauit et absoluit*). It is only found in late antique authors (cf. Amm. 30.1.11; Aug. *c. Iul op. Imperf.*2.105; Prosp. *carm. de prou.* 672; Sidon. *epist.* 8.9,2).

149-150. The instruction for man to follow the path of virtue with all his strength is reminiscent of passages of the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, where the command is to seek wisdom with all one has (e.g. *Vulg. Prov.* 4.7 *Principium sapientiae, posside sapientiam et in omni possessione tua acquire prudentiam.*). While Prudentius speaks of wisdom as something to be desired (e.g. 626-28 *sic inconposito humano in pectore sensus/.....nec liquida inuisit sapientia nec Deus intrat*) and often links the notion with God (C.5.161, C. 10.132 H.164) he uses the notion of *uirtus* far more often and is happy to adopt this traditional Roman term for the sum of human excellence.

147 retinaculis This is the only occurrence of this word in this spelling. The idea of pleasure as a net is a common idea. Cf. Cic. *Sen* 13.44 *uoluptatem quod ea uidelicet homines capiuntur ut pisces*.

151 congerat aurum Bergman sees an allusion here to Tibullus 1.1.1 *Divitias alius fuluo congerat auro*. Tibullus evokes the joys of the rustic life and while he is not often found in Prudentius an allusion to the imagined simple life of the country found in this passage suits his purpose here.

153 popularibus auris Gar. spots an allusion to Vergil (A.6.816) here where the phrase also occurs at the end of the line. Vergil speaks of the Roman king Ancus who, he says, sought popular favour. It is a common phrase in prose and poetry (e.g. Hor. *C.* 3.2.20, Liv. 3.33.7) but the exact match and line position here does recall the Vergil passage.

158 ne praeferat utile iusto Ambrose had, following Cicero's scheme, devoted the third book of his *De Officiis* to a consideration of whether what is just can ever be in conflict with what is expedient. Ambrose's answer is uncompromising: he believes that what is virtuous can never be opposed to what is expedient. This could be a reference to the discussion in Ambrose.

161-167 After the speech by Faith, Prudentius reflects on what she has said about the importance of pursuing eternal rewards rather than earthly pleasures.

162 perennibus in se The things that are eternal in a man must refer to the gifts of God mentioned in l.160 which are said never to perish.

164 uiuae mentis Prudentius is fond of qualifying *mens* with an adjective and on three other occasions he also speaks of a "living mind": cf. 385 *uiuida mens*; 387 *mens uiua*; H. 894 *mens uiua*. Quite what he means by this is not immediately apparent as a dead mind

would not qualify as a mind. In *H.* 894 the *mens uiua* is taken as a comparison with the *anima*. Prudentius says that no-one should doubt that the *anima* can see things hidden from bodily eyes when the *mens* sees all kinds of places during sleep. Here *uiua* is used to contrast the mind active in dreaming with the body sunk in sleep. At 385 the *mens* is *uiuida* in contrast to the *genius*, which Prudentius says is purely imaginary. At 387 the *mens* is described as *uiua* again in reference to the *genius* which has no real existence. So there must be a contrast in this line and I think it is between the living mind and the flesh which has no life of its own without the soul. The flesh is perishable but the *mens* is everlasting. Other adjectives he uses for *mens* are *libera* (*Per.*10.519), *sobria* (*C.S.*2.1058) and *innocens* (*C.*1.59). Elsewhere we find *mens* described as *captiua* (*C.S.*2.876). Prudentius uses *mens*, meaning the soul, many times in his work. The soul is for him the most precious thing a man has. This is illustrated in *Ps.* 2.217-220 where the martyr Lawrence says:

si forte detur optio
 malim dolore asperrimo
 fragmenta membrorum pati
 et pulcher intus uiuere.

Lawrence's sentiment is close to that expressed in this line. The question is rhetorical: the only people who might have disagreed were the Epicureans who would hold that the well-being of the body, as regards freedom from pain, protected the well-being of the mind (cf. *Lucr.* 3.459-73).

166 ego cf. n. 107-8

168-181 A section which reflects on the consequences for society if it has no hope of life after death and judgement. Prudentius shows an interest in satire here and while there is little extant material which it echoes, the whole flavour is reminiscent of earlier Roman satire. However, what is novel is that instead of satirising the faults of others, Prudentius says that these are the vices into which he himself would fall if it were not for his fear of God.

168-71 If this life is all there is, Prudentius says morality disappears as there is no fear of eternal punishment in the next life to deter the evil-doer. A belief in the creation of the world by God does not require a belief also in eternal life. In the Old Testament the view is that God is good to those he loves in this life and an explicit belief in an after-life is not found before the second century BC in Daniel 12.2. However what is perhaps more surprising is that Prudentius does not appear to allow for the possibility that one may wish to live a moral life through fear of what punishment God or the gods may inflict in *this* life. It is a recurring feature of this poem that Prudentius does not express a belief in direct intervention in human affairs by God. Thus he attributes military victories to the valour of soldiers (23-26) and the failure of the crops to inherent flaws in nature (997-1000).

174-75 infitiabor...../ depositum Bergman (p.463) cites as a parallel here Juvenal 13.60 *nunc si depositum non infitietur amicus*. The reference to Juvenal is appropriate in this satirical passage. Juvenal says it is now regarded a great act of honesty if someone does not deny that he has been left something on trust by a friend. For Prudentius the consequence of a lack of fear of God is that one will deny that one has a trust that was left to one by a relative without any witness present

176 magico cantamine Imperial legislation outlawed the practice of magic for harmful purposes. (For a law of Constantine to this effect cf. *C.TH* 9.16.3 This law did not outlaw `white magic` such as charms designed to produce favourable weather or good health) the malevolent use of magic had been behind the great series of trials of senators in Rome in the late 360`s which are described by Ammianus (*Res Gestae* 28.1.) Magic is also a standard ingredient of the bad behaviour in the Satires of Juvenal (e.g. *Sat.* 1.69-72).

The alliteration with `m` is perhaps meant to suggest the humming of an incantation.

176-77 Legacy hunters are a favourite target of satirists (cf. Hor. *S.*2.5, Juv. 1.37-44, 5.137-145). In the fourth century Ammianus mentions them (28.4.22) and Jerome condemns clerics who do this (*Ep.*52.6).

179 lex armata As fond as Prudentius is of personifying virtues and vices, this is the only time he comes close to using *lex* in this way.

180 iudex corrumpitur Corruption of judges is mentioned very often by Cicero e.g. *Clu.*44.125 *ipse adductus in iudicium pecuniam iudici dederit ad sententias iudicum corrumpendas*. In verse, Horace speaks of the corrupt judge in a way that suggests it is a stock figure: *S.*2.2.8-9 *male uerum examinat omnis/ corruptus iudex*.

182 Sed quid ego haec meditor ? A poetic aside and rhetorical effect to give the impression of being carried away by one`s subject. Pindar was the first to introduce this (e.g. *Pind.O.*2.89)

Reuocat Deus ecce seuera... The basis for good order in society is the fear of God and the belief in a final judgement. Ancient political theory often began with a consideration of the human soul and what was best for it and how the state could provide this. Christian

political theory was also concerned with the soul but more in the context of its eternal destiny. Tertullian treated this idea in the *Apologeticus* (*Apol.* 45.7)

184 momenta] *TESQ Heinsius alii*, *monumenta S2 Bergman edd. recc.*, *munumenta t* Gar. follows Bergman here. *Monumenta* reads more easily here. The sense would be that *`the memorials of my works will not perish through death`*. However, *momenta* is favoured by the main manuscripts and deserves attention. The plural makes it a more difficult reading. Allowing for a poetic use of the plural the sense is that *`the importance of my works will not die`* Both make acceptable sense but given the balance of manuscript authority and the *difficilior lectio* of *momenta* I have followed Cunningham here.

185 interior qui spirat homo Gnilka (1966 p.90) notes that this curious phrase appears to have taken from the *Vetus Itala* version of the Bible. At 2.*Cor.*4.16 St. Paul writes: *etsi exterior homo noster corrumpitur, sed interior renovatur* Gar. takes the phrase to mean the soul which is plausible.

187 nec mihi difficile est... Prudentius side-steps the question of how a disembodied soul can experience the pain of flames without a body by simply saying that God can do anything.

193-211 possum quoniam renovare fauillas. Prudentius begins a section on the resurrection of the body, which was an explicitly Christian idea (cf. *1 Cor.*15.51-57). In the Acts of the Apostles (17.18-32) St Paul preached at the Areopagus before a crowd which we are told contained some Epicureans and Stoics. At the mention of the resurrection of the body some of them burst out laughing (*cum audissent autem resurrectionem mortuorum, quidam quidem irridebant Acta Apost. 17.32*).

195-96 exempla meae uirtutis in ipsis/seminibus This example goes back to the Gospel of John (Jn. 12.24-25 *Amen, amen dico uobis, nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert.*) and was taken up in the early Church as an analogy of the resurrection (cf. *I Clem.* 24-6 which compares the resurrection of the body to the way day follows night, decaying seeds left in the ground become healthy plants and the re-birth of the phoenix.).

203 nil uos....fallant The normal construction for third person prohibitions is *ne* and the present subjunctive. Prudentius uses *nil* for more emphasis.

203 physicorum dogmata The *physici* were the natural philosophers such as Anaximander, Anaximanes, Anaxagoras, Xenophanes and Democritus. That the term did not embrace all philosophers is clear from Lactantius' comment *Quare si neque omnia sciri possent, quod physici putauerunt, neque nihil quod Academici, philosophia omnis extincta est.* (*Inst* 3.6). Prudentius disapproves of the *physicorum dogmata* here, although he does not say which natural philosophers he has in mind. Given that he has used examples from nature to corroborate the doctrine of the resurrection, he seems to be saying that for all their observation of nature the *physici* have not really understood what it can show them about the nature of God.

Augustine discusses natural philosophers in *Civ. Dei.* 8. where he applauds them for their work when it recognises the existence of one, supreme God who created all things. He sees that such natural philosophy existed beyond even the boundaries of the Roman empire as he praises the philosophers among the Indians, Persians and Chaldeans who acknowledged this truth (*Civ. Dei.* 8.9). An attitude closer to Prudentius' is found in his contemporary Paulinus of Nola when he attacks pagan philosophers (*Carm* 36. 32-41 :

Philosophos credam quicquam rationis habere / Qui ratione carent, quibus sapientia uana.....Sunt enim Physici naturae nomine dicti / Quos antiqua iuuat rudis atque incondita uita). Weston (1915) p.65 thinks that Paulinus has in mind the Cynics here although he believes *Physici* should refer to the Stoics in this context.

The main problem for Prudentius with these philosophers is that their systems allowed no room for the resurrection which he is arguing for here.

There is a lost work by Theophrastus, recorded by Diogenes Laertius in his bibliography of the philosopher (5.48), whose title was either φυσικῶν δόξαι or φυσικαὶ δόξαι, which was a collection of the sayings of philosophers to be used as a handbook. The tradition was continued by Aëtius who made a similar compilation, evidence of which is found in ps-Plutarch's *Placita philosophorum* and Stobaeus' *Eclogae*, which Diels assumed came from a common source which he assumed to be Aëtius. Diels then concluded that Aëtius had used Theophrastus as his source. (cf. Mansfeld in Fortenbaugh and Gutas (1992) pp. 63-111.). Thus Prudentius could here be referring to this doxographical tradition and handbooks of his own day.

dominus The term used by Christians to translate the Hebrew *adonai*, meaning lord, which was used instead of the divine name Yahweh which was never pronounced by the Jews.

208 surgat ut ex cinere. The resurrection of the body was taught by Christianity from its beginning (cf. 1 *Cor.* 15.35-58 and for a near contemporary of Prudentius cf. Aug. *serm* 264.6 “ *Sed hoc interest, quia ista caro resurget, ista ipsa quae sepelitur, quae moritur; ista quae uidetur, quae palpatur, cui opus est manducare et bibere, ut possit durare; quae aegrotat, quae dolores patitur, ipsa habet resurgere*) which found the idea in

Judaism from at least the time of the Maccabees (*Vulg. Macc.* 2.12. 44 regarding the sacrifices offered for the fallen Jewish troops by Judas Maccabaeus: *nisi enim eos, qui ceciderant, resurrecturos speraret, superfluum uideretur et uanum orare pro mortuis*).

The mechanics of rising from the dead is treated in a less direct way by other Christian writers. Minucius Felix writes: *Corpus omne sive arescit in puluerem sive in umorem soluitur uel in cinerem comprimitur uel in nidorem tenuatur, subducitur nobis, sed deo elementorum custodia reseruatur* (*Oct.* 34.10). A more direct approach is found in Gregory of Nyssa, who appeals to the omnipotence of God.

Ὡς οὖν τὸ σπέρμα ὑπάρχον ἄμορφον ἐν ἀρχαῖς, εἰς σχῆμα τυποῦται, καὶ εἰς ὄγκους ἀδρύνεται, τῇ ἀπορρήτῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατασκευαζόμενον τέχνῃ. οὕτως οὐδὲν ἀπεικος, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάνυ ἀκόλουθον, τὴν ἐν τοῖς τάφοις ὕλην, τὴν ποτε οὔσαν ἐν εἴδει, αὐθις εἰς τὴν παλαιὰν ἀνακαινισθῆναι διάπλασιν, καὶ πάλιν γενέσθαι τὸν χοῦν ἄνθρωπον, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐκεῖθεν ἔσχε τὴν γένεσιν (*In Christi Resurrectionem Or.*3)

(Therefore, just as seed, existing from the beginning without form, is fashioned into a shape and grows into a body, prepared by the ineffable skill of God, thus it is not incongruous, but highly appropriate, for matter, which is in tombs, which once had form, to be renewed into its former constitution and that dust to again become a man, just as from thence he had his origin.)

209 rependat Prudentius says that the dead will rise either to make recompense for their sins through torments or to shine in the citadel of the highest virtue. Two alternative states in the afterlife are thus presented. Normally one would assume Prudentius is referring here to Heaven and Hell. However, the use of *rependat* suggests that this group is making recompense to God and raises the question of whether Prudentius is here indicating a belief in a purgatory, where the dead are suffering for their sins but, because

they are paying God back they will eventually be allowed to enter Heaven. Although evidence is not lacking from this period for a belief in Purgatory (cf. Greg. Nyssa *Or. De mortuis* 587, Aug. *Civ. Dei* 21.13) and Prudentius himself gives ample evidence of his own belief in this doctrine (cf. *H.* 961-66 and *Per.* 6.97-99), I think here Prudentius is simply giving the two eternal destinations of Heaven and Hell and sees the punishments of Hell as satisfying divine justice. For a treatment of Heaven and Hell elsewhere by Prudentius cf. *H.* 802-930. He makes clear there that he believes the damned endure torment for all eternity (*H.* 834-36).

211 non peritura dehinc quacumque in sorte manebit. Christianity teaches the resurrection of both the virtuous and the wicked, with the wicked being sent to eternal punishment and the virtuous to eternal happiness. Cf. Matt 25.31-46, Justin Martyr *Apol.* 1 52, John Chrysostom *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* 8)

212 dum mixta uiget substantia in unum *In* and the accusative can indicate the result of an act: e.g. *portus ab Euroo fluctu curuatus in arcum* Verg. *A.* 3. 533. It is not a case of the body and soul growing into a single being as soul and body remain separate entities in Christian anthropology although forming one human being. I think *mixta* has to be taken with *substantia* to mean that the substance of the human person is formed of two elements, but it also has to have the force of a participle meaning that the substance lives in a unique mixture.

At *Ps.* 909, Prudentius speaks of the human being as a *duplex substantia*. Prudentius attaches a number of meanings to the word *substantia*. Thus at *C.* 7. 40 God looking down on Moses who has been fasting for forty days notices that he *is omni carentem....substantia*. The basic meaning is that of which a thing exists. Lav. (§442)

suggests here that *cum corpore* should be understood after *mixta* so that *substantia* refers only to the souls but if Prudentius can talk about man as a *duplex substantia* elsewhere, then I think *mixta substantia* can stand here. *Vigere* always takes *in* and the ablative (e.g. *ab hoc igitur uiro quisquam bellum timet qui, ante quam nos id coacti suscepimus, in pace iacere quam in bello uigere maluit* Cic Phil 10.14.7) so *mixta* must be the verb governing *in*. There is a parallel usage in Vergil (A. 12.714 *fors et uirtus miscentur in unum*)

213 proprii Another example of the later Latin use of *proprius* instead of the possessive adjectives *meus*, *tuus* or *suus*. (cf. n. l. 83)

214 -15 Non condidit alter / halantis animae figmentum et corporis alter

In the *Timaeus*, Plato had written of how the soul was created by the Demiurge and then human bodies were made by the lower gods (*Timaeus* 36). Manichaeism taught that humans were created from matter which belonged to the realm of the Prince of Darkness although they contained some parts of the light from the Father of Majesty which they had to struggle to release by ascetic practices to reach happiness. This would give a contemporary context to Prudentius' attack on dualism here except that he has already attacked Manichaeism, together with many Christian heresies and Judaism in his poem *Apotheosis*. His attacks in the *C.S.* are on paganism. Given that he goes on to attack straightforward polytheism I doubt whether we should see 215 as a digression into an attack on Manichaeism.

Figmentum is a rare word which can mean a figure or an image (cf. Gell. 5,12,12 and Amm. 2.9), which would not be appropriate here where it means formation.

218 ast] *TSQ*, aut *TcE edd.* Bergman, the Budé and Gar. prefer *aut* here, while Cunningham and Thomson prefer *ast*. Lav. (the editor of the Budé) notes (§ 69) that *ast* is one of the archaic forms that Prudentius uses and that it occurs especially at the beginning of the verse and before *alius* (cf. *H.pr.*7, *H.*120, *Ps.* 649, *C.S.* 1. 93, *C.S.* 2.775 etc.) Given the frequency of this usage in Prudentius it is to be preferred to the rather blander *aut*.

220-221 oleas...../ Graia quas Pallade fingitis ortas Athena was credited with having invented the olive. Vergil speaks of the olive as belonging to her at *G.*2.181: *Palladia gaudent silua uiuacis oliuae*. Servius (*Serv.A.*8.128) tells the story of its origin: *nam cum de nomine Athenarum Neptunus et Minerua contenderent et iussisset Iuppiter ut illius nomine diceretur ciuitas, qui munus melius obtulisset hominibus, equum Neptunus, Minerua oliuam protulit, et statim uicit*.

222 Lucinas nascentibus horas Juno Lucina was the goddess of childbirth. Cf. Servius (*Serv.A.*1.8): *namque Iuno multa habet numina: est Curitis, quae utitur curru et hasta, ut est hic illius arma, hic currus fuit; est Lucina, quae partibus praeest, ut Iuno Lucina fer opem; est regina, ut quae diuum incedo regina; sunt et alia eius numina*.

225 ignem The use of *ignis* here is interesting. Normally it is taken as a metaphor for the fires of love but here Prudentius contrasts this *ignem* with *lasciuus amoribus*. Thus *ignem* here means passion but in a chaste sense. In *Per.* 2. 304 there is a reference to marriage as a fire when Prudentius speaks of widows who do not re-marry and says *ignis secundi nescias*. Prudentius' use of *ignis* is close to Stoic ideas. Fire is for him part of the soul (cf. *A.* 907, *H.* 874, 907) and is associated with God to such an extent that he declares that

God is an everlasting fire (*Per.2. 393-96 sic ignis aeternus Deus/nam Christus ignis uerus est;/is ipse conplet lumine/iustos et urit noxios*).

229 et non resolubilis] *t*, et more solubilis *S*, nec morte solubilis *Sc*. A rare and late word found three times in Prudentius (cf. *C.10.149, A.515*) and also in Ambrose (*in Psa. 118, Serm.13, § 20. homines luti corruptione resolubiles*). In the other two examples from Prudentius it means perishable. This is the meaning here too. As it is a word found particularly in Prudentius it is the more difficult reading and thus preferable to the easier *nec morte solubilis*.

230 sensibus et uestris Lav (§ 528) writes: *Il arrive souvent que les poètes placent et comme deuxième mot d'une proposition coordonnée* and he gives two examples from Prudentius (*Ps 136 iactibus et uacuis* and *Ps 144 ferienti et tuta resistit*).

231 ad tot moderamina mundi. Prudentius uses the word *moderamen* nine times but only in the plural here. Ovid uses the plural with no obvious change of sense from the singular (*Met. 3.644*) but Prudentius is emphatic with his plural here as he reinforces it with *tot*. Prudentius is thinking either of the responsibilities of different gods for different aspects of life as he has described in the preceding lines and may also have in mind the Gnostic idea of the world being given to the care of lower divine beings, while a supreme God rules on high (cf. Jonas (1958) 43).

233-34 Porro autem angelicas legiones, quas mea fecit/dextera. The idea of God's angels being organised into legions goes back to the Gospels themselves, when Christ speaks of them as such (*Vulg. Math. 26.53 duodecim legiones angelorum*). (For the creation of the angels cf. *Ps.148.2,5* and *Col.1.16*)

nosse meum est Prudentius' prime purpose here is rhetorical. The emphasis is on *nosse meum*. He does not deny what other Christian writers said about the role of angels but here he wishes to emphasize God's absolute dominion over creation. Other strands in Christianity do speak of the angels as divine agents who govern the world. The Book of the Apocalypse gives angels leading roles in administering God's rule in the world (e.g. Apoc. 8.6-12). The near contemporary of Prudentius, Jerome, speaks of how the angels are given care of human beings by God (*In Mich.* 6.1.2 *Et iudicio contende aduersum montes, quos non alios significari puto quam Angelos, quibus rerum humanarum commissa est procuratio Deuteronominii Cantico in idipsum congruente: Cum diuideret excelsus gentes, cum disseminaret filios Adam, constituet terminos terrae secundum numerum Angelorum Dei (Deut. 32.8). Hi sunt administratorii spiritus, missi in ministerium propter eos qui haereditatem salutis possessuri sunt*). Prudentius side-steps the issue of how the angels function in the divine economy, stressing the omnipotence of God.

creatis These must be the angels again as the sentence is dealing with their role as possible helpers for God in ruling creation and it would not make much sense to include other created beings who were not possible contenders for this position here.

237 parere meis uirtutibus They can only appear to have the attributes of the Christian God as they do not really exist (cf. C.S. 1. 145-244) or they were demons (C.S. 1.369-70). The use of *parere* to mean 'appear' is quite rare in classical Latin (cf. Verg. A. 10.176 *caeli cui sidera parent*) but more common in ecclesiastical usage (*Vulg. Matt.24.30 parebit signum filii hominis in caelo*).

239-40 God is a spirit and thus has no body. Only bodies can be divided into parts. In fact this is a definition of what a body is (cf. Aug. *De Nat. et Orig. An.* 4.12.17). God goes on to say he is a *substantia simplex*. Contemporary pagan philosophy, in the Platonic tradition, would say that the highest divine entity was a simple being who could not be divided into parts (cf. Wallis (1972) p.57). Prudentius is trying to point out that to believe in a plethora of divine beings is to divide the *substantia simplex* of God.

242 ut scindi ualeam *Valeam* has the same meaning as *possim* would have here. (cf. Verg. A. 2.492)

243 quod ex nihilo formaui, pars mea non est Christianity followed Hebrew teaching on the creation of the world *ex nihilo* (cf. *Vulg. Gen.* 1.1, Aug *De Gen.* 1.6.10 *Deus rectissime creditur omnia de nihilo fecisse...*) and rejected the idea of God as a material being as presented, for example, by Stoicism, upholding him to be a spiritual being who transcends his creation. (e.g. the second century Apologist Athenagoras *Supplic.* 4.1f

Ἡμῖν δὲ, διαιροῦσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης τὸν Θεόν, καὶ δεικνύουσιν ἕτερον μὲν τι εἶναι τὴν ὕλην, ἄλλο δὲ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τὸ διὰ μέσου πολὺν.

(Is it not absurd to level the charge of atheism against us, who distinguish God from matter, and teach that God is one thing and matter another, and that they are separated by a vast chasm ?)

244-255 In the *Psychomachia* (Ps.823-887), the virtues celebrate their victory by building a temple for Christ. The temple in the *Psychomachia* is built out of precious materials in an account based on the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation (22.15). Here the emphasis is on a *templum mentis* rather than *marmoris* (l.249). In the context of the poem this is significant as Symmachus' speech was about

preserving the Roman curia as a centre of religious cult with its altar. There is a similar passage contrasting the Old Testament temple of Solomon, with that of Christ himself as the temple of God (A.512-36). However, the reader might also be familiar with Prudentius' account of the basilicas of Sts. Peter and Paul in *Per.* 12. 31-54 where he is only too happy to talk about the splendour of their construction, including the Parian marble which he rejects in this passage. It is, however, understandable in a context where he is arguing against Symmachus that he plays down the importance of the building *per se* whereas in the *Per.* he is keen to celebrate these great basilicas and highlight their splendour.

245 caementa remitto In the Old Testament God expresses a dislike of dressed stone in that he orders the Israelites to use only uncut stones to make their altars (*Vulg. Ex. 20 25 Quod si altare lapideum feceris mihi, non aedificabis illud de sectis lapidibus; si enim leuaueris cultrum super eo, polluetur*). *Caementum* means a stone from a quarry but in an undressed state. God is not here making a distinction between cut and uncut stones but rather rejecting the temple made of any kind of stone in favour of the temple of the *templum mentis* of the believer.

246 Paros This is one of the islands known as the Cyclades off the coast of Delos. It was famous for its white marble (Mel. 2.7.11., Plin. *N.H.* 4.12.22, § 67) for which it was one of the main sources in antiquity. (cf. Healy (1999) 204-208)

Punica Carthage was not renowned for the quality of its stone. Pliny says that tufa is the only stone found in the vicinity of Carthage (*N.H.* 36. 48. §166). It simply means here a red marble or porphyry as *punicus* means a purple-red colour (cf. Prop.3.3.32-33 *columbae/ tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu.*)

247 viridis Lacedaemon Pliny (*N.H.* 36.11.§ 55) speaks of *Lacedaemonium uiride* as being very expensive and brighter than all others in a section on coloured marbles. This is green porphyry (verde antico). Juvenal speaks of *Lacedaemonium orbem* as a part of the extravagance to be deplored (*S.* 11.175). Sparta was also famous for black marble from Mt. Taenarus (cf. Plin. *N.H.* 36.29 § 135)

maculosa Synna Synnada was a town in Phrygia Major famous for marble (cf. Plin. *N.H.* 35.1.§ 3) Its marble was distinguished by purple veins (cf Claud. *In Eutr.* 2 272.73 *pretiosaque picto / marmore purpureis, caedit quod Synnada, uenis* and Statius *Sil.* 1.5.37).

248 natium..... scopuli ostrum A rather torturous way of speaking of purple rock. It is difficult to see what is added by describing the *ostrum* as *natium*. Presumably Prudentius is thinking of red porphyry (which Pliny says came from Egypt (*N.H.* 36. 11. 57)).

249 templum mentis God says that he prefers a temple of the soul or wisdom rather than one of marble. The idea that the human being can be a temple for God is found in St. Paul (*Vulg. I Cor.* 6.19 *An nescitis quoniam membra uestra templum sunt Spiritus sancti, qui in uobis est, quem habetis a Deo...*) Cicero had used the phrase *templum mentis* to refer to the senate-house (*Mil* 33.90 *templum sanctitatis, amplitudinis, mentis, consili publici*). If Prudentius has Cicero's phrase in mind at all his point still stands that God loves a *templum mentis* rather than just the building itself: what matters is that God be received into a creature filled with virtue. If there is an allusion to the senate here then Prudentius has made it clear in book one that they have for the most part adopted Christianity (C.S. 1.544-77). Given that the poem is concerned with the debate over the altar of Victory in

the senate-house it could well be that here Prudentius is contrasting the true temple of God with a pagan alternative. The issue of the kind of temple God likes also occurs in that other `Roman` poem, *Per.*10, where we are again told that the temple God has made for himself is in the soul of man (*Per.*10.346-65).

Gar. points out that Lucretius speaks of knowledge approaching the *templa mentis* (5.103), where it is in parallel with the *pectus humanum*. Both the Lucretius and Prudentius passages occur in the context of faith. Lucretius speaks of *fides* helping the intelligence accept what he is teaching and Prudentius in 250 introduces the notion of *fides* having its foundations in the *mens*. Prudentius has used this passage of Lucretius before at 104.

250 niuali. Here Prudentius is interested in snow for its whiteness which is the counterpart to the white marble he has rejected. In *Per.* 12.38 *niuali* is used to speak instead of the cool water in the baptistry of St. Peter`s basilica in Rome which has flowed over *pretiosa marmora* (*Per.* 12.35).

256 Nec nouus hic locus est . Prudentius says that God has let his glory and light flow into human limbs and explains what he means by saying this place was not new because God raised up humanity which had strayed from him and made his home in pre-existing human flesh. By this Prudentius means both the incarnation of Christ in human form and the divine life which is thus given to all Christians through Christ (e.g. Athanasius *de Incarn. Verbi.* 54 : Ἀυτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν (*He became man so that we might become gods*) and Cyril of Alex. in *Ioh.*1.9 (1, 13)

θείας τε φύσεως ἀποτελούμεθα κοινωνοί, καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ γεγεννήσθαι λεγόμεθα,
καὶ θεοὶ διὰ τοῦτο χρηματίζομεν, οὐ χάριτι μόνον εἰς τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς

ἀνιπτάμενοι δόξαν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἤδη καὶ Θεὸν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐνοικούντα καὶ
ἐναυλιζόμενον

(We are made partakers of the divine nature and are said to be sons of god, nay we are actually called divine, not only because we are exalted by grace to supernatural glory, but also because we have God dwelling in us).

Why does Prudentius emphasize here that the place is not new? Symmachus has not argued that God has made a new place of worship for himself. One can only conclude that Prudentius is trying to argue for the antiquity of Christian worship and so he stresses that the best that mankind can offer to God is not some new, shining temple but rather the temple of their own beings.

257-58 Deus inlustrauit. Cunningham puts this sentence in parentheses presumably because he does not see it as spoken by God himself as it refers to him in the third person and in the perfect tense and so must be a comment by Prudentius. However in the previous sentence God has referred to himself in the third person, where he is undoubtedly the speaker, and at 268 does so again. Thus, although it may seem somewhat odd, I think it is acceptable for Prudentius to have God speaking about himself in the third person. Thomson and Cunningham start a new sentence with *Deus* which is more satisfactory than Lavarenne and Bergman who only punctuate with a comma after *Dei*.

inlustrauit It is not at first apparent how God could be said to enlighten matter. It was common enough to believe that God could enlighten the mind to give knowledge of his glory and man's destiny (e.g. among the Apostolic fathers, 2 *Clem.* 1, 4-7), but the enlightenment of matter is not spoken of. As the phrase is in apposition to the next, one

can only assume that this enlightening has something to do with God making the human body a fit dwelling for himself: as God has *lux uera* so the nature he will take on must thus share in that light.

260-262spectare superna.....et sublime tuentem. These lines recall Ovid (*M.1.84*) with their description of the creation of human beings and their upright posture. Prudentius differs from Ovid in that once he has described man`s creation he speaks of a Fall as described in Genesis 3. Prudentius describes this in terms of man turning his gaze upon the earth rather than looking towards heaven as God intended. The nature of man`s upright posture is often discussed in ancient texts e.g. Plato *Timaeus* 90 and Aristotle *Parts of Animals* 4.10. Gregory of Nyssa (*Hom. Opif. 8.1*) makes the same point from a Christian perspective when he says that man`s upright posture is a mark of his royal dignity and unique status, looking towards heaven, setting him apart from the animals who bow their bodies downwards. The same idea occurs in Lactantius (*Inst.2.1*).

263-269 Ewald (1942) sees these lines about the fall of man and the coming of a redeemer paralleled in Ovid`s account of the age of iron (*M.1.129-149*) which is eventually resolved by the coming of Jupiter in human form (*M.1. 213*) to punish the human race with a flood which enables it to have a new start (*M. 1. 253-312*).

Ewald makes clear the parallels in this form

Prudentius

Ovid

1) Creation of man (260-262)

1) Creation of man (*M.1.76-86*)

2) The fall (263-264)

2) The iron age, the age of vice
(129-149)

3) Man`s redemption (265-269)

3) A new race promised by Jove to
continue the worship of the gods
(251-252).

4) Worship of God (269)

4) Worship of Jove (220)

It is Ewald`s belief that, while the verbal parallels with Ovid are not strong, the structure of Prudentius` thought is influenced by Ovid. At best this can only be applied very loosely. In Prudentius, although he speaks of Adam as the perfect man (*perfectum hominem* 260), there is no sense of looking back to the Garden of Eden as a perfect society. It is certainly the case that attributing the Fall of Man to his bending down to the world`s riches is not an idea from Genesis and is a remarkable example of Prudentius choosing to use pagan terminology to describe a Christian belief in that he follows Ovid and his notion of Man`s downfall coming from looking towards the ground which they marked out with boundaries, planted crops in the ground and then dug for precious metals (*M.* 1.135-140). However there is nothing here to correspond to Ovid`s gradual decline from the Golden Age to the Iron Age. It is difficult to equate Jupiter`s announcement of a new race to worship the gods after the flood with Prudentius` account of Redemption through the Incarnation of Christ.

264 numen For the notion of divine indwelling cf. *n.* 1.256.

in deitatem Cf. *n.* 1. 256.

270-369 Progress a good thing (against Rel.3.4)

Prudentius develops the theme that change and growth are as inevitable in the life of the human race and Roman state as they are in the life of a human being, against the theme

that pervades Symmachus' third *Relatio*, that custom is to be revered, especially when it has brought great success to Rome. Symmachus made the claim that love of tradition is part of human nature (*Rel. 3.4 Consuetudinis amor magnus est*). Ambrose had attacked directly Symmachus' claims for the superiority of tradition. In *Ep. 18.23* he writes about Symmachus : *Sed maiorum, inquit, seruandus est ritus. Quid quod omnia postea in melius profecerunt ?* Ambrose then goes on to show how progress is a necessary part of history. He starts with the development of creation from the void and goes on to say that even the day gets better as the sun progresses through the sky. He then goes on to speak of the progress of civilization through agriculture (*Ep. 18.25*) and then of how the year progresses towards the harvest. From this he draws a comparison with human development from infancy to maturity (*Ep. 18.27*).

For Symmachus, pagan religion is necessary as the glue which holds society together and he has no such idea of progress. Prudentius has Symmachus first simply defend *morem ueterem*, which may, to an outsider, not sound like a specifically pagan line of argument. However, when Romans spoke of the *mores maiorum* the idea of religious practice was not far behind. Festus said of *mos*: *Mos est <institutum pa>trium: id est memoria ueterum pertinens maxime ad religiones <caerim>oniasque antiquorum* (146). This section takes Symmachus' claim that custom is to be revered and makes of it a *reductio ad absurdum* by saying that presumably Symmachus would prefer the life of primitive man to that of Roman civilization.

This passage makes an interesting contrast to the usual classical idea of a golden age. The whole question of ancient attitudes to the 'golden age' and technological progress is summarised by Lovejoy and Boas (1935). Prudentius uses the anti-primitivist text of

Vergil (*G.* 1.125-155). He also uses Ovid's account of primitive times (*M.* 1.76-150) to provide vocabulary and structure while disagreeing with its sentiments. Boas (1948) calls this passage 'one of the most striking expressions of the idea of progress in Latin literature' (p.184). There would appear to be some contradiction here as Prudentius had spoken of Adam as the perfect man and Christianity could thus regard Garden of Eden as a golden age. Ambrose himself had written glowingly of the condition of man before the Fall (*Hex.* 3.10) but could still speak of the value of progress in *Ep.* 18. Prudentius' only purpose is to attack Symmachus' assertion that tradition is the best guide and to show that things can change for the better. In making this point, there was another Christian precedent in Arnobius (2.66) who speaks of the Christian religion as being something new and then goes on to say how seeking progress is intrinsic to human nature. Arnobius contains some of the same elements as Prudentius i.e. acorns, animal skins and caves, but Prudentius also mentions wedges for cutting wood so he is not slavishly following Arnobius. The passage in full reads:

66.1. Licet ergo tu purus et ab omni fueris uitiorum contaminatione purgatus, conciliaueris illas atque inflexeris potestates, ad caelum <ne> redeunti uias cludent atque obsaepliant transitum, ad immortalitatis accedere nullis poteris contentionibus praemium, nisi quod ipsam immortalitatem facit Christo adtribuente perceperis et ueram fueris admissus ad uitam. 2. Nam quod nobis obiectare consuestis, nouellam esse religionem nostram et ante dies natam propemodum paucos neque nos oportuisse antiquam et patriam linquere et in barbaros ritus peregrinosque traduci, ratione istud intenditur nulla. 3. Quid enim, si hoc modo culpam uelimus infligere prioribus illis atque antiquissimis saeculis, quod inuentis frugibus glandes spreuerint et repudiauerint arbuta, quod

corticibus contegi et amiciri desierint pellibus, postquam uestis excogitata est textilis usu et commoditate succinctior, aut quod structis domibus et lautioribus successibus institutis non antiquas adamauerint casulas nec sub rupibus et cauernis praeoptauerint ut beluae permanere? 4. Commune est omnibus et ab ipsis paene incunabulis traditum, bona malis anteferre, inutilibus utilia praeponere, et quod esse constiterit pretiosius, laetius, id consecrari et petere in eoque defigere spem salutis et salutarium.

270 Scire uelim praecepta Patris quibus auribus haec tu accipias Presumably the teachings of Christianity were not unknown to Symmachus and it is difficult to see how these commonplaces would have had any great effect if he had been alive to read them. (Cf Intro p.4 for discussion of whether Symmachus was alive at the time of Prudentius writing this poem.)

271 Italae censor doctissime gentis Symmachus never held the position of censor. Prudentius applies the title loosely to him as a guardian of tradition as censors were responsible for ensuring standards were maintained in public life. The emperor Domitian had made himself censor for life and after that time the title remained an imperial one. (Cf. Pauly-Wissowa: *Censores*) Prudentius could be gently mocking Symmachus here by calling him the (self-appointed) censor of Italy.

272 An ueterem tantum morem ratione relictā/ eligis Symmachus had said in *Rel.* 3.8 *Nam cum ratio omnis in aperto sit, unde rectius quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio uenit numinum.* (For a discussion of Prudentius reaction to Symmachus' demoting of *ratio* cf.n.120.) Salzman (1989) argues that Symmachus was more dogmatic in his view of what constituted tradition than earlier fourth century pagan

writers such as Firmicus Maternus and Marius Victorinus. However the Roman attitude to tradition, which in case of doubt was to be preferred to the arguments of philosophy, is seen in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, where Cotta says he sometimes wonders whether the gods exist at all but nonetheless says: *Itaque ego ipse pontifex, qui caerimonias religionesque publicas sanctissime tuendas arbitror* (N.D. 1.61). Thus it could be said to be a traditional Roman attitude to uphold the traditions of the state religion, regardless of their credibility, for the reason that with these rites the Roman state had become great. *Relatio* 3 argues that the best interests of the state are preserved when tradition is honoured (*repetimus igitur religionum statum, qui reipublicae diu profuit Rel. 3.3*). Prudentius had said that the human mind in itself cannot attain to an understanding of God (94-98). However, where Prudentius then has recourse to Christian faith, Symmachus chooses tradition as his guide. Reason is nevertheless a major concern of Prudentius in the *Contra Symmachum*. Cacitti (1972) 402-435 and Evenepoel (1981) discuss this theme. Cacitti outlines the evidence, especially from book one, that Prudentius is keen to show that reason is what distinguishes Romans from barbarians.

274 “potior mihi pristinus est mos/ quam uia iustitiae.....” This quotation bears no resemblance to anything Symmachus says in the *Relatio* 3. However if tradition is the way to God for Symmachus, then Prudentius' argument here that Symmachus prefers tradition to justice, piety, and the truth has some point.

Post 276. The manuscripts include an extract from *Rel. 3.8*. Cf.n. post 6

SYMMACHUS : Suus cuique mos suus cuique ritus est. Iam si longa aetas auctoritatem religionibus faciat, seruanda est tot saeculis fides et sequendi sunt nobis parentes qui feliciter secuti sunt suos.

280 Prudentius uses asyndeton here which gives a more abrupt effect.

281 repperit usus. This rather strange turn of phrase (“whatever a later successor has found of use”) may be explained as being an allusion to *Georgics* 2.22 “*sunt alii quos ipse uia sibi repperit usus*” (cf. Bergman 464). Vergil is speaking about different kinds of trees at the beginning of *Georgics* 2. First he speaks about the natural growth of trees and then at line 22 he changes the subject to the way man has cultivated them to grow in special ways. It is this knowledge of nature to further man’s well-being which Prudentius is accusing Symmachus of wanting to reject if he sticks to his principles and so he uses this phrase used by Vergil to mark the beginning of man’s progress thus lending force to his argument that progress is part of man’s nature by reminding his reader of the *Georgics* and its celebration of man’s agricultural skills.

Ewald p.182 notes the Ovidian phrase *repperit usum* in *M.* 8.246 but it is difficult to see how this is a significant parallel as the verb takes the accusative and it occurs in the story of Daedalus which has no particular relevance to Prudentius’ point here.

282-301 Ewald (1942) 182-186 shows how Prudentius has taken passages from Ovid here to build up his picture of the golden age although he has a different attitude to it. For example, Prudentius speaks of a new world which did not need agriculture, (Ovid *M.* 1.101-102) where acorns provided food (Ovid *M.* 1.103-106), there was no need for metal (Ovid *M.* 1.98-99), men lived in caves (Ovid *M.* 1.121), and clothes were made of unsewn skins. He speaks of barbarous ways and ‘Scythian piety’. Ovid has a line of thought which includes these points in *M.* 1.101-140 with mention of the wild Scythians being made in *T.* 3.10. However, if we look at Lucretius 5. 925-1457 we also find the same items mentioned together with many more. Like Prudentius, Lucretius does not

think of the pre-civilised age as a golden age and, in fact, gives no indication whether he thinks progress is a good thing, tending to see it as simply inevitable, given human nature.

282 nulli subigebant arua coloni Another echo of the *Georgics*, this time a direct quotation from book 1, line 125 (cf. Bergman 464). Vergil speaks of agricultural tasks and then remarks that before the time of Jupiter (i.e the reign of Saturn often regarded as a Golden Age cf. *redeunt Saturnia regna* Verg. *Ecl.* 4.6) such skills were unknown and men lived off what the land provided. Only from the time of Jupiter has agriculture been necessary and has nature seen the arrival of the poisonous snake and the ravaging wolf. Prudentius continues in the next lines to see this primitive age not as something to be looked back on with affection but as a rather barbarous time. A contemporary view which is in sympathy with Prudentius` is found in Claudian`s *De Raptu Proserpine* (Rapt. 3. 18-32) when Jupiter speaks about the reign of Saturn as the “*ignavi senium ...aeui*” and how he introduced agriculture to enliven the minds of men. The reason he gives is :

dissuasor honesti

luxus et humanas oblimat copia mentes

(*Rapt.* 3. 28-9).

Jupiter is seen as encouraging the spirit of discovery and progress.

285 primi homines cuneis scindebant fissile lignum. Prudentius provides another quotation from the *Georgics*. The relevant line is *G.1.144* (*primi cuneis scindebant fissile lignum*) (cf. Bergman 464). This line is followed by the statement “*tum uariae uenere*

artes” (G.1.145) and so marks a transition from the primitive life to that of agriculture. Prudentius’ contemporary readers would recognise this.

288 et frigida paruas/ praebebat spelunca domos. Prudentius temporarily chooses to quote Juvenal instead of Vergil (cf. Bergman 464). Juvenal has *cum frigida paruas / praeberet spelunca domos* (S. 6. 2-3). Juvenal is speaking of the age of Saturn when virtue, specifically chastity, still existed on earth. This suits Prudentius’ purpose as he is speaking of primitive times here too but unlike Juvenal he is not holding up that age as model of good behaviour: he sees primitive times as something undesirable (cf. Sr Stella Marie (1962) p.44).

294 Scythica pietate For an extended review of ancient attitudes towards the Scythians cf. Lovejoy and Boas (1935) 315-344. They were regarded as barbarians but some writers chose to idealise them as noble savages who scorned the luxuries of civilisation. Lovejoy and Boas note that “as the Greeks and Romans came closer into contact with this savage people, the romantic notion of their nobility began to fade.” (*id.* 339). In Christian writers the notion of the noble savage is generally lacking (cf. Boas (1948) 129-135) and Jerome provides a catalogue of different type of barbarians with their vices (*Adu. Jov.*2.7). Interestingly, the idea of Scythian parricide is found in Tertullian’s *Aduersus Marcionem*. Given that Prudentius had also written the *Hamartigenia* against Marcion, he may have picked up the idea from Tertullian. Tertullian’s passage (*Adv. Marc.* 1.1.3) gives an idea of the tone of other authors on the Scythians:

Pontus, qui dicitur Euxinus, natura negatur, nomine illuditur. Ceterum hospitalem Pontum nec de situ aestimes; ita ab humanioribus fretis nostris quasi quodam barbariae suae pudore secessit. Gentes ferocissimae inhabitant; si tamen habitatur in plaustro. Sedes incerta, uita cruda, libido promiscua et plurimum nuda, etiam cum abscondunt, suspensis de iugo pharetris indicibus, ne temere qui intercedat. Ita nec armis suis erubescunt. Parentum cadauera cum pecudibus caesa conuiuio conuorant. Qui non ita decesserint ut escatiles fuerint, maledicta mors est. Nec feminae sexu mitigantur secundum pudorem; ubera excludunt, pensum securibus faciunt, malunt militare quam nubere. Duritia de caelo quoque. Dies nunquam patens, sol nunquam libens, unus aër nebula, totus annus hibernum, omne quod flauerit aquilo est. Liquores ignibus redeunt, amnes glacie negantur, montes pruina exaggerantur. Omnia torpent, omnia rigent; nihil illic nisi feritas calet, illa scilicet quae fabulas scenis dedit de sacrificiis Taurorum et amoribus Colchorum et crucibus Caucasorum

By `Scythian piety` Prudentius simply means barbarian piety, which would be an oxymoron to Roman ears.

praecipitet....iuuenis.....uietum/ uotiuo de ponte partem. Fraser has a long discussion about whether the Romans ever threw old men off bridges as a votive offering in his edition of Ovid's *Fasti* (note on 5.621). He talks about the ceremony of the Argei mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.38.3) and Varro, whereby effigies of men made of rushes were thrown into the Tiber from the sacred bridge on the Ides of May. He discusses whether they were simply substitutes for human sacrifice or had been introduced to replace the custom of throwing sixty year old men off the bridge. There was a Roman proverb *sexagenarios de ponte* which may have alluded to this practice. The

depontani was the name given to these men (cf. Paul ex Fest. p.75,7 Müll). Another theory was that men over sixty were not allowed to vote and so were not allowed over the bridge which led to the *saepta*. Whatever the truth of the matter, Prudentius prefers the idea that in early Roman times sixty year old men were thrown over the bridge as it fits his theory of past barbarism giving way to more civilized practices.

Lactantius (*Inst.* 1.21) attributes to the cult of Saturn the killing of a man as a sacrifice by throwing him off a bridge and it may be this that Prudentius is thinking of here.

296 caedibus infantum. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei.* 7.19) says that Varro claimed that the Carthaginians used to sacrifice children to Saturn, whereas the Gauls used to sacrifice adults. Diodorus (20.14.4-7), Minucius Felix, (30.3), Tertullian (*Apol.* 9.2), and Lactantius (*Inst.* 1.21) are familiar with this Carthaginian practice too. Archaeology has provided confirmation of this practice (cf. Stager (1980) 1-11). The Carthaginian god Ba`al Hammon was identified with Cronus or Saturn by Greek and Latin writers.

Prudentius thus leaps from Roman religious practices to those of Carthage but it all serves his general purpose of outlining how civilization has developed from the primitive state.

298 fragili culmo We return to echoes of the *Georgics* with this phrase which is found also in *G.* 1.317 (*agricola et fragili iam stringeret hordea culmo*) in a passage about autumn (cf. Bergman 464). For Vergil the *fragili culmo* is the stem from which the ear of barley is snapped off by the farmer. For Prudentius it is the fragile stem which is used to weave the hut like the dwelling Remus was said to have lived in (cf. Ovid *F.* 3. 183-184). The echo serves to keep the *Georgics* in the mind of his contemporary reader.

300 pelle Libystidis ursae. This is another reference to Vergil but this time from the *Aeneid* (cf. Bergman 464). The same words are found both in A. 5.37 and 8.368. The first time it occurs in a description of Acestes as he watches Aeneas' ships approach. The reference in book 8 is in the context of Aeneas' meeting with Evander. Evander gives Aeneas a room but the simplicity of the king's lifestyle is shown in that the couch is made of leaves and its cover is the pelt of a Libyan bear. Prudentius simply uses this Vergilian phrase to recall images of primitive simplicity to which he now suggests it would be ridiculous for his contemporary Romans to return.

302 Trinacrius.....Tuscus....As Gar. points out, identification of these two is not certain but given the Vergilian context, the Trinacrian leader may be Acestes, as this is a synonym for Sicilian, and the Tuscan may be Mezentius who was king of Caere in Etruria.

303-316 Prudentius gives a positive statement of how Rome has developed by abandoning some ancient practices and changing others for the better.

303-04 Gar. points out that a similar point is made by Tertullian (*Ap.6.9*). Tertullian shows that the state of pagan worship in his day in Rome was not always approved of by the Romans as their ancestors had tried to ban various cults (e.g. Bacchus and Isis) which were later regarded as respectable. Prudentius makes the same point: that paganism has itself changed and defence of current practice cannot be said to be simply trying to maintain things in the way they have always been.

313 damnare Lav (§ 305) lists various uses of *damnare* in Prudentius, all of which take the dative except for one use of it with the ablative. He does not mention this line. The other time he uses it with the ablative is in *C.S. 1. 470* (*lugebas longo damnatos carcere*

centum). The construction with the ablative when *damnare* is used in the legal sense of sentencing someone to a punishment is not unusual (cf. *ut is eo crimine damnaretur* Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.45 L & S *damnare* II). Here the sense is not legal but the more general sense of 'to reject' (L & S *ib* B 2) and the use of the ablative is more forced but not without precedent. (Cf. Stat. *Sil.* 3.2.126 *Eoas iaculo damnare sagittas*, Val. Fl. 1.70 *flauā quercum damnauit aristā*.)

316 et longo proficit usu Bergman (464) lists this as an echo of Juvenal (*S.* 13.18 *tot rerum proficit usu*) but the likeness is slight and I do not think the allusion to Juvenal *S.*13 really adds very much here.

317-334. A section which compares the development of humanity to that of the human being. Ewald (p.187) points to the similarity of this passage to Ovid *M.* 15 214-236 but Ovid is only describing the four ages of man which he compares to the four seasons (*M.* 199-213). Prudentius himself lists five periods (*infantia, puer, iuuenta, maturi roboris aetas* and *senectus*). There are examples from other authors who compared the development of Rome to that of a human being but Prudentius makes all humanity the object of his interest and not just Rome. However, it is useful to compare Prudentius' treatment of the development of the human race with that of these other authors who speak of the development of Rome as they all use the same metaphor of the ageing of the human being. Florus had written of how it was possible to detect the four ages of man in the history of the Roman people elaborating which age corresponded to each period of their history (Flor.1.intro, 4-8). Medical theory was accustomed to dividing human development into shorter periods (cf. Macrobius *Som. Scip* 65-75 where the division is into seven year periods).). When Florus reaches the period of his own day (thought to be

the reign of Hadrian) he speaks of how Rome had grown old until Trajan had come along to renew the vigour of its youth. He can offer no natural parallel for this and so what is used as a neat idea from nature has an unsatisfactory ending. Lactantius recorded that Seneca used the same theme and that he matched the ages to certain periods of history: thus the infancy of Rome was the period under Romulus, its boyhood was the period of the kings, while the adolescence of Rome ended with the Punic wars. Finally, old age came with the period of the civil wars, after which a return to rule of a single man brought it full circle back to its childhood again (Lact. *Inst.* 7.15, 14-16). Lactantius adds that nothing remains now except for its death. Prudentius' near contemporary Ammianus Marcellinus has a time-scale which is different to that recorded by Lactantius. Ammianus does not see his present age as being that of Rome's old age as we might expect. Instead he uses the traditional idea of the four ages, the last of which corresponds to the period after the establishment of the empire when *'iamque uergens in senium, et nomine solo aliquotiens uincens, ad tranquilliora uitae decessit'* (14.6.4.) It is interesting that it is not an allegorical *Roma* whom he describes as ageing but the people themselves. At this point, Rome *uelut frugi parens et prudens et diues* (14. 6.5.) entrusts her inheritance to the Caesars *'tamquam liberis suis'* (14.6. 5.). Thus for Ammianus the whole imperial period has been a rebirth for Rome and if the Caesars are the children of Rome there seems to be no reason why it cannot go on forever so long as it keeps producing Caesars. Thus Ammianus does not share Lactantius' view that nothing now remains except for death. In fact Ammianus suggests that in her present state Rome has recaptured something of her youth (*'sed Pompiliani redierit securitas temporis'* 14.6.6.) as all is sweetness and light in the empire as Rome is everywhere accepted as mistress and queen.

Rome in the 390`s, even though Ammianus describes her white-haired senators as being revered everywhere, was mistress and queen of the empire in a symbolic sense only. For a completely different view of Roman history see *SHA Carus* in the *Historia Augusta* (2 - 3) which treats it as a simple series of ups and downs dependent on the whim of Fortuna. Partoens (2000) discusses Prudentius` relationship to Florus and to Ambrose. He believes that the link between Prudentius` five ages of man and Florus` four ages is not as strong as was claimed by Schmid (1953) and believes that Prudentius is more concerned with following Ambrose`s argument here in *Ep.*18.23-29. This allows Prudentius to elaborate the argument of Ambrose with the well-worn comparison between the ages of man and human development. Although the pagan authors mentioned above made the comparison between the ages of man and the growth of Rome, the image of human growth had been used by Christians to reflect the growth of the Church. Partoens (p. 334 n.10) refers to Tertullian *Virg. Vel.*1.7 *sic et iustitia...primo fuit in rudimentis, natura Deum metuens, dehinc per legem et prophetas promouit in infantiam, dehinc per Euangelium efferbuit in iuuentutem, nunc per Paracletum componitur in maturitatem*). In treating of the development of mankind, it is probable that Prudentius is thinking of Rome as he later speaks of her as God`s way of bringing civilization to the whole world (602-607), but he does not here compare the different stages of Rome`s development to that of the human. When he does later speak of the development of Rome, he presents it as rather chaotic (in terms of the development of her government (413-435). Partoens shows that there is nothing specific in Prudentius` treatment to link it with Florus` version.

Symmachus portrays Rome as an old woman whose age demands reverence (*Rel.* 3.9.) Prudentius` point is that with old age wisdom increases and so the implication is that in

her old age the state is better placed to make decisions on religion than she was in her youth (331 *tempus adest ut iam sapiat diuina*). Later in this book Prudentius claims that with Christianity, Rome has put off her old age and returned to her youth (657). Claudian is fond of the image of Rome restored to her youth. He has a description of this in *B.Gild.* 208-212 where once Jupiter promises that Gildo will be defeated Rome regains her youth and strength. Not only does her hair lose its grey colour but her helmet's plumes grow erect again and all rust disappears from her shield.

319 titubatgressusque This may be from Claudian (*Rapt.* 3.153 *succidui titubant gressus*). *Titubare* is not a particularly rare verb although the literal meaning of to stagger is rarer than the figurative sense meaning to hesitate or falter. The phrase occurs in Claudian when Ceres has been warned in a dream that Proserpine is in danger and so she rushes to Sicily to find her only to find her gone and her home abandoned. Ceres' faltering steps are part of her reaction when she finds that Proserpine is missing. This has little relevance to this passage of Prudentius which describes the growth of a child. In Prudentius the staggering steps are those of an infant making his first attempts to walk and so are very different from the shock Ceres experiences.

323 mentem purgata senectus This is an example of an accusative of respect, often used with parts of the body and in poetry. Lav (§227) quotes a parallel from Vergil (*G.3.356 percussa noua mentem formidine mater*).

326 ceu quadrupes egit TSQ. *titubauit et instar* (327) *quadrupedis pueri lactantia uiscera traxit* E. Bergman prints 327 in brackets and notes that it is undoubtedly a gloss. Cunningham agrees although he leaves 327 out of the main body of the text: it makes no

sense if 326 takes the *TSQ* ending. This is probably another example of a scribe originally putting a similar line in the margin which later came to be included in the text (Cunningham (1968) 120). Interestingly, U (Bongarsianus) has the extra line in the text and then adds marks indicating that it is to be deleted and that 326 should end with *ceu quadrupes egit* (Cunningham (1968) 131). The verb *titubare* has occurred in 319 and this may have caused the scribe behind E to recall this line on a similar theme.

331 decocto solidaret robore uires Bergman and Gar. see here an echo of Vergil (A.2.639 *solidaeque suo stant uires*). Vergil is depicting Anchises encouraging the youth of Troy to flee the city. He being old and weak wants to stay but thinks the youths should make a new start elsewhere as they still have strength. Thus the phrase refers to those who are strong and young and so an allusion by Prudentius is appropriate here when he is looking for a way of speaking of the different stages of human development. However Prudentius differs from Vergil in that he speaks of *decocto robore* whereas Vergil has his young men strong *suo robore*. Prudentius' youth has lost his *robur* whereas for Vergil it gives them their strength. Prudentius has altered the phrase to make it describe a later phase of human development when the excessive physical strength of youth is burnt off leaving the *uires* stronger. I can find no parallel for this account of human development.

334 In the last age of humanity, it is able to understand the things of God better and to watch over its eternal salvation. Does this mean that Prudentius expected the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world to be imminent, as the human race was nearing the end of its existence? Kelly (1958 p.479) notes that Ambrosiaster (*In 2 Thess.*2,8f; *In 1 Cor.*15,52) thought the decline of the Roman empire was a sign of the end of the world, but there is no hint of such an outlook in Prudentius in the places where

he speaks of the Last Judgement by Christ (*C.* 10; *H.* 824-866). Partoens (2000 p.334) notes that it is interesting to compare Symmachus attitude to old age: he regards *Roma* as so set in her ways that she cannot now change her ways while Prudentius sees it as the time when she has acquired sufficient wisdom as to be able to see that Christianity is the right way for her.

335-340 Prudentius departs from his argument that progress is good to say that if it is to be conceded that antiquity is good then one aspect of primitive life of which he approves is the notion that at the time of the Flood humans worshipped only one God. This idea occurs also in Lactantius *Epit.* 25 *Merito igitur poetae commutatum esse aureum seculum memorant, quod fuerit regnante Saturno. Nulli enim tunc dii colebantur: sed unum et solum Deum nouerant.* Where the idea came from is hard to say but elsewhere Lactantius is keen to attribute monotheistic ideas to Vergil (*Inst.* 1.5 B, quoting *A.* 6. 724-27 & *G.* 4.221-24) and Ovid (*id.* quoting *M.* 1. 57 *mundi fabricator* & 79 *ille opifex rerum*). Although classical accounts of creation can appear to be monotheistic (e.g. Ovid *Met.* 1.21 *Hanc deus et melior natura diremit* which refers to the removal of chaos to start the creation of the world), once mankind is created there are already a number of gods. Even in the Ovid passage there appears to be room for polytheism as he says one god made the world but he does not know which one it was (*id.* 32 *quisquis fuit ille deorum*). Elsewhere, Prudentius states his belief that man is naturally monotheistic, even when he claims to be a polytheist (*A.* 189-193) and the same line of thought may be at work here.

Classical mythology was familiar with the idea of a flood similar to that of the Bible (cf. Ovid *Met.* 1.253-312 & *Gen.* 6.5-9.17), but Prudentius is clearly thinking of the biblical

version of events here rather than any mythological story since none of these speak of mankind worshipping only one God before the flood, which was sent by Jupiter during the iron age (Ovid *Met.* 1.129-149). He acknowledges the dual pagan and Christian tradition of the flood by speaking of it being described *in antiquis libris* (337).

335 Quamquam Prudentius introduces his concession to his opponent's argument. He uses *quamquam* also at 445 for the same purpose where he takes a point advanced by his opponent and shows that the truth of the matter is not as the opponent would have it. This figure is called synoeciosis. (cf. Porter (1997) p. 145). L&S notes that it can be used 'as a rhetorical particle of transition in objections made by the speaker himself' and gives examples from Cicero e.g. *quamquam, quem potissimum herculem colamus, scire sane velim N.D.* 3,16.42.

335 tantum studium This is the reading of E, P and C *p.c.* All the others read *tantus amor* which is the reading adopted by the editions too. Cunningham (1968 p.132) says that *tantum studium* "is excluded from serious consideration by metrics". I find the opposite to be true. The *us* of *tantus* cannot be long and a long syllable is required here.

340 uacuoque habitauit in orbe Bergman (464) notes an allusion to Vergil here. The relevant line from Vergil is *Deucalion uacuum lapides iactauit in orbem* (G. 1.62) In the Georgics passage, Vergil explains how the earth has been arranged so that certain regions produce certain goods. This he says has been the way of things since humanity came into existence at the time of Deucalion. Prudentius' allusion to Vergil recalls the Deucalion myth which is useful here where he is speaking of the Flood. The recalling of the time of Deucalion serves to remind the reader that even in pagan mythology there was a time before the full pantheon of gods existed.

343 sed quia Romanis loquimur de cultibus Prudentius says that at first the Romans had only a limited number of gods. In doing so he is following the long-standing view of the origins of Roman religion which was that at its beginning it was a very simple affair. For example, Varro claimed that Rome worshipped without cult images for the first 170 years of her existence until images were introduced in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus (616-579BC) (Aug. *Civ. Dei* 4.31). In one respect the Romans had always had many gods in that they had native gods for almost every conceivable activity, a list of which can be found in Aug. *Civ. Dei*. 4.11. Cults of other gods were introduced to Rome from elsewhere in Italy (e.g. Juno's cult was introduced after she had been won over from her town of Veii by the promise of a temple to be built for her in Rome (*euocatio*). The temple of Juno Regina was built on the Aventine in 392 B.C. (Livy 5. 20-23)).

The view that Roman religion was originally a very simple affair without cult statues and myths has been challenged by recent archeological finds. For example, excavations in the Roman forum have shown the cult of Vulcan there to be linked with the Greek god Hephaestus through the presence of a Greek black-figure vase dating from the early sixth century, thus indicating that Greek influence was present from Rome's earliest days. (For this and other details regarding external influence on the earliest religion of Rome cf. Beard, North & Price (1998) 12-13.)

352-356 Prudentius speaks about the introduction of foreign cults into Rome. However his choice of examples is curious in that instead of choosing for example the introduction of Cybele in 205BC from Asia Minor, he chooses Corinth and Athens which were not notable for giving major cults to Rome and the defeat of Cleopatra in 31BC when Egyptian religion already had established a foothold in Rome before that date. However,

his choice is governed by his rhetoric as his point is that Rome brought home gods who had already proved themselves worthless by allowing their original worshippers to be defeated by the Romans.

352 hoc signum rapuit bimaris de strage Corinthi When the Romans sacked Corinth in 146 B.C., Pausanias tells us that the Romans carried off votive offerings and works of art without specifying any in particular (Περὶ ἡγήσεις τῆς Ἑλλάδος 7.16.7–10). An inscription tells us that Mummius, the conquering Roman general dedicated a temple and statue to Hercules on his return to Rome but there is nothing to suggest that the statue came from Corinth (*CIL*, Vol 1 2ed., no 626). The main cults at Corinth were those of Aphrodite, Apollo and Demeter Thesmophoros. Apollo's cult was introduced at Rome in 433 BC (Livy 4.25.3), the first known temple to Venus was built in Rome at 295 BC (cf. Richardson (1992) 409) and Demeter/Ceres most famous cult in Rome was started on the Aventine in 493 BC (cf. *id.* 80).

In 86 BC Sulla sacked Athens because it had supported Mithridates VI against Rome (Plut. *Sulla* 12) I can find no tradition of any cult being imported from Athens either.

354 Cleopatra. Cleopatra, together with Antony was defeated at the battle of Actium in 31BC by Octavian Caesar. Vergil mentions Anubis, the god with a dog's head, in the context of the battle at A. 8.698 (*latrator Anubis*), contrasting this strange kind of god and the other Egyptian gods (*omnigenumque deum monstra, ibid*) with the standard Roman gods Neptune, Venus and Minerva. Egyptian religion in the form of the cult of Isis, in which Anubis played a part, was said to have come to Rome in the time of Sulla (Apul. *Met.* 11.30 *collegii uetustissimi et sub illis Syllae temporibus conditi*). Illegal temples of Isis were pulled down in Rome in 53 BC (Dio Cass. 40.47.3) before the first public

temple, the Iseum Campense, was opened in 43BC. In *C.S* 1.629-630 Prudentius includes the cult of Isis among those Symmachus wishes to see retained.

355 Hammonis Ammon was the chief deity of the Egyptian pantheon. He was depicted with rams horns attached to his head. (cf. *Ov. M.* 5.328 *nunc quoque formatus Libys est cum cornibus Ammon*)

360-361 numina, quae patriis cum moenibus eruta nullum/ praesidium potuere suis adferre sacellis! The Roman practice of *euocatio* of the enemy's gods during a siege was not peculiar to them (Dumézil 1970 Vol 2. p.425 gives examples of similar practices with the Hittites and Indians). The local gods were tempted away from supporting their own people by promises of greater standing if they allowed themselves to be honoured at Rome. This is described in Macrobius (3.9.2) and Pliny (*N.H.* 28.18). Although Christian writers question the point of worshipping gods who could not defend their own peoples (cf. Minucius Felix *Octavius* 25.7 *quid autem isti dii pro Romanis possunt, qui nihil pro suis aduersus eorum arma ualuerunt?*), this is not how the tradition of *euocatio* understood the assimilation of foreign gods: they were not useless and weak but simply seduced by the glory of Rome with which they would come to share.

362-363 Cernis ut...../.....probenetur Although Lav. does not comment on this use of the subjunctive here, it can be confusing to find a subjunctive after *ut* when *ut* has the sense of 'how'. There is a parallel in Vergil, (*A.* 10.20 *cernis ut insultent Rutuli*).

semper Prudentius says that it is always that case that ancient custom has taken on foreign gods. Thus it is a custom for ancient custom to have introduced foreign gods! Prudentius is surely correct in his analysis of Roman religious history, with its willingness to take on the worship other gods, and thus he shows the weakness of

Symmachus' position by showing that innovation in religion was an ancient practice in Rome.

366 Quodcumque sacrorum It is something of an overstatement to say that all pagan religion in Rome was the worship of gods which had introduced from outside the city. The cults of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus went back to the origins of the city (cf. n.343).

367 inimicam The enemy city being Rome as these gods have been defeated by her armies.

369 non est mos patrius, quem diligis, improba, non est. This is because the custom of the fathers was to welcome new religions.

370-487 Reply to Rel. 3.8 on the Genius

Prudentius addresses himself to Symmachus' claim that fate or a *genius* governs the destiny of Rome. He firstly queries what a *genius* is meant to be and compares it unfavourably with the soul (375-403). He then considers, if there was such a thing as a *genius* of Rome, how inconsistent it has been in its supervision of the Roman constitution and says that now it has also changed its mind about religion and accepted Christianity (404-435). The next section describes the belief that everything is ruled by a *genius* or fate and rejects it in favour of free will (436-487).

371 propium...aeuum cf.n. 83

372 "cunctis nam populis.... Symmachus' actual words are: *uarios custodes urbibus cultus mens diuina distribuit; ut animae nascentibus, ita populis fatales genii diuiduntur* (Rel. 3.8). Prudentius paraphrases.

373 aut fatum aut genius Symmachus had spoken of *fatales genii*. (Cf. n.74.) The use here of *aut...aut* implies they are exclusive alternatives. It is true that fate and the *genius*

were different things. It is possible to have a notion of fate without needing to also believe in a genius. Later Prudentius speaks of the *genius* thinking it is under the rule of fate (409-410) and the discussion of the genius moves on to the idea of predestination in general: the section ends with the declaration *nil sunt fatalia* (486). At 429-430 we find *fatum geniusve animusue / publicus* which strengthens the theory that Prudentius does not make much distinction between fate and the *genius*. However, although there may not be a great distinction, it would be wrong to think there is none at all. When he speaks of the *genii* of individual buildings (445-449) he says that the next madness is to ascribe a fate to each building which derives from astrology (450-460) and so he still distinguishes between fate and the *genius*.

Post 374. The manuscripts include here a quotation from Symmachus' *Rel.3.8*

SYMMACHUS: Varios custodes urbibus mens diuina distribuit. Vt animae nascentibus ita populis fatales genii diuiduntur.

375 iam primum qui sit genius uel qui status illi/conpetat ignoro Prudentius would, of course, have heard of the idea of a *genius* but what he does not understand is how it can be a reasonable to believe in its existence. It is interesting that Prudentius says he knows what function the soul performs in animating the human body and regulating its thought processes but attacks the idea of the *genius* which for at least some of his contemporaries was the same thing. (Cf.n.71.)

377 spiritus informis sine corpore formaue *Informis* here must mean more than lacking shape as the line goes on to ask whether the *genius* is *sine forma*. The *TLL* (*informis* 2 *incorporeus*) notes the use of the word *informis* to mean incorporeal. As an illustration it

mentions Iren. 1,2,4 *de Aeonibus: imperfecti et infigurati et informes, hi sunt angeli*. However there seems to be an unavoidable tautology here.

379 contra animas hominum..... Prudentius having said that he is not happy with the idea of a *genius* says he believes instead in the concept of the *anima*. The soul is one of the main themes of Prudentius' work. In the *Apotheosis* he has a long section on the nature of the soul where he explains that it is not part of God but something created by God which once created has an eternal existence (A. 782-951). In the *Hamartigenia* the eternal destiny of the soul is spelled out in terms of hell or heaven (H. 824-930). Prudentius gives us a picture of the virtuous soul reclining on a couch in heaven enjoying heavenly tastes and scents and taking no notice of the souls of the damned which it can see! (H. 856-862). The *Psychomachia* is all about the struggle of the soul to live the virtuous life and the *Peristephanon* offers examples of how the martyrs were able to conquer bodily torments through the strength of their souls (e.g. *Per.* 2.221-224). The debate in antiquity about the nature of the soul was long and complicated. Tertullian sums up the main positions up to his own day in his *De Anima* 15: 5-6. For the precise location of the regent part of the soul he has the following to say:

ut neque extrinsecus agitari putes principale istud secundum Heraclitum, neque per totum corpus uentilari secundum Moschionem, neque in capite concludi secundum Platonem, neque in uertice potius praesidere secundum Xenocraten, neque in cerebro cubare secundum Hippocraten, sed nec circa cerebri fundamentum, ut Herophilus, nec in membranulis, ut Strato et Erasistratus, nec in superciliorum meditullio, ut Strato Physicus, nec in tota lorica pectoris, ut Epicurus, sed quod et Aegyptii renuntiauerunt et qui diuinarum commentatores uidebantur, ut et ille uersus Orphei uel Empedoclis:

namque homini sanguis circumcordialis est sensus. Etiam Protagoras, etiam Apollodorus et Chrysippus haec sapiunt

Galen says that the soul's three parts are situated in the liver, the heart and the brain (*The Soul's Dependence On The Body* 773)

Prudentius links the soul to the blood in that it runs around the veins warming the blood. I think the point for Prudentius here is that the soul performs a recognizable and necessary function in the human body-it is the directing principle in a human being- whereas the *genius* has no parallel, necessary function. Prudentius thus concludes that the *genius* has never existed. (386). Later he shows how there has been no consistency in the pattern of the Roman constitution (413-435) with the idea that that this is evidence of the lack of a guiding spirit.

385 uiuida mens cf. n. 164

386 moerorum] Z (*et proculdubio*T) Q, *murorum* TcS, *membrorum* E. Cunningham keeps this archaic spelling he found in Z. Gar. prefers *murorum*. However whichever spelling is used Prudentius is clearly speaking here about walls and not the limbs suggested by E.

387-392 Prudentius goes on to list other functions of the soul in the human life, thus emphasising the essential nature of the soul as opposed to the unclear workings of the *genius*.

387corporibus uersat mens uiua regendis/ summum consilium. Lav. (§.337)

notes that the use of the dative of the gerundive to express purpose is classical but rare and points out that it is quite frequent in Prudentius (e.g. C.11.106; A. 156; A.772) and in other Christian writers such as Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Cyprian.

388 *tutacula hap leg*

392 The *mens uiua* knows whom it believes to be the creator of the world. Thus Prudentius posits a belief in the ability of the human mind to know its creator by means of reason. This idea is found in the Fathers (e.g. Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 2.6.1 *Inuisibile enim eius (Dei) cum sit potens, magnam mentis intuitionem et sensibilitatem omnibus praestat potentissimae et omnipotentis eminentiae. Unde etiamsi nemo cognoscit Patrem, nisi Filius, neque Filium, nisi Pater, et quibus Filius revelauerit, tamen hoc ipsum omnia cognoscunt, quando ratio mentibus infixata moveat ea, et reuelet iis, quoniam est unus Deus, omnium Dominus* : Ioan.Chrys. *De Anna serm.* 1.3 which speaks of nature and conscience as the two ways of finding God). Thus Prudentius outlines the role of the soul and, in the following lines, he contrasts it with the role of the *genius* which he claims is rather improbable.

393-403 Prudentius responds to Symmachus' assertion that the soul can be compared to the *genius* of peoples and cities (373) by asking at what moment the *genius* is united to the city. Symmachus in *Rel.* 3 had said that *genii* become allotted to cities *ut animae nascentibus*. The questions asked by Prudentius recall the issue in antiquity of when soul and body were united. Tertullian in *De Anima* 25-26 argued against the view, here adopted by Symmachus, that the soul is acquired by a newly-born infant when it takes its first breath in favour of the soul being infused at conception. The question of when the soul was attached to a human being is not discussed by Prudentius. Prudentius now ridicules the idea that Rome received its *genius* on coming into existence by listing various points at which this event could have occurred.

393-394 The genius of Rome was honoured with its own *dies natalis* on the 21st of April (cf. Pauly-Wissowa Γενέθλιος ἡμέρα), which would indicate that the Romans had a clear answer to Prudentius' question. As mentioned above, Servius (A. 2.451) tells us that a shield was kept on the Capitol which had the inscription: *Genio Romae, siue mas siue femina*. Dumézil (1970 p.44) doubts the truth of this as a female *genius* is otherwise unknown (cf. n.71). It is hard to imagine that Prudentius would not have used this confusion as to the gender of the *genius* of Rome to strengthen his case, if he had known about it.

395-398 The story of Romulus and Remus being fed by the she-wolf is found in Livy 1.4 and that of the vultures in Livy 1.6-7. The story of the vultures is that Romulus and Remus looked for an omen from the gods to decide who should govern their new town and after which of them should it be named. Remus looked up first and saw six vultures and then Romulus looked up and saw twelve. A fight broke out between the supporters of the brothers who both claimed the prize: Remus because he had seen the vultures first and Romulus because he had seen twice as many. In the fight Remus was killed.

399-403 Prudentius now asks where exactly this *genius* of Rome has its residence and whether it helps out in the law-courts or the army. Just as the soul has a necessary place in the body from which it animates it, so Prudentius then expects the *genius* to have a location from where it can direct the life of the city. So Prudentius asks whether this is in the law-courts or the barracks, is it in a secret chamber or on the roof-tops.

404 fingamus.. Prudentius uses the same rhetorical turn as we have seen above at 1.335 where having disposed of Symmachus' main argument he then drives his point home by showing that even if Symmachus has a valid point (such as love of tradition being a good

thing or as here, that there is such a thing as a *genius*) he goes on to show that there are still contradictions in Symmachus' position.

404-12 Prudentius is willing to pretend that the *genius* of Rome exists and asks why does it not now change its mind on the question of religion. He asks, why does it imagine itself to be a prisoner of Fate when it is, in fact, free to change its mind. He rebukes the *genius* for thinking it is a prisoner of astrology. In 413-40 Prudentius demonstrates how the *genius* of Rome has changed its mind over the centuries about the best form of government for the city, so why should it not also change its mind about the best religion too?

406 *calidis animetur tota medullis*. The *genius* is compared to the soul in a human body again, which Prudentius has spoken of as warming the whole body (l.381)

410 *genesis* The *genius* was linked to ideas about astrology. Cf.n.74. While the relationship between the *genius* and fate is rather complicated, it does not seem to have been the case that the *genius* was the slave of the horoscope but rather an extra influence together with the horoscope.

412-413 *erroresque...../errauit* The *genius* is free to abolish its *errores*. Prudentius then gives an example of how it made errors (*errauit*) for seven hundred years over the best constitution for Rome and has finally found the best form. So it should adopt the same policy on the question of religion.

413-435 Prudentius now illustrates how in regard to the constitution the *genius* has regularly changed its mind as to what is for the best and so asks why does it not do the same with matters of religion now that God's authority which was unknown to it before has now been revealed (i.e. in Christianity).

How does Prudentius' account of the development of Roman government compare to other accounts? It differs from that of Cicero in book one of the *De Re Publica* (*Re.Pub.* 1.44-70) in that it offers no explanation of why one constitution gives way to another. It seems that Rome hit on the idea of the principate by good luck according to Prudentius. He mentions that Rome had the mixed constitution so praised by Polybius and Cicero but only speaks of it in the period before the *decemviri* (451-449 B.C.). Most of the Roman republic he characterises as a time when the state was ruled by the two consuls which then gave way to the triumvirate of Octavian, Antony and Lepidus of 43 B.C. Reading Prudentius' account of Roman constitutional history one gets no idea how long the various types of government lasted only that in total they covered 700 years.

417 non sine grandaevis curarum in parte locatis. This refers to the Senate composed of elders from the leading families. The creation of the Senate by Romulus is mentioned by Livy (1.8.7). When he comes to mention the principate he does not refer to any advisory body, although the emperors, at the time of Prudentius, did have the *sacrum consistorium* or *consistorium principis* which consisted, as one might expect, of the leading officials of the empire. Presumably this is because Prudentius wants to give the impression that the kings of Rome operated a different administrative system to the current emperors so that he could make a good case for the inconsistency of the *genius*.

418 mox procures... In 510 B.C. king Tarquinius Superbus was expelled from Rome and the Republic was established (cf. Livy 1.59)

419 clauum consilii The metaphor is reminiscent of Cicero's *clauum tanti imperii tenere* (*Sest.* 9.20).

420 dicionibus aequis Prudentius omits any mention of the struggles between the plebeians and patricians.

421 diu This is the only indication in his outline of Roman constitutional history about the length of any individual section. Given that the plebeians achieved the creation of the *tribuni plebis* in 494 to protect their rights, it could seem that Prudentius is referring to the forty-three years before the short-lived reign of the *decemviri*. However I think that as the system created in 494 lasted throughout the republic apart from minor interruptions, then *diu* refers to the mixed constitution of plebeians and patricians. There is an interesting parallel here with Tacitus' brief account of the development of the Roman constitution at the beginning of the *Annales*. There (A.1.1.) Tacitus mentions the rule of the military tribunes with consular power as not lasting for very long (*neque tribunorum militum consulare ius diu ualuit*). In fact this period lasted from 444 to 366 B.C.: a period of seventy-eight years. Strangely, as Thomson remarks, Prudentius does not include this period although it would have suited his purpose to have included another example of the *genius* of Rome changing its mind. There may be some unconscious recollection of this passage of Tacitus here in that Prudentius chose not to mention the military tribunes because he remembered Tacitus saying that of then *neque ..diu ualuit* but somehow the word *diu* was remembered here and he concluded it when speaking of the longest lasting arrangement of the constitution of the Republic. It is understandable why Gnilka (1965) seeks to explain the difficulties here by assuming that the passage on the *decemviri* is an interpolation but Cunningham (1968) 121-27, effectively refutes Gnilka's idea that there is an interpolation here.

422 abest a loco in E, adest post 427 There is a disagreement over the position of line 422. It could easily fit after 427 as both lines refer to the traditional system of consuls and tribunes. As the *decemviri* were in office from 451-449 BC a reference to the existence of the tribunes would be possible in either position but perhaps on balance, as this is an account of the evolution of the government of Rome, it would be more appropriate after 421 as that was when they first were created. Furthermore, E is often a source of eccentric readings.

423 subito Prudentius emphasises the apparently arbitrary changes in Rome's government.

et bis quina creantur/ summorum procerum fastigia In 451BC the constitution was suspended and government was through the *decemviri legibus scribundis* who were patricians. (cf. Livy 3.33ff.) The purpose of this was to allow the ten to draft a law code for Rome. This interlude was closed in 449 and government returned to the consuls until 445 when government was by *tribuni militum consulari potestate* (an office, unlike the consulship, open to plebians) until 376 BC. Prudentius is giving the briefest of outlines of Roman history and so omits this development, which is a little surprising as it would serve his purpose to have another change of government.

Prudentius' point about the fasces and axes is interesting. Livy tells how the *decemviri* sat in the courts in rotation one at a time and the man on duty was accompanied by twelve lictors with the fasces while the other nine were accompanied only by a single attendant. Later when the second set of *decemviri* were appointed in 450BC and became rather tyrannical they appeared in the forum with twelve lictors each and Livy (3.37) emphasises that the fasces this time had axes in them to show that there was no right of

appeal from the decemvirs. As Prudentius speaks of the fasces as *duodeni* he indicates they had twelve fasces each and the mention of the axes seems to show that he has this second decemvirate in mind. The description of the ten as *bis quina* also points to the second decemvirate as the ten did not operate in two groups of five but the second decemvirate was composed of five patricians and five plebians (cf. *CAH* 7.2 (1989) 114f). There may be an echo of Ovid (*F.* 4. 384 *inter bis quinos usus honore uiros*) where Ovid is speaking of the *Decemviri stlitibus iudicandis* a minor magistracy probably established in the third century BC (*Dig.* 1.2.2.29).

428 Ultima sanguineus turbauit saecula triumphum Prudentius' run through republican history ends with mention of the triumvirate. Presumably he means that of Octavian, Antony and Lepidus as he speaks of the *ultima saecula*. He ends this section with a golden line. Here he uses *sanguineus triumphum* as a collective singular (cf. *Lav.* §878).

429 Prudentius equates the *genius* with fate or the spirit of the nation. The *genius* is quite a precise idea in Roman religion but to Prudentius they are equivalent terms, as he is contemptuous of the whole idea. Cf. n.71.

430 The *genius* finally learns what is best for the state and introduces the idea of an emperor. The repetition of *errauit*, which occurred at 413, shows Prudentius using ring composition to emphasise his point.

431 augustum Octavian was granted the title Augustus in 27BC

432 patrem patriae Augustus records in his *Res Gestae* 35 how he was given this title in 2 B.C. by the Senate, the equestrian order and the whole Roman people. The title was first awarded to Cicero in 63 B.C. by the Senate after the defeat of the Catalinarian

conspiracy. Subsequently it was given to Julius Caesar after the battle of Munda in 45 BC. Prudentius refers to Theodosius as *parens patriae* in *C.S.* 1.9.

432-433 populi atque senatus rectorem In the *De Re Publica* (2.29) Cicero designates his ideal politician as a *rector et gubernator civitatis*.

435 largitor honorum Bergman (p.464) notes that this title found also in Claudian (*IV cons. Hon* 118)

437 tandem peruenit ad illud Poinssotte (1972) draws attention to the similarity here with the *Carmen contra paganos* 29 which reads *metas tandem peruenit ad aeui*. The *Carmen* is itself echoing A.10.472 (*metasque dati peruenit ad aeui*). It is thus interesting to see that here Prudentius is not alluding directly to the *Aeneid* because there are only two words in common whereas he has three words in common with the *Carmen*. The *Aeneid* passage comes from Jupiter's response to Hercules' grief over the imminent death of Pallas at the hands of Turnus. Jupiter reflects that every man's time of death is fixed and that the best a man can do with the time allotted to him is to seek glory by great deeds. Turnus has come to the end of his life. Although the text of the *Carmen* is rather corrupt, the author attacks Nicomachus Flavianus, prefect of the city of Rome, for reviving pagan cults. Why does Prudentius choose to imitate this phrase here, where he is speaking about how the *genius* has finally found the best form of government for the state? All I can suggest is that both the passages alluded to speak of someone coming to the end of their life. In suggesting that the *genius* has finally discovered the best form of government for Rome, there is also the hint that the time for *genius* to depart has also arrived. Zappacosta (1967) sees many connections between the *Carmen* and book one of the *Contra Symmachum*.

441-442 ...Nam subdita Christo / seruit Roma Deo cultus exosa priores Prudentius has treated this theme at length in book 1.506-606 where in response to Theodosius' address to Rome, we are told that both the noble families of the city and the common people converted to Christianity.

443- 487 In this section Prudentius first considers how Rome has not only one *genius* but such a spirit is believed to preside over every building. Thus he tries to point out further weaknesses in the concept of the *genius*. A building's fate is believed to depend on the day chosen for its construction. This leads to a general consideration of Fate in general, which includes references to astrology, which Prudentius rejects in favour of free-will.

445 Quamquam cf.n. 335

genium Romae The *genius Romae* had cultic and tutelary significance. Nitzsche (1975 p.13) cites Livy 21.62 when Hannibal's invasion of Italy saw sacrifices offered at Rome to "*Juno, Fortune, Hercules, and especially to the Genius of the city, for whom five victims were slain*". It features in Ammianus' account of Julian. At 20. 5 10 on the night before he is proclaimed Augustus by the army, Julian had a vision of the *genius publicus*, (the same as the *genius Romae*) which said that it would no longer remain with him. At 25.2 he has another vision of the *genius publicus* walking away from him in sorrow.

fingitis..../....soleatis Prudentius uses plural second person verbs thus broadening his attack to the group of people who hold the same opinions as Symmachus. *Mihi* is a dative of interest. Cf. n. 540

448 locos The form *loci* is used of individual places. If one wishes to speak of places connected with each other which make up a region or, as in this case, a city, *loca* is the more correct form. Prudentius uses *locos* at 504 to mean individual places. This is not a

late usage as it occurs in Lucretius (4.509), Vergil (A.1.306) and Tacitus (A.. 61). However, overall *loci* is rarer than *loca* (cf. L. & S *locus* B 4).

454 Lachesis The three goddesses of Fate were called Nona, Decuma and Morta (Varro ap. Gell. 3,16,10). Their Greek names, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, were used regularly in Latin poetry (e.g. Clotho in Ov. *F.* 6.757, Lachesis in Mart. 4, 54,9 and Atropos in Stat. *S* 4,8, 18). Claudian mentions Atropos twice (*Bell. Gild.* 203 & *De Rapt. Pros.* 1 218) and Clotho not at all. However he has eight references to Lachesis who is often interchangeable with fate in the contexts she occurs. This is true in the three occurrences in the *De Raptu Proserpina* (1.54; 2. 354; 3. 411) and in the short poem *Aponus* (1.93). The other occasions see her involved in the affairs of Rome although she never has a speaking part herself (*Bell. Gild.* 203; *De Cons. Stil.* 2.335; *De Bell. Goth.* 55; *In Eutropium* 2.288). Prudentius mentions Lachesis only once in all his work and here he links this goddess with nothing more exalted than the positioning of a wall and says that her threads are *male fortia*.

457 fraxinus It is curious that Prudentius should single out the ash-tree as a building material. Vitruvius describes it as being liable to bend when newly cut but later becoming extremely dry and hard and as such useful for making dowels to be used in joints (*ulmus vero et fraxinus maximos habent umores minimumque aeris et ignis, terreni temperate. <ea e> mixtione comparatae, sunt in operibus, cum fabricantur, lentae et ab pondere umoris non habent rigorem et celeriter pandant; simul autem uetustate sunt aridae factae aut in agro perfecto qui est eis liquor stantes emoriuntur, fiunt duriores et in commissuris et coagmentationibus ab lentitudine firmas recipiunt catenationes.* 2.9.11) I can find no religious significance regarding the ash-tree.

459-487 Prudentius discusses ideas of fate and free-will. On the one hand Symmachus and his sympathisers believe in fate and on the other they establish laws and so believe in freedom. Prudentius here argues for free-will but he also has a place for Providence as seen in his treatment of how God prepared the world for the coming of Christ by creating the Roman empire (620-633). Patristic ideas about the nature of free-will and predestination in Christian theology were very much in the air at the time Prudentius wrote. Pelagius who exalted the role of free-will to such an extent that he and his followers appeared to leave no room for grace in the Christian economy, lived in Rome between 384 and 409 so Prudentius may have come across his ideas (cf.n. 122). Prudentius' thoughts on the nature of free will are seen in more detail in the *Hamartigenia* (H. 506- 930):

“...facile est frenare rebelles
affectus carnis nimisque retundere pulsus
materiae fragilis et uiscera uicta domare” (H.524)

A similar sentiment is found in H .679-683 where he asks whether the God who made man lord of all creation would not also let him have control over himself. The discussion of Lot and his wife also draws the moral that humans are free to follow the path of what is good if they so choose (H. 770-2). Grace seems to play little part in the theology of Prudentius. (The word is only used five times in the whole of his work.) If Prudentius is not showing the influence of Pelagius here, it may be that he has been influenced by Stoicism. Epictetus had said (4.9) that there was nothing easier to manage than the human

soul. All it required was to exercise the will. Seneca had taught a similarly optimistic belief (*Ep.* 80.4: *quid tibi opus est ut sis bonus? uelle*).

462 bis sex in tabulis Prudentius typically appeals to an ancient Roman institution (the Twelve Tables of the Law) to make his point that the Christian world-view is that which is truest to the real nature of Rome. There is nothing significant about the use of *bis sex* rather than *duodecim*. It is standard poetic usage (e.g. *Ov. M.* 4.220; 6.72 ; 6.571; 12.553 etc.)

rubrica The title of a law was written in red (*Dig.* 43,16;*Cod* 8,4) and so the word came to refer to the law itself (*Pers.* 5.90 *Masuri rubrica uetauit*)

463-464 Prudentius uses alliteration to emphasize his point.

464 inevitabile The neuter of the adjective is used here as an adverb.

471-76 A similar discussion is found in Augustine when he discusses ideas on fate and attacks the notion of astrology in *Civ.Dei.* 5.1-11. He says that those who believe that human behaviour is dictated by astrology can have no concept of God or even the gods as all prayer becomes useless in such a system. He also attacks those who say that it is God who has determined the position of the stars saying that if men are fated to perform evil deeds through a system delegated by God, then there is no room left for the judgement of God, as all human actions are fated.

471 Nemo nocens, si fata regunt quod uiuitur ac fit Prudentius sums up his argument in a memorable phrase. cf.n.35 above. Gar. compares this to a line of Seneca *fati ista culpa est: nemo fit fato nocens* (*Oed.* 1019). There may well be a link between Prudentius and Seneca's play as the preceding chorus (980-997) on the subject of Fate echoes Prudentius' own argument here and also mentions Lachesis.

475 facta rependit Bergman (p.464) notes that this phrase also occurs in Claudian *Theod.* 228. (*facta rependens*). Claudian contrasts the uncivilized man whose judgements are ruled by love of revenge and the man whose judgements are guided by reason. Whereas Claudian speaks about the judge, Prudentius is concerned with the guilty man. If fate rules everything then there is no room for innocence or guilt, nor any need for justice whose personification is one of the main characters in the Claudian poem. It is hard to say whether these two, rather unexceptional, words would register with the contemporary reader of Prudentius' poem as an echo of the Claudian passage. Claudian's idea of fate is that it is equivalent to the will of Jupiter and can be changed by prayer (cf. *De Rapt. Pros.* 3.65) so he does not claim to believe in a fate which is more powerful than the gods: it would not be possible to see a rebuke of Claudian in this allusion.

476 peremptus. This is a rather strong word as it carries the meaning of being destroyed or annihilated. The guilty man is punished but the punishment Prudentius has in mind seems rather severe.

Quisque Prudentius uses this instead of *quisquis* here and in other places (e.g. *A.22;A.1060;H.867;Pe 10.35*). Lav (§490) points out that this is an archaic and late usage.

478 nosse Deum Poinsothe (1982) points out that this is a turn of phrase used by Christians and pagans alike to express knowledge of God. Thus Lucan speaking of the druids writes *solis nosse deos* (*B.C.* 1.452) and the Bible has *qui non nouerunt Deum* (*Vulg.2 Thes.1.8*) and *Confitentur se nosse Deum* (*Vulg.Tit.1.16*). It is used elsewhere by Prudentius (*A.241 natum nosse Deum*)

479 mathesis The word *mathesis* is a Greek technical term, for astrology and is rare in Latin. It is not found in the OLD. L & S has only five uses of the word to mean astrology.

One of these is this passage, another occurs in this work at 893 and another is in the preface of Firmicus Maternus' work of the same name. Firmicus Maternus wrote his work *Mathesis* in the years 334-7. This was an astrological treatise in eight books the first of which was an *apologia* for astrology. He later became a Christian and wrote a work entitled *De errore profanarum religionum*. The other two references are in Aelius Spartianus (*Hadr.* 16.7 and *Ael.* 3.9) where he discusses Hadrian's belief in astrology. Works against astrology were written by Christians e.g. Jerome mentions a work of Minucius '*contra mathematicos*' (*Ep.* 70.5.)

480 Spirat enim maiora animus seque altius effert. Prudentius says the soul being a spirit rises higher than the material stars. Firmicus Maternus had resolved the conflict between destiny and free-will using the argument that the soul being divine can triumph over the stars. (*Math.* 1.6.4 *Hic intellegi datur stellarum quidem esse quod patimur et quae nos incentiuus quibusdam ignibus stimulant, diuinitatis uero esse animi quod repugnamus. Nam quod ad leges pertinet quibus peccata hominum seuera coercitione plectuntur, eas recte prudentissima constituit antiquitas; animo enim laboranti per eas opem tulit, ut per ipsas uis diuinae mentis perniciosa corporis uitia purgaret*) This argument sounds somewhat similar to that of Prudentius here.

The phrase *spirat maiora* has a precedent in Curtius (6.9.11) The context there is that it refers to the conspirator Philotas who was plotting against Alexander who says: *ipse apud multos copiarum duces praepotens uiribus, maiora quam capit spirat*. While in Curtius the phrase is used of one who aimed too high, Prudentius uses the phrase in the positive sense of aiming for higher things.

483 *figere propositam natali tempore sortem* The construction *figere aliquid* with abl. is known in poetry (e.g. Verg. A. 6.622 *fixit leges pretio*). The idea here is that the position of the stars at the time of birth is thought to fix the allotted fate of the individual.

484-487 The section on the *genius* ends on a climax as Prudentius calls on mankind and the cities of the world to reject the idea of fate and accept that the soul is free to know God. The heightened emotion is seen here in staccato style and use of repetition with *huc.....huc.....*

486 *secta* Unlike the occurrence of this word at 93 and 1067 to mean a school of thought, here Prudentius just uses it to mean a path or way.

...Nil sunt fatalia : vel si / sunt aliqua, opposito uanescunt irrita Christo. This is a line of thought we have seen before in Prudentius. He will first assert that a pagan concept does not exist and then say that even if it does it is of no value. Thus he spoke about the *genius* where in 370-403 he speaks about how ridiculous the idea is and then in 404 he says “*fingamus tamen esse aliquam*” and goes on to show how even if it did exist it should now bow to Christianity.

Post 487 Most manuscripts here include a quotation from Symmachus *Rel.* 3.8.

SYMMACHUS: Accedit utilitas quae maxime homini deos adserit. Nam cum ratio omnis in operto sit, unde rectius quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio venit numinum?

488-772 Reply to Rel.3.9 on pagan cult

In 488-489 Prudentius states Symmachus` argument in *Rel.* 3.9 that Rome`s success has been due to her worship of the pagan gods. Symmachus` words which he puts into the

mouth of *Roma* are: *Hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit, haec sacra Hannibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Senonas reppulerunt*. Prudentius begins his reply asking whether Rome's success was due to the desertion of the gods of her enemies to her cause or was it rather brought about through the strength of her armies? He says the latter is the case. He goes on to point out the inconsistencies in their behaviour if the gods really did intervene on Rome's behalf, saying that while they may have helped Rome to victory, they did nothing at the times of her defeats. (490-577). Some of the arguments he uses here are similar to those he used in the refutation of *Rel.* 3.3 where he argues against retaining the Senate as a temple of *Victoria* because victories are won by military skill and the help of *Deus omnipotens* (36) rather than by a winged girl.

Prudentius then reveals that there was a divine interest in the success of Rome: it was the plan of God that the world should be subject to Rome so that at the Incarnation, Christ should find a united world into which he could enter (578-633). The section ends with a prayer for Christ now to enter the world united by Rome and then Prudentius introduces his personification of Rome who, addressing the brother emperors, rejoices in her new Christian identity and success against the Goths at the battle of Pollentia (634-772).

488-502 Prudentius gives a list of places conquered by the Romans with the gods and goddesses traditionally associated with them and who should have protected them from defeat by the Romans. However Prudentius' argument is not that the gods were faithless but that they were weak against the *uirtus* of the Romans (510-511).

490 bellatrix Prudentius addresses Rome as a female warrior. Later we see that he visualises the allegorical figure of *Roma* in the same way (663-665) as Claudian had done. (cf. *n.* 640-644).

491 Europam Libyamque Another echo of Claudian, this time from *Gild.*4 where we find “ *iunximus Europen Libyae* ” in the opening passage of the poem which celebrates the victory over the African prince, Gildo, in February 398. There had been an attempt by Eutropius, the minister of Arcadius and *de facto* ruler of the eastern empire to woo the province of Africa and with it the corn-supply on which Rome depended away from the jurisdiction of Rome to that of Constantinople. He was defeated by his own brother, Mascezel. Thus this phrase would recall for the contemporary reader the recent return of Africa to Roman jurisdiction.

492 Iuppiter ut Cretae domineris Crete fell to the Romans under the command of Q. Caecilius Metellus in the years 68-7 BC. Juppiter was associated with the island in Greek mythology because he was said either to have been born there on Mt. Dicte or Mt. Ida or to have been hidden there, in a cave near Lyctus, on Mt Aegaeum from his father Saturn (Hes. *Theog.* 468ff.).

Pallas ut Argis The end of Greek independence came in 146 B.C. with the razing of Corinth following the defeat by Rome of the Achaean Confederacy. Pallas Athena was the patron goddess of Athens and was worshipped throughout Greece. Prudentius therefore chooses her to represent the patron goddess of Greece as a whole.

493 Cynthus ut Delfis Cynthus was a mountain on the island of Delos where Apollo was said to have been born. His famous oracle was to be found on Delphi. Apollo surrendering Delphi is covered in the Roman conquest of Greece mentioned above.

494 Isis Nilicolas Isis was the wife of Osiris in Egyptian religion and was one of the national deities of Egypt and so is taken to represent the country here. She is mentioned four times in Prudentius' output, three of these being in the *C.S* (1.629, 2.494, 2.869) the

other reference in the *Peristephanon* (3.76 *Isis, Apollo, Venus nihil est*). Her cult was established in Greece, in the Piraeus, in the fourth century B.C. and spread throughout the Hellenistic and Roman world.

...Rhodios Cytherea There were many cults on Rhodes but that of Venus (Cytherea) was not one for which the island was famous. The island of Cythera was the traditional birth-place of Venus. It is not clear why Prudentius has made this connection. The island came under Roman rule in 43B.C. when it was captured by Cassius.

495 uenatrix Ephesum uirgo. Ephesus was famous for its temple of Artemis/ Diana. It came under Roman rule in 133B.C. together with the kingdom of Pergamum on the death of Attalus III.

.... Mars dedit Hebrum. Ares is thought to have been of Thracian origin. The river Hebrus was in Thrace. Although it had close links with Rome in the first century B.C. it only came under direct Roman rule in 46 A.D.

496 destituit Thebas Bromius Bromius is another name for the god also known as Dionysius, Bacchus or Liber Pater. Dionysius was said to have been introduced into Athens from the village of Eleutherae in the borders between Boetia and Attica. He is also said to have been of Thracian or Phrygian origin. Thebes was in Boetia. He was said to have returned to Thebes from making conquests in the East but the king, Pentheus refused to recognise him as a god and was torn to pieces by the female devotees of the god, the Maenads. The story is told in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

497 Iuno..... An Etruscan inscription of 500 B.C. found at Pyrgi, near Caere links the patron goddess of Carthage, Tanit, with the Etruscan Juno. (Cf. Feeney (1991) p.116.) Hannibal is shown by Livy to have been devoted to Juno (28.46.16). It is interesting that

Prudentius here speaks of Juno allowing her Africans to be subject to the Phrygians/Carthaginians. The tradition was that the Phrygians founded Carthage as a colony in 814 BC (*Timaeus FGrH*. 566 fr.60). Thus for Prudentius Juno is a goddess who has let her devotees down twice, first the Africans and then the Carthaginians.

499 si qua fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fouetque Prudentius here inserts l.18 of book 1 of the *Aeneid* which refers to Juno and her love for Carthage which she to make the capitol city of the world.

501 Perfidiane deum indigenum cecidere tot urbes... The straightforward pagan response to Prudentius' question would have been in the positive, given the understanding of *euocatio* mentioned above (n. 360).

503 O pietas, o sancta fides . Prudentius has been mocking the loyalty of the gods towards those who worshipped them. It is not that he accepts this as the reason that Rome's enemies were defeated as we see later. When he mocks *pietas* and *fides*, whose *pietas* and *fides* is he speaking of? It is strange to use *pietas* and *fides* as attributes of the gods, although Prudentius speaks of Christ as *pious* (*Cath.*3.2 *omniparens pie*) and the attitude of trust in the faithfulness of God is found throughout Christian writings (e.g. *Vulg.* 2 *Thess.*3.3 *Fidelis autem Deus est*). Claudian speaks of the *fides* of the stars in an astrological context and as such a phrase is unusual to refer to higher powers, it could have been the case that Prudentius had Claudian's passage in mind. Claudian writes: *certa fides caeli, sed maior Honorius auctor* (*Bell. Gild.* 1.499). The ancient world was accustomed to regard its gods as fickle and needing to be bribed by large sacrifices if they were to be propitious to their devotees. The idea that the god had a particular obligation to his devotees was not common. Cicero, defining justice, writes: *iustitia erga deos*

religio, erga parentes pietas nominatur (Part. Or. 22, 78). He has no word to describe the obligation of the gods to their people. In his irony, Prudentius may intend the reader to contrast the fickle nature of the pagan gods with the trustworthiness of the Christian god as *fides* acquired a technical meaning in Christianity to mean that religion (cf. *Vulg. Apoc.14.12 qui custodiunt mandata Dei et fidem Iesu* and *Lact. 4.30 domicilium fidei* and Prudentius himself at C.S. 1.652 *nam si nostra fides....*). The phrase *sancta fides* occurs in other earlier authors but generally in the context of an agreement between humans (cf. *Catull. 76.6; Cic. Imp. Pomp. 42; Verr. 3.6; Verg. A.7. 365*)

Vergil has a line *heu pietas, heu prisca fides inuictaque bello/ dextera* (A 6.878) which comes in the context of Anchises' lament for the thwarted promise of Marcellus. It is more than likely that Prudentius has this line in mind here, although the contexts are different, the use of a similar line by Prudentius at least gives the authority of Vergil to his line.

A simpler reading is to assume that here he is mocking the devotees of the pagan gods for their *pietas* and *fides* towards gods who do nothing but betray them.

alumnos/.....locos L.& S says that the use of *alumnus* as an adjective to mean that which nourishes or nourished is a late usage and gives the example of *Mart. Cap.1 p.11 cygnus alumna stagna petierat*. Prudentius uses this to highlight the treachery of gods who betray the places which have cultivated them.

505 transfugio A rather rare word, found in Livy and Tacitus to mean deserting to the enemy (*Liv. 22.43,5 ut transfugia impeditiora essent. Tac. H. 2,34; 4, 70; A. 2.46 et transfugiis paulatim nudatus*).

506 Prudentius now makes a new point in which he gives the answer to the question as to why pagan gods failed to defend their devotees from conquest at the hands of the Romans.

507 religio The lengthening of the first syllable was not unknown and in some manuscripts the form *relligio* is given to make this clear. (This is found in C, M,O and U.)

Prudentius asks whether it was the case that human belief in the gods wanted to save its own and was overcome by a stronger *uirtus* rather (*an*) than that the devotees were abandoned by their gods. Later Prudentius makes clear that this *religio* was only a *superstitio* (511). *Religio* was normally distinguished from *superstitio* as being true and reasonable worship whereas *superstitio* was unreasonable (cf. Cic. *N.D.*1.42.117 and Lact. *Inst.*4.28.11). However, Prudentius is using *relligio* in a neutral sense to mean a system of belief without discussing its validity as we have seen at l. 407. (Claudian does the same (e.g. *Cons. Stil.* 1.230 *lucosque uetusta/ Religione truces*) in speaking of German paganism whose shrines Stilicho has destroyed.)

510 Prudentius declares that it was indeed the greater force of *uirtus* that overcame *religio* rather than that the gods betrayed their devotees. This is a recurrent theme in the poem (cf 23-38 and 551-563).

512-539. Although, previously, Prudentius has said that Rome achieved her military success through great effort (24-26) he now claims that it was not difficult for her to overcome nations which were led by effete priests. He is arguing rhetorically: it suits his purpose to ridicule pagan cults by saying that these nations thought they could be saved from defeat by trusting in flimsy ritual practices (524-526).

515-17 Num The questions here expect the answer `no` and so Prudentius is emphasizing that the Romans did not really have to make much of an effort to defeat such weak opposition.

514 omnigenum...deorum Bergman notes here an allusion to Vergil (A.8.698 *omnigenumque deum monstra*). The allusion to Vergil's account of the battle of Actium recalls the earlier poet's disdain for the exotic gods of Egypt. This phrase thus provides a useful background to Prudentius' theme of the defeat of foreign gods by the forces of Rome, although Vergil himself depicts the traditional Roman pantheon fighting against the gods of Egypt.

515 cum Dictaeis.....Corybantibus The Corybants were priests of Cybele. The cult of Cybele came from Phrygia and her home was on Mt. Ida. Mt. Dicte was in Crete. The Curetes were armed attendants who escorted the cult statue of the goddess at her feasts. They took their name from the Curetes who were said to have protected and hidden Jupiter on Mt. Dicte on Crete when as an infant he was being pursued by his father Saturn. (cf. Lucretius 2. 629). Ovid (*Fasti* 4.210) distinguishes between the two groups of Curetes and Corybants in the cult of Cybele but Prudentius only mentions the Corybants and associates them with Mt. Dicte. He has already spoken of the conquest of Crete a few lines before (492) in connection with Jupiter and his cult there.

Claudian speaks of the Corybants clashing bronze shields (*4th Cons. Hon* 149)

516 Samnitis Marsusque The Samnites lived in the southern Apennines. They made a treaty with Rome in 354 B.C. but later fought the Romans in three wars. They helped Hannibal and fought against Rome in the Social War and against Sulla in the Civil War of 82 B.C. The Marsians lived in central Italy near the Fucine lake. They were friendly to

Rome throughout the Samnite wars and the invasion of Hannibal (Livy 28.45). However they took the lead against Rome in the Social War with the Samnites.

Prudentius means that these fierce peoples, the Samnites, the Marsians and Etruscans, were fighting as part of the Roman army since none of these peoples launched their own invasions of Crete. His point is that it was not very difficult for the Romans to capture Crete and so a supernatural explanation for their victory is not necessary.

For more on the hardy nature of the Italian peasant soldier cf Horsfall (1971).

517 mastigophoris Α μαστιγοφόρος is a whip-bearer and here means an officer who kept order at public shows. The term is found in late Latin. (cf. *Dig* 50,4,18,§ 17; Arn.2.23)

517-518 Prudentius asks a similar question to the previous one. He asks whether the Etruscans were fighting against only policemen and boxers. The Etruscans were rivals to Rome for control of central Italy. In 396 B.C. Rome destroyed the Etruscan town of Veii (Livy 5.1-22) and by the end of the third century B.C. Rome had taken the whole of Etruria. This calls to mind Lucan (*B.C.*7.270-2) where Caesar tells his troops that the army of Pompey consists of men from the Greek gymnasia more used to wrestling than to handling weapons.

519-520 Now Prudentius says that Mercury was powerless to defend his Spartan wrestling-schools. Sparta had been destroyed in 395 by the Goths under Alaric so this is a curious example for Prudentius to pick as the examples he gives here are of Roman victories against ineffective pagan gods and surely by 395 Sparta should have been defended by the Christian God. Sparta was defeated by Rome in 195 BC. and forced to join the Achaean confederacy which had gone over to Rome in 198 BC. There was no

major cult of Hermes in Sparta but Prudentius makes the link because of the common association of the cult of Hermes with athletics (cf. Horace *C.1.10.1-4*).

521-527 Prudentius returns to discussing the cult of Cybele. This time he speaks about the inability of the goddess to defend her homeland of Phrygia against the Romans whom he refers to as the “foot-soldier of the Apennines”.

521 Appenninicolam The Apennines run the length of Italy from the Alps, near Genoa to south-west. Being a mountainous area the people would be hardy types. This line is interesting. Vergil uses this compound in a four word hexameter (*A. 11.700 Appenninicolae bellator filius Auni*). Claudian also has a very similar four word hexameter (*VI. Cons Hon. 505 Appenninigenis cultas pastoribus aras*) which is close to Ovid's *Appenninigenae quae proxima Thybridis undis* (*M. 15.432*). The echo of Claudian's Appennine shepherds may have strengthened the idea of the hardy soldier. Ovid's description of the Tiber as being born in the Apennines would have strengthened the link here with Rome. For more discussion of the four word hexameter cf. Dewar (1996) p.178 & p.342.

523 cogente..... Gallo The Gallus was the eunuch-priest of Cybele, whom Prudentius pictures urging the Phrygians into battle. Presumably being a *semiuir* Prudentius does not think him suitable for military life. Vermaseren (1977 p.96) thinks they were figures of scorn to both pagans and Christians. However, the references he gives to back this up are not so condemning. Ovid (*Fasti* 4. 183) speaks of the Galli as *semimares* but it is not apparent that there is any sneer here but only a statement of fact. More condemning is Anacreon 11,2 (ἡμίθηλος). Minucius Felix (*Oct* 23,4) states that the Galli imitate the story of Cybele and Attis and while he comments *Haec iam non sunt sacra, tormenta*

sunt there is no obvious sneer at the state of the Gallus. Apuleius provides a very unflattering picture of the Galli as effeminate and dishonest (*Met.* 8.26-30).

524 In the next three examples flowers and the bow and arrows of a woodland girl are pitted against the Roman army to emphasise that Roman brutal strength was so obviously superior to these powerless weapons which symbolise the pagan gods.

Idalias nisi rosas Idalium was a mountain city in Cyprus which was sacred to Venus. cf. A. 1.681, 693.; 10.52. At A. 1.693 there is a reference to the flower *majoram* (*amaracus*) but no mention of roses.

laurum citharoedi/ vatis Apollo is meant here. The laurel was sacred to him. (Cf. A. 3.91 *laurus dei* in the context of Apollo.) Eating laurel leaves was said to convey the gift of prophecy (Juv. 7.19, Tib.2,5,63) because the Pythia at Delphi did so.

525 siluicolae calamos arcumque puellae I.e. Diana.

527 A line that recalls Vergil's famous *tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem* (A. 1.33) although there is no direct verbal similarity. However it is interesting to compare the two sentiments. Prudentius considers it to have been no difficult task for Rome to acquire her empire since the enemies she faced put their trust in worthless gods whereas Rome trusted to military skill. However he does speak later of Rome's *sudataque bella* (551) and so we can assume that the emphasis here is on making the adherents of pagan gods appear to be effete.

528 Fluctibus Actiacis While Actium was of course important for establishing the imperial system which Prudentius has praised as the highest form of government (431) he may also have chosen to mention it here because it was after that battle that Augustus

had a statue of Victory placed in the entrance to the Curia of the Senate. This statue had been captured by the Romans at Tarentum (Dio Cassius 51, 22, 1-2).

symphonia Vergil (A. 8 696) and Propertius (3.2.43) identify the musical instrument which gave the signal for war among for Anthony's forces as the *sistrum*. Apuleius describes this rattle which was used in the worship of Isis (*Meta.* 11.4) and Plutarch gives an elaborate account of its symbolism in his *De Iside et Osiride*. It is not certain what kind of an instrument a *symphonia* was. Jerome (*Ep.* 21.29) says some people wrongly thought it was a kind of organ when the word only means 'harmony' (*consonantia*). Isidore says the name *symphonia* was given to a kind of drum but does not say that a *symphonia* is a kind of drum (*symphoniam uulgo appellatur lignum cauum ex utraque parte pelle extenta, quam uirgulis hinc et inde musici feriunt. Fitque in ea ex concordia grauis et acuti suauissimus cantus* *Ety.* 3.22) While a drum is at least a percussion instrument like the *sistrum*, Prudentius may just mean it to be music in general although then there would be no contrast with the Roman forces using the trumpet. Given the accounts of Vergil and Propertius I think Prudentius may be using the word to indicate a drum as recorded by Isidore.

530 Prudentius sees Actium as a battle between light Egyptian boats and the huge *liburnae* of Augustus. Starr (1941 p.54) says that we know little about the *liburnae* except that they were fast and so presumably, small. In literature from the time of Tacitus it comes to be used for any warship. The Liburni were a maritime people living on the north-east coast of the Adriatic. In their capacity as pirates (Livy 10.2.4), they invented the *liburna* which was copied by Octavian for his navy at Actium. Vergil (whose account (A. 8. 675- 713) of Actium Prudentius seems to have in mind here) does not make such a

contrast between the opposing navies (*credas...../.....montis concurrere montibus altos* (A. 8.692) suggests rather that the sides were equal in their equipment). Starr (p.53) points out that while Octavian used the *liburna* the majority of his ships were triremes. Cerri notes that Plutarch (*Vita Antonii* 65) and Florus (*turribus atque tabulatis adleuatae castellorum uel urbium specie* 2.21) claim it was Antony's side that had the more heavily armed ships. However, it would seem that Prudentius has been more influenced by the account of Actium in Propertius than in the historians as Cerri (p.266-67) demonstrates that the *baris* of Propertius 3.11.44, (a *hap. leg.*), is the same as the *cumba* which he mentions as the vessel in which Cleopatra fled (4.6.63). Cerri goes on to point out that Prudentius may have gathered his information about the Egyptians using small weak craft from Juvenal (*S.* 15. 126-27). Thus this passage gives us a valuable insight into Prudentius' choice of sources.

Institerant This verb can either be the pluperfect of *insistere* or *instare*. There is a variant reading of *instar erant* in MSU which editors reject in favour of *institerant*, the *difficilior lectio*. (One *ms.* has *instabant* (V *p.c.*) but this is not a very authoritative pedigree.) It is hard to see how the sentence fits together and where *Memfitica rostra* is meant to fit in. As Cerri comments, it would be very unusual for *insistere* to take a direct object in the way that Thomson translates ('Slight boats and frail yachts pressed their Egyptian rams amid towered galleys') as the verb is usually intransitive. He says that we have here the verb *insistere* yet *instare* has an identical form in this tense and there is a usage of that verb which allows for the accusative in much the way that Thomson takes it. (Verg. A. 8.434-35 *alia parte Marti currumque rotasque uolucris/ instabant*). However, I think it is possible to take *Memfitica rostra* in apposition to *tenues cumbae*

without too much strain in the sense. Cerri points (p.262) out that line 531 recalls the course of the battle when Antony's ships were encircled by those of Octavian. However his translation of *insistere* 'to mean to find themselves blocked in' (*si erano trovate bloccate* p.264) takes the meaning of the verb further than any parallel use would support.

532 Nil potuit Serapis deus et latrator Anubis. Vergil's account makes much of the battle between the traditional gods of Rome and the strange gods of Egypt. Prudentius keeps the exotic Egyptian gods fighting for the forces of Anthony and Cleopatra but replaces the traditional Roman gods with the *exercitus ardens* of Rome. Anubis makes a useful target for abuse being in the strange form of a human with a dog's head. Vergil uses the phrase *latrator Anubis* (A. 8. 698) and this is the only Egyptian god he names as representing what he calls the *omnigenumque deum monstra* (cf n.541 above). Prudentius names Serapis too. This may be for a contemporary resonance. The famous Serapeum of Alexandria was destroyed in the summer of 391 by order of the emperor who ordered all temples in Alexandria to be destroyed following riots between Christians and pagans during which the pagans led by the philosopher, Olympius, occupied the Serapeum and used it as a base for their raids on the Christians (cf. Jones (1964), 168). Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.12 regarded this building as second only to the Roman Capitol in splendour.

Serapis. The normal scansion of this word is for the first syllable to be short and the second long. Here the word must be read with a short 'a' for the metre to work. L & S notes this also happens in Martianus Capella (2.191) and Paulinus of Nola (*Carm.*26.100).

534 Algidus The name of a snow-capped mountain south-east of Rome. (cf. Hor. C.1.21,6).

535 Non armata Venus, non tunc clipeata Minerua. Vergil in A.8. 699 mentions Neptune, Venus and Minerva fighting against Anubis and his companions. Prudentius, thus, although he omits a reference to Neptune he would seem to have this passage of the *Aeneid* in mind here. The idea of *armata Venus* may seem strange, especially given the incident in the *Iliad* (5.426ff) where after Aphrodite is wounded in battle by Diomedes when she had been trying to help Aeneas fight against him Zeus tells her that war is not her province. In the *Aeneid*, Venus does not fight in war apart from the reference to her activity at the battle of Actium. More straightforward is *clipeata Minerua*. The *aegis* is associated with Jupiter and Minerva. A. 8 features both of them using their shield. (A. 8. 354 for Jupiter and 8.435 for Minerva and a description of the snakes depicted on it). The *aegis* originally was depicted more as a kind of bib decorated with the head of the Gorgon. It gave its bearer complete protection even withstanding the thunderbolts of Zeus (*Il.* 17.593-6).

540-550 Prudentius considers the argument that the gods change sides because they like to be on the side of a victor. Interestingly, the examples he gives are Greek, not Roman.

540 Sed dicis Symmachus does not make this point in his third *Relatio*. It is interesting to note Prudentius' style in addressing his opponent. Sometimes he uses the plural form of the verb (cf. n. 445), other times he takes a passage of Symmachus and paraphrases it and other times he speaks to his opponent in the singular but the argument he addresses himself to is a hypothetical pagan objection, as in this case.

legisse deos ubi.... *Locum* is understood after *legisse* and that place is Rome.

544-550 Prudentius has stated the pagan position to be that the gods will willingly change sides if they think that their worship will be more secure with another people. Prudentius now takes two examples to show that gods did not change sides willingly but were taken by force from their own people.

544 Ulixi . The standard Latin gentive is *Ulixis*. This variant is less common. Vergil uses it twice in the *Aeneid* and both times it is the last word in the line as here. (A. 2.7; 3.273)

544-546 The Palladium was a small wooden statue of the armed Athena, said to have fallen from the sky, which served as the guardian of the city. It was believed that if it was stolen the city would be defenceless. Prudentius here speaks of it being stolen by Diomedes and Ulysses. The incident is related by Vergil (A. 2.162-79). Athena was not pleased by her statue being stolen from the Trojan citadel. She made this known by making the statue's eyes flash with fire, give forth a salty sweat and three times the statue ran off. Ovid refers to this version of the story of the Palladium as well as the other tradition that it was carried off by Aeneas and taken to Rome where it remained in the temple of Vesta (*Fasti* 6.419-60). The point for Prudentius is that Athena's statue was taken against her will as he includes the detail about the salty sweat of the statue. However this detail is only made known to us in Vergil by Sinon who deceives the Trojans into taking the wooden horse into Troy by his lies. Thus the story of the sweat may only be a lie by Sinon. The story is more complicated than this according to Ovid who recalls that Athena was angry with the Trojans since she was slighted by Paris in favour of Venus and so let her image be removed from Troy. (*F.*6.431-2). Thus following Ovid's version, the answer to Prudentius' question would be in the positive. Another problem here in the background, is the other version that the Palladium was rescued from

Troy by Aeneas who brought it to Rome. The difficulty with that story is that so long as the Palladium was in Troy, the city would never fall. If Troy fell while holding the Palladium, what guarantee was there that guarding the Palladium in the temple of Vesta was any guarantee that Rome would not fall? Other writers tried to combine the two versions of events so that Diomedes went to Italy and gave the Palladium to Aeneas (cf. *OCD. n. Palladium*).

The Palladium came to be stored in the Temple of Vesta in the Roman forum (although other ancient cities also claimed to have it).

545 caesis custodibus arcis Prudentius indicates that he has Vergil's story in mind by taking a few words from his account. At A.2.166, Vergil writes *caesis summae custodibus arcis*. From the subsequent illustration about Alexander the Great it is clear that Prudentius is arguing against the idea that these protecting gods chose to leave their cult cities thereby allowing these cities to fall to their enemies. Prudentius would rather ascribe their fall to the military skill of the beseigers.

547-550 Prudentius says that Alexander on conquering Greece took the captured deities of the Greek cities with him to Babylon. Amyclae, near Sparta was the site of a famous shrine of Apollo. Alexander did not sack Amyclae but the name was used to refer to Sparta (Sil. 6.504) and Prudentius seems here to be using it to refer to Greece as a whole. Alexander is not known to have destroyed temples throughout Greece. The nearest he came to this was when he sacked Thebes after it had revolted against him. However given the strong tradition in Latin literature of considering Alexander to either have been a bad person from the start or someone who descended into tyranny after the death of Darius

attributing such action to him would perhaps not have seemed out of place. (For a summary of Roman attitudes to Alexander cf. Morford (1967) 15-19.)

547 ductor Macetum *Macetae* is less common than the usual *Μακεδόνες*. The form *Macetae* is found also in Claudian (*Ruf.* 2. 279).

550 Assyriaeque uehi Babylonis ad arcem? Prudentius takes Assyria and Babylon, both themselves once centres of great empires, as terms to encompass Alexander's conquests. The question he raises is why did the gods of Greece, conquered by Alexander, not follow him and set up their major cult centres in the newly conquered areas of Alexander's empire? Prudentius' answer, which we have seen outlined already, (l. 510-511) would be because these gods were irrelevant to the outcome of the fighting which depended only on the skill of Alexander as a military leader. Prudentius mentions Babylon six times in his works and on one occasion links it to Assyria, but apart from here, the references are to Babylon as it appears in the Bible as the place of exile for the Israelites after the fall of Jerusalem in March 597 B.C. (*2 Kings* 24.10ff) (cf. *H.* 448; *Per.* 6.110; *C.* 4.43; *A.* 129; *Ti.* 90). To a Christian audience the mention of Babylon would have recalled the Old Testament's theme of Babylon as the centre of all evils. Understandably, Prudentius does not pursue the comparison of Rome to Babylon seen in the Apocalypse of St. John (*Apoc.* 17. -18. 3).

551-574 Prudentius says that it belittles the victories of Rome to claim that they were achieved by the intervention of her traditional gods. This is not the first time he has used this theme. He first uses it in 23-38 and then again in 506-509.

551 sudataque bella Prudentius uses this striking verb a few times in the context of war. (cf. *Ps.* 167, 239, 820; *C.* 2.76).

556-563 One might have expected a conditional sentence here to use the subjunctive as the subject is hypothetical but Prudentius is using irony and saying that if we suppose the situation is as Symmachus claims then we admire our heroes in vain.

557 stantesque duces in curribus An echo of Juvenal 8.3 (*et stantes in curribus Aemilianos*). Juvenal, in Satire 8, attacks those who think that greatness lies in having a distinguished family tree. There is some connection between the lines of thought in the two poets as Juvenal goes on to say that *nobilitas sola est atque unica uirtus* (S. 8. 20). He also goes on to mention the Curii and Corvinus as does Juvenal. In book 1. 544-577, Prudentius was happy enough to boast of the lineage of the famous Roman families who accepted Christianity (cf. esp. *sescentas numerare domos de sanguine prisco/nobilium licet ad Christi signacula uersas* C.S. 1.566-7).

558 Fabricios, Curios, hinc Drusos, inde Camillos Bergman points out (p.464) that as well as following Juvenal (8.3-4), this line also echoes Vergil's *Decios, Marios magnosque Camillos* (G.2.169). Prudentius omits Juvenal's *Aemilianos* and only has the Camilli in common with Vergil. The Aemiliani may have been Christians at this time; they are associated with the founding of the church of the Santi Quattro Coronati, founded in the fourth or fifth century, which was also known as the *titulus Aemiliani*. On the other hand, Prudentius names the tormentor of the martyrs Fructuosus, Augurius and Euolgius as the *iudex Aemilianus* who is described as *atrox, turbidus insolens profanus* (*Per.* 6.34-35) and so does not spare the feelings of the Aemilianus family if they were Christians. G. Fabricius Luscinus and M. Curius Dentatus were often taken as examples of noble frugality (cf. A. 6.844 & Val. Max. 4,3,5; 6,3,4) Drusus was a surname in the Livian family in Rome and was first adopted by the Livius who killed the Gallic general

Drausus (Suet. *Tib.* 3). M. Livius Drusus Nero Claudius Drusus was the younger brother of the emperor Tiberius and a successful general especially in Germany where he died on campaign in 9 B.C. Camillus was a cognomen of several members of the *gens Furia*. M. Furius Camillus was the most famous on account of conquering Veii and freeing Rome from the Gauls (Liv. 5, 19, 2).

Cerri (1963) notes in his article on Roman archaeology in the *Contra Symmachum* (p. 314.n.61) that only the Drusi are known to have had a triumphal arch erected in their honour out of all the families mentioned here. Thus it is more likely that Prudentius has derived his list from literature than from his visit to the city of Rome. This is reminiscent of Prudentius' treatment of the battle of Actium, mentioned above and also discussed by Cerri, where Prudentius has let literary factors take precedence over historical ones. It is however generally accepted that Prudentius probably made a visit to Rome (cf. Cerri (1963) p. 304) given his statement that he had travelled there (*Per.* 9.3), has seen the graves of the saints in Rome (*Per.* 11.1-2) and his account of the celebration of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul in *Per.* 12. Cerri mentions Cicero as a likely source for these names of traditional heroes (*qua re imitemur nostros Brutos, Camillos, Ahalas, Decios, Curios, Fabricios, maximos, Scipiones, Lentulos, Aemilios, innumerabilis alios qui hanc rem publicam stabiliuerunt; Pro Sext.* 143; *ex hoc genere illos fuisse arbitror Camillos, Fabricios, Curios, omnisque eos qui haec ex minimis tanta fecerunt Pro Cael.* 17.39).

560 manibusque in terga retortis Bergman (p. 464) says this phrase echoes Horace (*Epist.* 2.1.191 *manibus regum retortis*) and Ovid (*Amor.* 1.2. 31 *manibus post terga retortis*). Horace's phrase comes in a passage describing events on stage in the theatre, Ovid is writing about the triumphal procession of Cupid. Neither context adds much to

our understanding of Prudentius here. This is probably not an allusion as it would be hard to imagine how else he could describe the hands of the captives tied behind their backs.

562 Brennum, Antiochum, Persen, Pyrrhum, Mithridatem. Brennus was said to be the Gallic leader who captured and destroyed Rome in 390 BC. Antiochus is probably Antiochus III (242-187 BC) of Seleucia who fought the Romans when he invaded Greece in 193 BC. He was defeated at the battle of Magnesia in 190. Perses or Perseus was the last king of Macedon and was defeated at Pydna by L. Aemilius Paullus in June 168 BC. He walked in the triumphal procession of L. Aemilius Paullus at Rome in 167 BC. Pyrrhus (319- 272 BC) was the king of Epirus whose invasion of southern Italy and Sicily was defeated by Rome in 275 BC. Mithridates VI of Pontus fought Rome from 89 BC to his death in 63 BC after being defeated by Pompey.

563 Flora, Matuta, Ceres et Larentina. Flora was the Italian goddess of flowering plants. She had two temples in Rome and the *ludi Florales* were celebrated annually each spring from 173 BC (Ovid. *F.* 5.329f). Matuta Mater was goddess of the dawn and had a temple in the forum Boarium. Ovid talks of her festival at *Fasti* 6.475. Ceres, the goddess of growth, had a temple on the Aventine. Acca Larentia was an obscure goddess with a festival on December 23rd (cf. Ov. *F.* 5.73). Livy (1.4. 7-8) speaks of Larentia, the wife of Faustulus, who was the shepherd who found Romulus and Remus and mentions that some people think that Larentia was a prostitute (*lupa*) and that the story of the she-wolf may have originated this way. There is a variant reading *Laurentina* in *TS* which makes no sense here as it means `pertaining to Laurentum` which was a maritime town in Latium.

Prudentius lists only female gods as supposed helpers of Rome against her greatest enemies and rather minor goddesses at that so as to emphasise how ridiculous it would be to imagine that such goddesses could have brought victory to Rome.

564-577 Prudentius now examines the idea of omens and why they failed at crucial moments in battle. This is a theme found in other Christian authors (e.g. Minucius Felix *Oct.* 26.) Prudentius' examples are all from the Republic. In a similar passage, Ambrose reflects on Roman defeats despite the presence of the altar of Victory in the Senate House. Since it was only put there by Augustus his examples can only be from the Imperial period. Ambrose mentions, amongst others, the cases of the emperor Valerian who was captured by the Persians under Sapor in 260 AD (Valerian had persecuted Christians by his rescripts of 257 and 258) and the troubled reign of his son and successor Gallienus. (*Ep.* 18. 7 *Numquid etiam illi christiani fuerunt, quorum miserabili novoque exemplo alter captivus imperator, sub altero captivus orbis fefellisse quae uictoriam promittebant suas ceremonias prodiderunt?*) Ambrose keeps the argument closer to the issue of the altar whereas Prudentius considers the broader question of the failure of the pagan gods to help their own worshippers which confirms Döpp's thesis (1980) that Prudentius' real theme is the victory of Rome under Christianity rather than a serious debate about the altar.

Interestingly, in Claudian's account of Alaric's invasion in the *De Bello Getico*, there is also a passage where omens are discussed and ultimately rejected by Stilicho in a speech favour of courage and patience (*Bell. Get.* 269-313). Among the omens mentioned is one where two wolves killed by the emperor's escort are found to contain human hands (*Bell. Get.* 248-266). Thus on this point it would seem that Claudian and Prudentius are in

agreement about the superiority of military might to the power of omens although Claudian does not treat his reader to examples of the inconsistency of omens as Prudentius does here.

564-5 “ his tamen...../.....ales” Here Prudentius introduces another objection from an unspecified opponent. These words are not in Symmachus' *Rel* .3 He wants to discuss the role of omens in the pagan world as proof of the concern of the gods for the Romans in helping them achieve their victories. Cicero in his *De Divinatione* (1.85) speaks of birds and their role in divination. The Romans believed that a raven croaking on the left-hand side or a raven on the right was a favourable omen.

566-7 si Coruinum/ coruus Apollineus pinna vel gutture iuuit? Corvinus was a *cognomen* in the *gens Valeria*. M. Valerius fought a huge Gaul in single combat in 349 BC. Livy (7.26) tells how a huge raven settled on the Gaul's helmet and attacked his face and eyes and so he was given this *cognomen*. The raven was the bird of Apollo (cf. Ovid *Met* 2. 544ff.).

568 Prudentius asks why if this bird of Apollo could be so helpful to Corvinus could it not have intervened to save Rome from her greatest defeat, at Cannae in 216 BC? Cicero's Cotta in the *De Natura Deorum* makes a similar point about Cannae in relation to the questions of whether we can say the gods are good and care for good men. Cotta asks why the gods did not save L. Aemilius Paullus from this terrible defeat (*N.D.* 3.80). Prudentius is not questioning the possibility of divine intervention, as the next section (578-648) makes clear, but only trying to show that the traditional gods were of no use.

569 ..infaustas tegerent cum funera Cannas. Bergman (p.464) notes an echo here of Claudian *Bell.Get.* 387 *et Trebiam saeuo geminassent funere Cannae*. In Claudian this is

part of Stilicho's speech to win back Italians who had risen in support of the Gothic invasion and so there is no parallel with the passage here but it serves to maintain a link between the two accounts of the campaign.

570 The heavy alliteration with the letter 'c' ties in the *coruus* with Cannae and the dead consul lying on a heap of bodies. It then continues in l.571. Livy describes the death of the consul Paullus who he says fell among his dead soldiers (22.49 *in hac strage militum*).

571 Cremera Livy (2. 48-50) tells the story of how the *gens Fabia* decided to wage war against Veii by itself with disastrous results: all 306 were killed except for a small boy.

574 nullane tristificis Tritonia noctua Carrhis Carrhae was another major Roman defeat. The army of M. Licinus Crassus was destroyed by the Parthians in 53 BC and Crassus himself died in the fighting. (cf. Plutarch *Crassus*) Tritonia is a name for Minerva and the owl was her bird. Venus was associated with the dove (cf. Ovid *Met.* 15. 386, Claudian *Stil.* 2.354) and was regarded as a protector of Rome. Prudentius keeps up the air of mockery in supposing that the Persian race would be afraid of Venus' golden girdle.

576 Paphiam niueae uexere columbae Bergman (p. 464) sees here an echo of Claudian *Stil.* 2 354 *Venus inuecta columbis* but the image of Venus in her dove-drawn chariot is so common (cf. Ov. *A.* 1.2.23-24) that it is difficult to see a real allusion here.

577 Prudentius says that if Venus had shown her girdle to the Persians they would have been struck with fear.

578-633 Prudentius now reveals the real reason that Rome has been so successful in her conquests. He claims that it was the will of God that all the world should be unified under

one system so that Christ could come into a world freed from war and so able to receive him (620-622). The same theme is also found in the first book of the poem (C.S. 1.287-90) and in the speech of the martyr, Lawrence in *Per.* 2.413-44. It is not clear at this stage whether Prudentius is speaking about the birth of Christ in the time of Augustus or whether he is referring to a later `coming` of Christ in the sense of the adoption of Christianity by the Roman empire.

Dumézil (1970) p. 509 points out that for Romans the best proof of the existence of the gods, especially once Greek philosophy began to influence Roman life and question accepted notions about the gods, was the success of Rome herself. Thus he quotes Cotta who says of the Roman state in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* (N.D. 3.2.6):

"quae numquam profecto sine summa placatione deorum immortalium tanta esse potuisset" Cotta's attitude is like that of Symmachus, when he writes *unde rectius quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio uenit numinum ?* (Rel.3.8).

Here Prudentius seeks to overthrow this thinking behind the victories of Rome and to attribute these victories to another divine plan, that of the Christian God.

579-80 Dicis domitum terraque marique/orbem..... Once again Prudentius has attributed to Symmachus' words and ideas that he has not included in his third *Relatio*. Ambrose touches briefly on this idea in his reply to Symmachus when speaking of pagan sacrifice, his *Roma* says : *Aliis ego disciplinis orbem subegi.* (Ep. 18. 7).

580 quaeque retexis Bergman (p.464) notes a vague echo of Horace *Sat.* 2.3.2 *scriptorum quaeque retexens* but the verb is used in different senses. Horace speaks of Damasippus revising his writings, while here the verb is used in the sense of recounting.

586 Discordes linguis populos et dissona cultu Bergman (p.464) points out a resemblance to Lucan's *coiere nec umquam tam variae cultu gentes, tam dissona uulgi ora* (3.288) as well as Claudian (*Stil.* 1. 152-4)*certe nec tantis dissona linguis / turba nec armorum cultu diuersior umquam /confluxit populus*. Lucan lists the many different nationalities that sent men to Pompey's army which he says exceeds any army the world has ever known in its diversity of nationalities. Claudian makes the same claim for the empire bequeathed by Theodosius to Stilicho's care. Prudentius, echoing these passages, recalls the enormous size and diversity of the Roman empire but makes the point that the unity of the Roman world is not the work of humans but the plan of God. The same point occurs in *Per.*2.425-432 Although time and again he attributes Rome's victories to the strength and skill of her soldiers he sees them as being helped not by the gods of paganism but by the Christian God and so he has a double causation for Rome's victories. In book one, Prudentius says about the Romans who attributed their victories to Mars and Venus: *felices, si cuncta Deo sua prospera Christo / principe disposita scissent* (*C.S.* 1. 287-8). It was thus Christ who secured victories for Rome even when the Romans did not acknowledge him. Augustine speaks of God rewarding the virtue of the Romans with an empire (*Civ. Dei.* 5.13).

588 quidquid tractabile moribus esset. The question of what constitutes a true *mos* is a recurring theme in the poem. Prudentius' point here is that God has wanted to bring all who can be moulded into a civilised society into one empire: i.e. all who can be shaped by *mores*. His vision of Christianity is essentially that it is for Romans. He is later to argue (816-822) that there is a huge gulf between what is Roman and what is barbarian and that following Christianity is only possible for Romans. The idea that Christianity

cannot exist among barbarians is also found in Optatus in the late fourth century: cf. *De Schism. Don. 3.3*: *Non enim respublica est in Ecclesia, sed Ecclesia in republica est, id est in imperio Romano: quod libanum appellat Christus in Canticis Canticorum, cum dicit; Veni sponsa mea, inuenta de Libano (Cant. 4.8), id est, de imperio Romano: ubi et sacerdotia sancta sunt, et pudicitia, et uirginitas, quae in barbaris gentibus non sunt.*)

Clearly Prudentius and Symmachus have different ideas on what constitutes the *mores* of a civilised nation since Symmachus' appeal is based on the need for the Romans to remain faithful to their traditions or *mores* in which he includes the worship of the ancient gods.

589 concordique iugo retinacula mollia ferre This line resembles Vergil's *frena iugo concordia ferre* (A. 3.543) which occurs as the Trojans see Italy for the first time and see four horses running by the coast. Anchises takes this as a sign that they will have to face war in Italy but he also looks forward to peace as he says that horses can learn to bear the yoke. The Vergilian echo here lends authority to Prudentius' statement as the establishment of peace is not only prophesied by Anchises but has been brought about by the Christian God as part of the plan for Rome.

591 religionis amor Unity and peace in the Roman empire is to be found in unity and love of religion: Prudentius reveals a traditionally Roman view of religion as something essentially concerned with the good of the state rather than the idea that religion is essentially a matter between the god and its devotee.

copula Lav. lists this among the new or rare senses to be found in Prudentius The word is used in Nepos (*Att. 5.3*) to mean a bond of friendship (*talium uirorum*). It is in this sense that Prudentius uses it here.

593 concordia Prudentius adapts an ancient Roman idea as a step to Christianity. Cicero mentions *concordia* eighty-two times and Livy forty-five times. Honorius had issued a *solidus* with the inscription *Concordia Augustorum* (cf. Carson 1981 p.73), although a similar coin with the same inscription and also a figure representing Constantinople had also been issued in the reign of Gratian (*ibid.* p. 73). Prudentius adopts this Roman political slogan for his Christian purposes: God brought about *concordia* to prepare the way for Christ.

Concordia is a character in the *Psychomachia* who appears after the battle against the Vices has been won and leads the victorious forces back to camp (*Ps.* 644-666) where she is attacked by *Discordia* who is then torn to pieces by the Virtues (*Ps.* 667-725). *Concordia* then addresses the victors on the importance of unity and peace in a way which is reminiscent of this passage (*Ps.* 750-797).

596 saevis exasperat armis Bergman (p.464) notes that Vergil speaks of *saeua arma* (*A.*1.295) and Statius also has *quae saevis utilis armis* (*Theb.* 8.179). However, while the Vergilian allusion may be relevant, as it comes from Jupiter's vision of the peace that Julius Caesar will bring, the phrase is really too common to say that there is meant to be any allusion here. It occurs elsewhere in the *Aeneid* (9.651) and also in Ovid (*A.*2.12.24; *R.A.* 246).

597 alit Lav. (§ 1350) lists this in his section on rare or novel meanings. He says that here the meaning is *plaire à* and translates as :"*il est agréable à Dieu en lui offrant le spectacle de la paix*" This is certainly a meaning of *alere* not found in the L.& S I have translated as `nourish` to try to keep the original meaning but it certainly contains the idea of the gift of peace as pleasing to God.

599-600 Aurora inluminat .../...miscebat Bellona While Prudentius has been very keen, especially in book 1, to debunk the pagan gods as being, at best, non-existent, he does allow an existence to the gods of the underworld in the guise of the devils of the Christian Hell (C.S.1.369f). (Cf. Solmsen (1965) 242-257.) Aurora did have an existence as the goddess of dawn in Roman thought, being the equivalent of Ἥως. Bellona as goddess of war had a temple not far from the Circus Maximus. Neither goddess belonged to the underworld and so is not listed in book 1 as a devil. Aurora appears in *Ps.* 612 simply as a term for the east. Bellona does appear another two times in Prudentius' output. Both of these are in the *Psychomachia* (l.236, 557) where amid all the allegorical characters she appears simply as herself. If Prudentius was not against using these traditional personifications for dawn and war, one wonders whether he really had anything against a personification (with accompanying statue) of Victory, despite the protests of 31-35. Of course, the debate here is about the altar of Victory, not the statue.

600-1 Prudentius depicts the known world before Roman conquest as involved in mutual slaughter. Gar. sees here an allusion to the wars after the death of Diocletian between the Augusti and Caesars but Prudentius is referring to a time when the nations learnt to become Romans and this was something that had happened long before the fourth century.

602-620 It was God's plan that the world should be dominated by Rome and that everyone should become Romans. This passage on the glories of the Roman empire is reminiscent of Claudian's *Cons. Stil.* 3. 130-173. The Claudian passage reviews the history of Rome praising her for her success in conquest which has extended as far as Britain. The conquered, however, are received by her as by a mother who gives them a

common name and invites them to share the gift of citizenship. She draws her strength from the Sibylline oracles and the laws of Numa. Jupiter, Minerva, Vesta, Bacchus and Cybele look after her while the snake of Aesculapius which took up residence on the Tiber island has brought the healing art to the city. After a passage in praise of the consul Stilicho (*Cons. Stil.* 3. 174-201), Claudian describes how the goddess Victory welcomes the consul to her temple and Claudian prays that she will always bless him (*ibid* 3.202-222). Prudentius' passage appears to be a response to Claudian's.

Prudentius returns to the theme of the Roman empire as part of the divine plan to spread Christianity in *Per.*2 413-84 where the martyr Lawrence prays for the conversion of the city of Rome and goes further in that he prays that Romulus and Numa may become Christians (*Per.* 2. 443-44).

603 hisdem Gar. notes this peculiar form of *eisdem* which would derive from the form *hicdem*. Lav.(§ 63) notes that this usage is found elsewhere in Prudentius (e.g. C.12.86 C.S.2. 799,805) and other late Latin authors and says it was the result of the disappearance of the initial 'h' in pronunciation.

604 quos Rhenus et Hister. Bergman (p.464) lists this as an allusion to Claudian's *Stil.* 3. 13 *Rheni pacator et Histri*. In the Claudian passage, Stilicho is praised for his victories in Libya, on the Rhine and the Danube. The combination of *Rhenus* and *Hister* is not one that I can find elsewhere, so it would be likely that this passage would recall for the contemporary reader of Prudentius, the Claudian passage. Given that it is a reference to the *Cons. Stil.* 3, it is likely to be deliberate. (Cf. Intro pp.22-23).

606 corniger Hesperidum Bergman (p.464) notes this as a quotation from Vergil (A. 8. 77 *corniger Hesperidum fluius*) where Aeneas addresses the Tiber. Thus Prudentius incorporates it when he wishes to speak about the Tiber.

607 Ganges Although direct Roman trade with India declined from 200 AD (cf. Warmington (1974)) poetry used the Ganges to represent the extreme East (e.g. Juvenal 10.1-2). Claudian mentions the Ganges six times. He speaks of how the Ganges will be amazed at finding itself flowing between Roman cities when Probinus and Olybrius are permitted to fulfil their potential (*Cons. Olyb. et Prob.*163) and also suggests that Honorius and Arcadius might like to conquer the Ganges (*III.Cons. Hon.*203) yet, in *In Ruf.* 1.291-3, he speaks of everything that is under Roman rule being terrified by Rufinus and explains that this encompasses everything from furthest Spain to the Ganges. Thus Prudentius follows Claudian's hyperbole here in extending Roman rule to the edge of the known world.

tepidique lauant septem ostia Nili An echo of Vergil's *et septemgemini turbant trepida ostia Nili* (A. 6.800) noted by Bergman (p.464). The Nile was identified as having seven mouths (cf. Juv. 13. 26, Ov. *M.* 1,422, 5.187). Although, as we have seen, Prudentius has no qualms about quoting Vergil directly, his reference to A. 6. 800 only has two words in common and only *septem* instead of Vergil's *septemgemini*. The use of *tepidi* recalls Vergil's use of 't' alliteration. Vergil's line comes in that part of book 6 where he is speaking of the reign of Augustus and the huge extent of his empire. The Nile on hearing the oracles of the gods about the extent of his conquests trembles in fear. Prudentius' Nile is not trembling but if the association with the Vergil passage was close enough for

Prudentius` readers to make the link, then it would have been an appropriate passage for Prudentius to recall when speaking here about the extent and glory of the Roman empire.

608 Ius fecit commune pares This was fully achieved by Caracalla in 212 when citizenship was extended to all the free population of the empire.

610 Viuitur Prudentius uses the verb here in its passive impersonal form. Cf. C.2.33 and Cicero *Off.*1.15.46

611 unis *Unus* is used in the plural in the sense of `the same`. Lav. (p.193) has a parallel from Cicero (*Flacc.* 63 *Lacedaemonii septingentos iam annos amplius unis moribus...uiuunt*).

614-617 Prudentius sees the benefits of empire as providing all citizens with a common legal system, a common economy and the right to marry another citizen from anywhere in the empire. Marriage was restricted for Roman citizens to other Roman citizens. A relationship between a citizen and a non-citizen, while it might exist, did not enjoy the rights that went with *conubium*. Clearly, once all free people had citizenship, significant restrictions, apart from the usual impediments (age, relationship within certain degrees etc.) ceased to exist. Claudian recalls some of the same benefits of Roman rule. He speaks of Rome as *armorum legumque parens* (*Cons. Stil.* 3. 136) and of common citizenship (*Cons. Stil.* 3. 152). He also mentions that people can now live where they like and that to visit Thule is a *lusus* and that people can now drink the waters of the Rhone and the Orontes (*Cons. Stil.* 3. 154-8).

nunc...per...ad. Prudentius heightens his rhetoric by a threefold repetition of this formula.

614 uadimonia. A legal technical term which means, in its basic sense, a promise secured by bail. It comes then to mean an appearance in court (*ad uadimonium uenire* Cic. *Quint.* 21,67) and from there simply to mean an appointment (*tibi... ..amatorem.....uadimonio sistam* App. *M.* 9.22)

615 commercia et artes Hendiadys for `the products of their skills`.

618 textur alternis ex gentibus una propago As *alternis* means `of two different types`, the only sense I can suggest of this is the division between barbarian and Romans.

619 Hoc actum est tantis successibus atque triumphis. Spondees for the first three feet add solemnity.

625 ut fuit olim By *olim* Prudentius must be referring to the time before the *pax Romana* unified the known world.

627 disiunctasque animi.... partes. Plato speaks, in the Republic, of the soul having three parts (*Rep.* 4.2) which war against each other. The parts of the soul are *disiunctas* because the harmony between them has been disturbed.

628 invisit sapientia Gar. notes that the Vulgate has the following verse which may have influenced Prudentius here: *Sap.* 1.4 *Quoniam in maleuolam animam non introibat sapientia, nec habitabit in corpore subdito peccatis.*

629-633 at si mentis apex regnandi iure potitus..... There is a hint of Pelagianism again in the suggestion that the impulses of the lower nature can be controlled simply by the *apex mentis*. *Apex mentis* is a rather unusual phrase. The idea that the soul had different powers the chief of which is the reason which directs its action goes back to Plato (*Rep.* 434e-449, *Tim.*). Tertullian gives a review of what philosophers had thought about the number of parts of the soul (*De Anima* 14) and approves of Plato's concept of the rational

principle which he sees as being a reflection of the godhead (*ibid.*16) although he places the soul, which for him is a material thing, around the heart (*ibid.*15). For Augustine, *animus* and *mens* were synonymous but both meant that part of the soul where the intelligence is found (cf. Hölscher (1986) 228-229). Presumably the *apex mentis* means the soul's highest rational level which here gains the *ius regnandi*. Plato in the *Timaeus* (69 d-e) speaks of the rational part of the soul dwelling at the top of the body and some similar line of thought is evident here. Claudian follows Platonic psychology closely and speaks of reason as occupying the highest part of the head (*hanc alta capitis fundavit in arce IV Cons. Hon.*).

630 stomachi The *stomachus* was thought of as the seat of either good or bad emotion. For an example of good emotion cf. Quint.2.33 *bono sane stomacho contenti*; for bad emotion cf. Cic. *Q. Fr.*3.8.1 *epistula plena stomachi et querelarum*.

631 iecur The liver is likewise thought of as a seat of emotion. (cf. Hor. *Ep.*1.18.72)

632 stabilis uitae status By this Prudentius is referring to the kind of life an individual leads.

633 haurit corde deum It is rare to find *haurire* with the ablative meaning 'to drink something with or through'. There are parallels for *haurire animo* which is close to this Prudentius' phrase in Vergil (*A.* 10.648 *animo spem turbidus hausit inanem*), Tacitus (*H.* 1.51 *expugnationes urbium, populationes agrorum, raptus Penatium hauserant animo*) and Ovid (*M.*10.252-253 *haurit/pectore*).

domino et subiungitur uni Here Prudentius puts the *et* in an unusual place. Lav. (§ 528) comments: *il arrive souvent que les poètes placent et comme deuxième mot d'une*

proposition coordonné (Ps 136, 144 etc.). Ps 136 reads: *iactibus et vacuis hastilia fracta iacerent*.

634-648 At the climax of this section, Prudentius now says that Christ has entered a world pacified by Rome. This is above all a rhetorical flourish. He has been speaking about the way God prepared for the coming of Christ by means of the *pax Romana*. The verb *influe* indicates a prayer for Christ to enter. Christ did enter in during the reign of Augustus with his birth but here Prudentius speaks about the present. It is unlikely that Prudentius is thinking of the second coming of Christ at the end of time with *ades* and *influe*. Prudentius does occasionally refer to this in his work (cf. C. 9.106), but the emphasis in this poem is on the benefits Christianity has for his own age. His statement is that Christ has come refers to Christ entering the hearts of the Romans now. (For a much later example cf St Bernard of Clairvaux *Sermo 5 in Adventu Domini Triplicem Domini adventum novimus. Tertius quidam adventus est medius inter illos*. He goes on to speak of this other coming as that of Christ to the individual). A reader of the whole poem may think back to book 1 where Prudentius describes how the chief Roman families have converted to Christianity (C.S. 1. 544-577)

634 concordibus influe terris influo normally takes *in* and the accusative as happens at 827. Other examples of *influo* and the dative are at *Per* 1. 19 and *Per* 10.433. *Influe* used of a person's movements is rare.

635 congrege nexu This use of *congrex* to mean close or intimate is unique to Prudentius.

636 pax et Roma The emphasis on peace and Rome is seen by the use of the words three times in three lines. Extra emphasis is given by `p` alliteration and the `x` of *excellencia*

in 1.638. Pax is presented here as another entity along with Roma. Pax is one of the many allegorical characters in the *Psychomachia* (*Ps.* 631).

culmina rerum Bergman (p.464) notes that this phrase occurs three times in Claudian. Horace speaks of Maecenas as *columen rerum mearum* (*C.* 2.17.4) but this means more the 'support or protector of my affairs' whereas the Claudian and Prudentius phrase takes the other meaning of *culmen* to mean the summit of affairs. Claudian uses it in *Ruf.* 1.21 speaking of how Rufinus has achieved the *culmina rerum*. It is found again in *Get.* 392 referring to the Second Punic War as being a dispute between two great powers *de culmine rerum* and finally in *Stil.* 1. 142 it is the consul's task to support the tottering state (*rerum ruituro culmine*).

637 nec Roma tibi sine pace probatur This recalls *Ps.* 772 *nil placitum sine pace Deo*.

638-640 There is a choice between *pax* or *excellentia* as the subject of *facit*. Since the superiority of Rome could be either pleasing or displeasing to God but peace would always be pleasing to him, I think that it makes more sense to take *pax* as the subject of *facit* and *excellentia* as the subject of *placeat*: it is because of the peace that Rome's superiority brings that Rome is pleasing to God. To take *excellentia* as the subject of *facit* would mean that the superiority of Rome has made it so that peace is pleasing to God.

640-44 Prudentius and Symmachus both agree that *Roma* has grown old (cf. *C.S.* 1.511 *senio...docilis...Roma*) although Prudentius later says that *Roma* thinks it is shameful for her to admit that she has grown old (653) whereas Symmachus' *Roma* seems to revel in her antiquity. Prudentius says that she has not been robbed of her former strength which we might expect to be the case if she was old. Symmachus does not say she has lost her strength either but Prudentius exaggerates his point so that he can speak of how she has

conquered nature and regained her strength. When *Roma* speaks she explains that she has regained her strength by the rule of Theodosius (656-7). I think that Prudentius really has Claudian in mind here. In his poems *Roma* is a major figure: Rome is depicted twenty-five times as a goddess and twice as the city (cf. Christiansen (1969), 49-62). He describes her as a huge figure, as large as Mars and Pallas: her movement causes buildings to shake and her plumed helmet reaches the ceiling (*Cons. Stil.* 2. 270-77). She appears like the goddess Minerva riding a chariot which has the ability to fly at great speed (*Cons. Olyb et Prob.* 75-104). When her grain supply is cut off she loses all strength and ages rapidly (*B. Gild.* 17-27). Once Jupiter promises that Gildo will be defeated she regains her youth and strength. Not only does her hair lose its grey colour but her helmet's plumes grow erect again and all rust disappears from her shield (*B. Gild.* 208-212). As well as having warlike qualities, *Roma* also shows herself to be a good mother. She speaks of herself as the mother of the emperor (*VI Cons. Hon* 361-363.). She is also addressed as the mother of the whole world. (*Cons. Stil.* 3.150-153 & 173-179). However, as Cameron notes, it is "the symbolic figure of Rome personified" who is the main object of Claudian's interest (Cameron (1970), 363). This figure, Cameron notes, is generally seen making supplication. She is worthy of respect but rather powerless. Symmachus' *Roma* is rather colourless in comparison.

The cult of Roma as a goddess began in the Greek world in the second century BC. For details cf. Beard, North & Price (1998) pp.158-160. There was a temple dedicated at Smyrna in 195 B.C. However the cult was not established in Rome until the reign of Hadrian with his temple of Venus and Roma in the forum built in 145 A.D.

640 ... nec enim..... *Nec* governs *spoliata* rather than *senuit* as *spoliata* cannot be an affirmative as I do not think Prudentius means to say that although she has been robbed of her former strength she does not grow old.

644 -6 As always, Prudentius is ready to acknowledge Symmachus' skill as an orator (e.g. 91, 271) and uses a rather rare word (*praenobilis*) to highlight his praise .

647-8 Prudentius compares Symmachus to a tragic actor who puts on a mask to lend weight to his wicked words. It is well-known that Christians were opposed to attendance at the theatre. Tertullian objects to the theatre but mainly because it was a pagan shrine (*theatrum proprie sacrarium Veneris est. Spect. 10*) Chrysostom also objects to the theatre as the temple of the Evil One (PG. 56,263; 57.71, 426;58. 120, 188). For different reasons, Julian the Apostate urged his new pagan priesthood to likewise avoid the pantomimes (Letter to a priest 304 B). Augustine is notable for making a distinction between the mimes, with their obscenities, and classical drama of which he approves of for educational purposes (*Civ. Dei. 2.8*). Prudentius also attacks the theatre in *Per.10*, which as mentioned above has a number of parallels with the *Contra Symmachum* because of its Roman material. Prudentius attacks the depiction of classical myths on stage (*Per. 10. 220-230*), stories which he says are unworthy of divinities. His dislike of the theatre is seen also in *H. 308-311* where the activities of eunuchs on stage are called a disgusting entertainment. What is interesting here is that it is not the popular and coarse pantomime that Prudentius attacks but the tragedy. While the writing of tragedy was not one of the forms favoured in the fourth century revival of Latin literature, there is some evidence that stagings were still known. For example, Claudian in *Cons. Man. 311-332* speaks of the theatre including the tragic actor (*et alte graditur maiore cothurno Cons.*

Man. 315). However, evidence for theatrical activity at this time is not plentiful (cf. Beacham (1991) 194-5). It is known that the theatre of Pompey was restored between 393 and 402 at imperial expense and that it was used by Honorius in 404 to celebrate his consulate and victory over the Goths (cf. Dessau, H *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 793).

Post 648 Most manuscripts here include a quotation from *Rel.* 3.9 where Symmachus has *Roma* speak. This is the one place where it is possible to argue that these quotations from Symmachus were intended by Prudentius to be part of his text because Symmachus' passage seems to be picked up by Prudentius' *Si uocem simulare licet*. However I think that overall the case for including these quotations is rather weak. The adopting of a voice referred to here follows on from the mention of Symmachus' depiction of *Roma* in 643-644 and there is no need for the prose passage which Cunningham defends. Cf. n. post 6. and intro pp. 26-28. The text reads:

SYMMACHUS: Romam nunc putemus adsistere atque his uobiscum agere sermonibus. Optimi principes, patres patriae, reueremini annos meos in quos me pius ritus adduxit. Utar ceremoniis auitis, neque enim paentitet. Viuam meo more, quia libera sum. Hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit. Haec sacra Hannibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Senonas reppulerunt.

649-768 Prudentius follows the examples of Symmachus and Ambrose and gives a speech to the figure of *Roma*.

649-654 Prudentius introduces the speech by *Roma*. It is interesting to note that Prudentius is somewhat more patronising about doing this than either Symmachus or Ambrose. Symmachus writes : *Romam nunc putemus adsistere atque his uobiscum agere*

sermonibus (Rel. 3. 9). Ambrose introduces his *Roma*, saying: *Aliis illa eos interpellat uocibus* (Ep. 18.7). Also of interest is the theme of the speech by *Roma* in each case. For Symmachus the theme is that respect should be shown for *Roma*'s advanced years and that her ancient ceremonies should be allowed to continue because it was with this worship that Rome was saved from invasion by the Carthaginians and the Senones. It ends with a reminder of *Roma*'s advanced years and the remark that it is difficult for the old to change their ways. Ambrose takes the approach that the enemies of Rome were defeated by the valour of the Romans rather than by pagan sacrifice. Rome also knew bad times when the pagan gods were worshipped. Then *Roma* says that it is never too late to learn new ways and that she is glad now to know the true God. Prudentius' speech by *Roma* is much longer than the others. *Roma* has put off her old age under the rule of Theodosius while at the same time real respect is now shown for her age. Under Jupiter she had been misled into evil ways which she has now rejected. To the accusation that now the pagan altars have been abandoned, victory has deserted her, *Roma* says the opposite is the case and she speaks of the victory of Pollentia against Alaric as proving that Christ is fighting for the Roman empire. In considering this speech in Prudentius it will be useful also to compare it to the speeches of *Roma* in Claudian which are such a regular feature of his work.

652 aegida Cf. note on 535.

655-768 Prudentius' *Roma* gives her reply.

655 duces Honorius and Arcadius are given the title of *dux* whereas their father is referred to as a *princeps*. There is no significance to this. Thus in C. 9.96 Prudentius refers to Christ as the *ducem tuorum principum* thus placing the position of *dux* above

that of *princeps*. The cognate *ductor* is found in Prudentius and is also interchangeable with *princeps*: cf. A.450 *principibus tamen e cunctis non defuit unus/me puero, ut memini, ductor fortissimus armis*.

generosa propago Prudentius is rather fond of using this adjective (e.g. C.S. 1.552 *generosus Anicius*; Per.3.51 *generosa patrum/ turba*) It simply means noble.

656 principis inuicti Prudentius refers to Theodosius.

renascens The idea of *Roma renascens* is an old one: Florus had spoken of *Roma* regaining her youth under Trajan (1.Intro.8. *nisi quod sub Traiano principe mouit lacertos et praeter spem omnium senectus imperii quasi reddita iuuentute reuiruit*). Prudentius goes further than Florus in that he addresses the problem of how one can regain one's youth. She has discovered a new life through Christianity since the time of Theodosius who was the first Catholic emperor to come to the throne as such and to impose Catholic belief in the face of the Arian heresy. For an interesting discussion of allegorical old women who become rejuvenated in late antique literature see Curtius, (1953), 103-5.

657 flauescere Claudian speaks of Roma's hair losing its grey colour but does not specify the colour to which it is restored (*Bell. Gild.*209-10). Fair hair was highly prized.

659 longa dies The phrase meaning 'length of days' is also found in Vergil (A. 6.745)

661 Nunc, nunc..... Prudentius emphasises his belief that Rome's destiny has at last been fulfilled in its acceptance of the Christian faith by his repeated '*nunc*' and a another '*nunc*' in the next line.

662 merito.....uenerabilis et caput orbis Rome is now deservedly called venerable and head of the world because she now serves the true God and has abandoned the savage

ways he is about to recall. Claudian spoke of Stilicho restoring to her her position as *caput* (*Cons. Stil.* 3.129) because of his leadership abilities. Prudentius has a different perspective on why Rome is now the *caput mundi*.

663-5 This description of the figure of *Roma* is interesting. Again it would seem that Prudentius has in mind the colourful character of Claudian's *Roma* rather than that of Symmachus or Ambrose. In *C.S.* 1.415-432 Prudentius has the emperor Theodosius address a *Roma* who is cast down and covered in dirt which is also reminiscent of Claudian. (Cf. n. 640-644.)

664 *cingula serto cingulum* meaning a belt is frequently found in the plural. Vergil (*A.* 12.942) gives an example of where it is used to mean a sword-belt in particular. The word thus came to mean military service (*Cod. Just.* 7,38,1:12,17,3). Prudentius uses the word this way himself at *Pe.* 1.32. *sertum* meaning a wreath is only very rarely found used in the singular like this. An example occurs in Ausonius (*Idyll.* 6,88).

665-6 Three times Prudentius repeats *crimen* to drive his point home about the evils of Rome's past.

666-83 atrox/ Iuppiter Prudentius has *Roma* ascribe her former evil ways to Jupiter. Thus it was *illius instinctu* that Nero killed his mother and the apostles. There is nothing in the life of Nero which suggests he was more devoted to Jupiter than any other emperor would be. He did not adopt Jupiter as Augustus did Apollo. Thus, by this phrase, Prudentius simply means that Jupiter was the source of all the evil that was done in the name of Rome. (Perhaps the phrase is meant to recall the use of the words *instinctu diuinitatis mentis* used on the arch of Constantine (*CIL* 6.1139) so as to contrast Nero with the first Christian emperor.) Prudentius does not attribute Decius' evil deeds

directly to Jupiter but the thrust of the whole passage is that Jupiter was the force behind these evil deeds. The particular evil deeds that Prudentius mentions are mainly the persecution of Christians (cf. Tac. *Ann* 15.44) although he starts by speaking of Nero's murder of his mother (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 14.8).

We have seen that Prudentius does not believe that the gods really were divine beings, but mortals who tricked simple rustics into believing they were gods (cf. n.1) apart from the gods of the underworld which are devils from Hell (C.S.1.369). Yet he has spoken of the corrosive influence of pagan art and poetry which recall the deeds of the gods and so allow their stories to influence the way people behave (cf. n.49). Thus he can speak of deeds being done by the *instinctu* of a god. However it is difficult to think of which story of Jupiter Prudentius could have in mind here such that it would inspire Nero to drink the blood of the apostles or to stain Rome with the slaughter of the devout. Similarly, *Roma* says she was deceived *arte Iouis* (680). Jupiter feared the spread of Christianity and so filled the world with slaughter (683). Thus it would seem at this point that Prudentius is allowing his *Roma* to attribute a real influence to Jupiter in the affairs of the world, despite what he says elsewhere about the nature of pagan gods, although he has said that pagan art can have a real malign influence (39-60) and it could simply be this he is referring to here.

672 Decius Decius was the first emperor to initiate a general persecution of Christians throughout the empire. This began in December 249 (cf. Lane Fox (1986) 450-57). Since he was a traditional hate-figure for Christian writers it was natural that Prudentius would depict him as a blood-thirsty murderer (cf. Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 4).

674 multorum similis The other emperors who persecuted the Christians were Valerian (257-259) and Diocletian (303-313).

674-5 per uulnera tristia flagrans/ extrahere insignes animas. The language here is rather stilted. The verb *extrahere* means `to draw out` and thus also `to extract` (and thus `to eradicate`) or `to prolong`. Thomson takes it in the latter sense. The other sense could be possible in the sense of drawing souls from bodies to cause death but seems unlikely as the rest of the sentence goes on to speak of mockery and then death. This would require the first clause to still be dealing with torture. Other examples of *extrahere* in the sense of prolonging are not so stilted (e.g. *res uariis calumniis* Cic. *Fam.*1,4,1; *bellum in tertium annum* Liv.3,2,2) but Statius has *anxia spes mentem/ extrahit* (*Th.* 1.322).

676 undantesque meum in gremium defundere mortes Prudentius here echoes Vergil's *undantique animam diffudit in arma cruore* (*A.*10 908). In the *Aeneid* these words describe the death of Mezentius in the presence of Aeneas. Mezentius has been thrown from his horse, which Aeneas killed, and falls on his own weapon to end his life. Mezentius appears in the *Aeneid* as a wicked, bloodythirsty tyrant. It is difficult to see what resonance Prudentius hopes his text will acquire by recalling this scene from Vergil. The tyrant Mezentius pours out his own life on his weapons whereas the slaughtered Christians pour out their lives in the lap of *Roma*.

677 sub iure fori This refers to the edicts for persecution of Christians by Decius, Valerian and Diocletian. Decius' edict was not against Christians but only asked that everyone offer sacrifice to the gods, which thus excluded them (cf. Lane Fox (1986) 451). For the edict of Valerian of July 258 cf. Cyprian *Ep.* 80.1. Diocletian issued his edict against the Christians in March 303 (cf. Eusebius *H.E.* 7.2.4-5)

678-80 uestra.../ uobis *Roma* is still addressing Honorius and Arcadius.

680 arte Iouis Rome was deceived by Jupiter: he was her patron god.

681-2 Prudentius says that the wars in which Rome was involved were used as a means by Jupiter to prevent Christianity getting established since he has already said that God could only enter a world which was at peace (621-625). Thus this presumably refers to the civil wars before the peace brought by Augustus when Christianity began. That Prudentius does not claim that Rome has not been at war since the coming of Christianity is clear in the next line when he responds to those who say that since that time Rome has had bad fortune in war whereas in pagan times she was able to survive even when her doom seemed assured.

684-695 *Roma* takes on the pagan critics who allege that Rome has fallen on bad times since her people abandoned the worship of the traditional gods. Augustine faced the same criticism (*Civ. Dei.* 1.1.). Prudentius writing before the sack of Rome in 410 is able to give a simpler response and say that under Christianity Rome has defeated her enemies.

687-89 The examples Prudentius chooses of Roman victories when defeat seemed certain are those mentioned by Symmachus (*Rel.*3.9).

687 Hannibalem Symmachus refers to this at *Rel.* 3.9. where *Roma* claims that the traditional rites of Rome have subdued the world to her, driven Hannibal from her walls and driven the Senones from the Capitol. Hannibal, in 211 BC, used a diversionary action to try to draw the Romans away from the siege of Capua. He took his army to Rome and with 2,000 cavalry he rode up to the Colline Gate but was driven off by the cavalry of the city garrison (Livy 26.10-11). In the debate in the Senate, when it was discovered that

Hannibal was marching against Rome, Livy records that Fabius Maximus declared that Jupiter and the other gods would defend the city (Livy 26.8).

688 Senonas Livy records that this tribe led the Gauls who captured Rome in 390 BC (Livy 5.47). An attack on the Capitol where the Romans held out was defeated because the sacred geese of Juno, which the garrison had refrained from eating, gave the alarm that the Gauls were attacking. Prudentius does not copy Ambrose who asks whether this then meant that Jupiter was speaking through a goose and why did he leave the defence of the city to geese instead of intervening personally (*Ep.* 18 5.).

Capitoli ex arce For Romans the Capitol, with its temples and especially that of Jupiter Capitolinus, was the centre of the state religion and the symbol of her power and eternity. For a fuller treatment of the importance of the Capitol cf. Edwards (1996) 69-95.

For the genitive form *Capitoli*, Lav. (§ 89) writes: *Les génitifs en i des noms propres romains en ius et ium sont tout a fait classiques*. He gives examples from Prudentius including 1103 *Palati*. He goes on to say that in common nouns Prudentius always uses the *ii* form. The final *`i`* is dropped here to make the line scan, although E and S2 keep it.

689 super e celso.... saxo The Capitol is the smallest of the hills of Rome but being the one that was the centre of the state cult it could be thought to be nearest to the heavens and so might be thought of as tall. For a similar idea cf. Psalm 48 which speaks of Mt. Zion in Jerusalem as “towering in beauty” or “beautiful by reason of (its) height” although the mountain is not bigger than neighbouring hills but is thought to be higher because it is the dwelling place of God.

numina Symmachus had said that the enemies of Rome were repulsed by *haec sacra*. Ambrose (*Ep.* 18.5) had wondered where Jupiter had been and whether it was him

speaking through the geese that gave the alarm when the Senones attacked. Prudentius uses *numina* which can mean gods but is vaguer and can simply mean divine power. It could be that Prudentius, knowing the story of the geese, uses *numina* to indicate that the divine intervention was not direct on the part of Jupiter but it could also simply be because he has already spoken of Jupiter in dealing with Hannibal and it suffices to simply speak of *numina* this time rather than to repeat the names of the gods.

690–1. *Roma* has just spoken of two occasions when Rome was saved from near disaster. She now asks those who recall her past defeats to observe that in this Christian era she no longer sustains defeats. Who are the critics who recall to her her past defeats? It could either refer to Christians who allude to defeats Rome suffered when loyal to pagan gods or pagans who now hold the abandonment of the pagan gods responsible for Rome's decline. The former seems unlikely as talking about the disasters of Cannae or Carrhae could not detract from Rome's overall military success in the pagan period. The latter are thus more likely. The most recent major defeat suffered by Rome was at Adrianople in 378 where the Arian Christian emperor Valens was killed and two thirds of the army destroyed. Yet Catholic writers were quick to attribute this defeat to Valens heretical views (cf. Orosius 7.33). Prudentius makes no allusion to this. He is only interested in pointing out that now Rome with its Christian emperors no longer suffers defeat, as he is about to show in his mention of the battle of Pollentia.

693 ueste comisque / ignotus . Claudian draws attention to the hair and clothing of the Goths at *Get.* 481-2 (*crinigeri sedere patres, pellita Getarum/ curia*). Another contemporary view of barbarian appearance is seen in Ammianus' picture of the Huns (*R.G.* 31.2.) who gives an idea of how outlandish their clothing (and general way of life)

could appear to the fourth century Roman. Ammianus speaks of the Huns wearing tunics made of linen or mouse-skin which they wore till they fell apart (*R.G.* 31.2.5). Prudentius mentions hair here: Ammianus also thought barbarian hairstyles were worthy of comment: the Alamanni were noted for their long hair which they dyed. Ammianus records a surprise raid on the Alamanni by the Romans where he says of the Alamanni “*lauantes alios, quosdam comas rutilantes ex more, potantes non nullos*” (27.2.2).

694-95 capta passim...../ in uincula pubem The barbarian exulting in a captured city and leading its young men into captivity has a contemporary ring to it, given the perilous state of the empire by the early fifth century. The release of these captives is mentioned later by Prudentius and also by Claudian (cf.n. 732-37).

696-699 The Goths were originally from the area of the Carpathian mountains across the Danube. In 376 they were given permission by the Romans to cross the Danube into the Empire to escape the Huns. Faced with a food shortage they revolted against the Romans, defeating them at the battle of Adrianople in 378 where the emperor Valens was killed. Peace was made in 382. Alaric emerged as leader or king in 395. It is thought that he was a commander of Gothic troops in the army of Theodosius before this. In 395 Alaric led a Gothic revolt against the Romans during which they ravaged Greece before heading towards Italy in 401 where they fought two battles with the Romans led by Stilicho, at Pollentia and Verona in 402 after which the Goths retired to the Balkans (cf. Heather (1991) 84-213).

697 iuratus Claudian also believes that Alaric vowed to invade Italy and take Rome (cf. *Get.* 81-2 *pollicitus patrii numen iurauerat Histri/ non nisi calcatis loricam ponere rostris*). Certainly the three attempts to take Rome made by Alaric between 408 and 410,

which culminated in its capture in 410, would seem to confirm that this was his intention. Heather (1991 pp. 208-9) doubts that Alaric had such a deliberate intention. The main Gothic motivation was simply to find a safe area in which to settle. After Stilicho checked their advance into Italy in 402 they tried to settle in Gaul instead. The capture of Rome would be mainly of symbolic significance.

patrio ueniens iuratus ab Histro Bergman notes that Claudian has *patrii numen iurauerat Histri* (*Get.* 81). Thus, while there is a verbal echo, Prudentius changes the pagan idea of a *numen* of the Danube and does not have Alaric swear by anything concrete. This may be a recognition of Alaric's, albeit Arian, Christianity. It is interesting that Prudentius does not say anything about Alaric being an heretical Christian.

699 mastrucis *Mastruca* was a Sardinian word for a garment made of skins (Quint. 1.5.8)

togatos While evidence suggests that the toga was not worn by ordinary Romans in later antiquity, portrait statues of the wealthy still depicted it being worn. Prudentius here speaks of those wearing the toga as being the nobility and this may reflect contemporary practice. Book 1 speaks of the Senate in togas (*C.S.* 1. 546).

703-20 Prudentius gives his version of the battle of Pollentia. Claudian gives the other major account of the battle. Orosius, writing after the death of Stilicho, speaks of the unfortunate affairs at Pollentia and reveals that Stilicho attacked the Christian Goths while they were retreating to celebrate Easter (7.37.2). He does not regard it as a great victory as he says:

Taceo de infelicibus illis apud Pollentiam gestis, cum barbaro et pagano duci, hoc est Sauli, belli summa commissa est, cuius improbitate reuerentissimi dies et

sanctum pascha uiolatum est cedentique hosti propter religionem, ut pugnaret extortum est, cum quidem, ostendente in breui iudicio Dei, et quid fauor eius possit, et quid ultio exigeret, pugnantes uicimus, uictores uictim sumus.

Later Gothic writers depicted the battle as a victory for Alaric (cf. Cassiodorus *Chron.Min.*2.154 and Jordanes *Get.*155). Claudian speaks of the battle as a tremendous victory but has to account for Alaric's ability to retreat in strength and be able to advance again soon. He does this by saying that Stilicho's plan was to allow Alaric to be humiliated by surviving his defeat (*Get.* 90ff) and also because he was worried that if he pressed the Goths too much their rage might grow and they might retaliate and threaten Rome itself (*Get.*95ff). Claudian only gives a short description of the battle in seventeen lines (*Get.* 581-97). All he says is that the leader of the Alans, who was fighting for the Romans but who had been accused of treachery, was killed, whereupon his men were about to desert. As this would have left the Roman flank exposed (presumably the Alans composed one of the cavalry wings of the Roman army) Stilicho went with a legion to rally them and thus saved the day. Of the battle itself Prudentius gives no detail. (The traditional dating of the battle to April 6th 401 was challenged by J. Barrie Hall ('Pollentia, Verona and the Chronology of Alaric's First Invasion of Italy' *Philologus* 132 (1988) 245-57) who claimed it was more likely to have taken place in 403. Dewar (1996) xxxvi-xl outlines the subsequent debate and the weaknesses in Barrie's arguments.

nimbos equitum The Goths, unlike the Huns, did deploy infantry as well as cavalry in battle. For an account of Gothic infantry cf. Ammianus 31.12. Prudentius' account of the Goths mentions only their cavalry. Claudian describes the cavalry of Gildo which Stilicho defeats as *equitum nimbos* (*Cons. Stil.*1 353). Claudian makes a little more of the

metaphor by speaking of Gildo's army firing a thick rain of javelins. Vergil describes the soldiers of Turnus as a *nimbus peditum* (A. 7.793).

705-6 perfracta congređientum/ pectora One would normally assume that a breast which had been shattered was not of much use anymore. The clue to this unusual turn of phrase lies in the last clause of the sentence, which speaks of praise being sought *per uulnera*. The sentence is about victory in battle despite enduring wounds. Thus the soldiers may have suffered wounds to the chest but they continue to fight. This phrase is noted by Bergman as an echo of Vergil's *perfractaque quadripedantum/pectora* (A. 11. 614). The use of the Vergilian phrase recalls his battle-scene between the Trojans and their enemies.

707 pulchram per uulnera quaerere laudem Bergman points out that this is reminiscent of Vergil's *pulchramque petunt per uulnera mortem* (A. 11.647 & G. 4.218). It seems that Prudentius has Aeneid 11 in mind in this passage.

709 dux agminis...../ iuuenis fuit. Honorius was not the leader of the army at Pollentia, except nominally as emperor. Claudian makes this clear in addressing Stilicho: *Per te namque unum mediis exuta tenebris/ imperio sua forma redit* (Get. 36-7). Prudentius pretends that Honorius was on the field of battle when it would have been generally known that he was not.

710 Christipotens *hap. leg* and epic compound. Prudentius uses two other *Christi-* compounds: *Christicola* which occurs sixteen times (e.g. C.S 2 1003) in his work and *Christigena* which is another *hap.leg.* (H.787). Latin had constructed compounds such as *armipotens* (as an epithet of Mars or Diana cf. Vergil A. 2.425; 9.717) and *caelipotens* (Plaut. *Pers.*5.1.3) but using a proper name in this compound was a new development.

Elsewhere the *-gena* and *-cola* compounds were used of the Juno by Ovid e.g. *Iunonicola* (*F.* 6.49) and *Iunonigena* (*M.* 4.173).

711 Stilico This is the first mention of the powerful guardian of Honorius and the real policy maker in the West. He is designated as *parens* to Honorius. He was his father-in-law. Thus *parens* is used in the rarer, looser sense of a relation and particularly as a substitute father for Honorius. Claudian is happy to refer to Stilicho as *pater* of Honorius (*Fescenn.* 3. 12 *Stilicho socer est, pater est Stilicho*) and has Honorius address Stilicho as *sancte pater* (*Bell. Gild.* 1.354). He even goes so far as to say that Stilicho is a truer father to Honorius than Theodosius was (*Cons. Stil.* 3. 122).

deus unus Christus utrique Here Prudentius says Stilicho is a Christian. It seems unlikely that such a committed Christian as Theodosius would leave his sons in the care of a pagan, but Orosius refers to him as a pagan (cf. n. 703-20). Whatever Stilicho's personal beliefs he did show tolerance to pagans and heretics.

712 altaribus The normal Latin word for an altar was *ara*. *Altaria* originally referred to offerings placed on the altar but came to mean an altar too. Twice Prudentius has the phrase *altaris aram* (*C.* 7.203 and *Per.* 749) which indicates that the words are not interchangeable for him. Tertullian spoke of the *altare Dei*, in a Christian, although spiritualised, context in the *De Oratione* 28 and generally Latin Christian writers would reserve *ara* for pagan altars and use the word *altare*, *altarium* or *mensa*. Nonetheless Prudentius uses *ara* indiscriminately of both pagan and Christian (as well as Old Testament) altars. (e.g. *Per.* 1.41 *ara* is pagan but at *Per.* 2.38 it is Christian.) The construction here is difficult as a literal translation would be 'when his altar had been adored'.

712-3 ...cruce fronti / inscripta This must be a reference to the sign of the cross being made by the Roman troops. Prudentius quite brazenly speaks of the Christian piety of the Roman army without making any reference to the fact that they attacked the Christian, though Arian, Goths as they celebrated their Easter Mass. The making of a small sign of the cross on the forehead is attested by Tertullian: (*de cor. mil.* 3: “ *Ad omnem progressum atque promotum, ad omnem aditum et exitum, ad calciatum, ad lauacra, ad mensas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedelia, quaecumque nos conuersatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus*). This is the gesture to which Prudentius refers.

713 prima hasta The easier way of expressing this idea would be to say *primum hasta* but here one can only assume that Prudentius is using *prima* predicatively so that it would read that ‘the spear preceded the dragon as the first’.

dracones In the third century the Roman army adopted a dragon-shaped standard for its units. It was like a long sock in the shape of a serpent which filled up as the wind blew through it. (cf. Prudentius *C.* 5.56 *tumidis..... draconibus* and Claudian *Cons. Hon.* 4, 549 *tument post terga dracones*) Van Assendelft (1976) p.153 notes that *draco* also is used as a word for Satan in Prudentius. In *Per.* 34-36 there is a passage where the martyrs Emetrius and Chelidonium leave the army to become Christians. Prudentius makes a play on *draco* since they abandon the *dracones* or standards of the army to take up the standard of the cross and its wood *quod draconem subdidit*. In *C.* 5.56 Prudentius depicts the armies of Pharaoh chasing the Israelites as having the *draco* standard, although it is anachronistic, to make the point that they are doing evil work. Van Assendelft is surely right when she says that Prudentius has more than the simple standard of the Roman

army in mind here because Stilicho is victorious because the *apex Christi* is raised above the *dracones* of the army. The link is made explicitly by Prudentius at *Per.*1.34-36 :

Caesaris uexilla linquunt, eligunt signum crucis
proque uentosis draconum, quos gerebant, palliis
praeferunt insigne lignum, quod draconem subdidit.

Christi apicem A difficult idea. An *apex* is the top point of something. It can mean a hat of any kind. What does Prudentius have in mind here? Thomson (1953) takes it to mean 'the crest of Christ' and so I take it to be a kind of standard. It must be a meaning of this kind rather than an abstract idea of the 'honour of Christ' since the context is the *dracones* of the Roman army and this is something higher than them. However the use of *apex* to mean this is possibly unique.

715 ter denis gens exitiabilis annis cf n.696. Claudian speaks of this time in more flowery language (*Get.* 166-71). Claudian has the similar periphrasis *ter decies* (*Get.*166).

718-719 mirabere seris / posteritas, saeculis Bergman (p.465) points out that Claudian has a passage where *posteritas* and *aetas* are said to marvel which may be a parallel to this. (*In Ruf.* 2.285 *quae non posteritas, quae non mirabitur aetas*). In Claudian, Posterity will be amazed at the way that Stilicho's Eastern troops, who are recalled by Arcadius, through the persuasion of Rufinus, keep their intention to murder Rufinus a secret. Here Posterity will marvel at the victory of Stilicho over Alaric at Pollentia.

720 Pollentinos agros Prudentius presents Pollentia as a great Roman victory over the Goths and a vindication of Rome's adoption of the Christian religion.cf.n.703-720

721 ...manibus Gallorum excisa.. A reference again to the capture of Rome, apart from the Capitol, by the Gauls (Senones) in 390 BC.

722 redeunte Camillo Livy (5. 19. 2ff) tells how M. Furius Camillus freed Rome from the Gauls. He arrived with his army and drove out the Gauls just at the time when a gold ransom was being paid to them by the Romans

.... **lauro** The laurel was sacred to Apollo, but it was generally used as a decoration in festivals. For example, victorious generals wore laurel crowns on their heads and carried laurel branches in their hands while their lictors decorated their fasces with laurels too. (Ov. *M.* 1.560). There was no tradition of decorating buildings with laurel but as it was a sign of victory Prudentius' idea here is clear enough.

726 fortissime princeps This must refer to Honorius, although Stilicho was the victor of Pollentia. Honorius was not given to successful independent decisions. In his index Cameron (1970) p.501 for the entry "Honorius independence, alleged signs of" he adds "had there been any real signs, this entry might have been more informative". It is a characteristic of Claudian in his earlier period as covered by the *De Bello Gildonico*, when Stilicho had been declared a *hostis publicus* by the Eastern court, that he attributes all the success of Stilicho to the initiative of Honorius (cf Cameron (1970) pp.114-5). Cameron produces evidence from the inscriptions from the base of statues of Honorius and Stilicho in the Roman Forum to show that this was the official policy of the time. Later, he is more ready to attribute glory to Stilicho alone (e.g. *Bell. Get.* 36ff addressing Stilicho: *Per te namque unum mediis exuta tenebris / imperio sua forma redit*). Prudentius follows the earlier policy and attributes the glory to Honorius although he does give some recognition of Stilicho's part in the battle (743-4).

727 quos spargam flores Bergman (p.465) notes that Claudian has *Roma* say that flowers will be scattered for Stilicho on his entry into Rome when he accepts the

consulship (*Stil.* 2. 400-1 *spargentur et omnes / flore uiae*). The phrase *spargam flores* is found in Vergil, (A.6.884) where the ghost of Anchises speaks of Marcellus. Thus, if this phrase is meant to be an echo of Vergil, it recalls the death of one for whom great things were expected. However, Anchises speaks of how great Marcellus' prowess in battle would have been (A.6.879-81) and maybe it is this aspect of Marcellus, rather than his untimely death, which Prudentius is alluding to here. It is difficult to think how else Prudentius would express this idea and so maybe no allusion is intended.

729 immunis tanti belli An echo of Vergil (A.12, 559 *immunem tanti belli*), which Bergman (p.465) observes. Vergil is describing the scene where the final conflict has broken out between the armies of Aeneas and Turnus. Aeneas notices the city of Latinus at peace while war rages all around it. He is inspired by his mother to change the course of the battle and thus begins to attack it with his army. *Roma* thus compares herself to the city of the Latins in that she is *immunis tanti belli*. Maybe Prudentius' allusion to Vergil here serves to highlight that although Stilicho has freed Rome from the threat of Gothic attack there is still the possibility that there may be further attacks. We do not hear in the *Aeneid* of the fall of Latinus' city despite Aeneas' attack and so in identifying Rome with the Latin city Prudentius speaks of a city which remains uncaptured.

730 aure tenus The victory over the Goths is more impressive than that of Camillus over the Gauls since the enemy came nowhere near Rome.

732 Date uincula demam *Roma* now addresses herself to the Romans who have suffered at the hands of the Goths. The construction here is a subjunctive in a subordinate phrase as if *ut* was understood. Cf. Verg. A. 4.683 *date, uulnera lymphis/ abluam*.

732-737 These lines speak of a restoration of freedom and a family reunion which are the result of a military victory. Claudian has a passage describing the release of captives after the battle of Pollentia (*Get.* 616ff).

737 Timor omnis abesto This is a quotation from Vergil (A.11.14). Aeneas speaks to his men after their victory over the Latins and urges them on to further conquests. Prudentius' use of the phrase here recalls that triumph of Aeneas and links the victory of Pollentia with the battles that created the Roman people. Bergman (p.465) notes this phrase in Iuvencus (3.107), a Christian poet of the fourth century. In Iuvencus, these are among the words of Christ to his disciples when he goes towards them walking on the water. Given that Prudentius makes no verbal allusion to Iuvencus' version of this story in his own telling of it in the Preface (cf. p.79) it is difficult to say whether he has the Iuvencus passage in mind here. If he has, it adds an extra resonance as it brings to mind the picture of Christ pulling Peter from the waves, and so as Christ rescues Peter from the waters, so now he has rescued Rome (Peter's city) from the barbarians.

738-42 *Roma* picks up Symmachus' (*Rel.* 3.9) point that it was under her old gods that Rome enjoyed her greatest military feats, such as the defeat of Hannibal, by saying that this defeat of Alaric was even more impressive as the Carthaginians were already weakened by the attractions of the countryside before they were defeated. Cf. Livy 23.18.11 *quos nulla mali uicerat uis, perdidere nimia bona ac uoluptates immodicae, et eo impensius quo auidius ex insolentia in eas se merserant. Somnus enim et uinum et epulae et scorta balineaque....eneruauerunt corpora animosque.*

Seneca develops the same theme in relation to the dangers of Baiae in *Epist.* 51.5. *una Hannibalem hiberna soluerunt et indomitum illum niuibus atque Alpibus uirum eneruauerunt fomenta Campaniae. Armis uicit. Vitiis uictus est.*

Thomson notes that Prudentius has his chronology wrong here. Prudentius says that Hannibal retreated to Campania, with devastating effects, after he had attacked Rome. The usual account (Livy 23.18) is that Hannibal wintered in Campania in 216 BC after Cannae and only moved against Rome in 211BC. Prudentius also claims that Hannibal's army was undermined by the pleasures of Baiae although this was only developed as a pleasure resort in the late Republic. The point has been taken up by Partoens (2000) who argues that Prudentius has been misled by his reading of Florus. Writing of this period, Florus says:

Cum uictoria posset uti, frui maluit relictisque Roma Campaniam Tarentumque peragraré; ubi mox et ipse et exercitus ardor elanguit, adeo ut uere dictum sit Capuam Hannibali Cannas fuisse. Si quidem inuictum Alpibus, indomitum armis, Campani - quis crederet? - soles et tepentes fontibus Baiae subegerunt. (1.22.21-22)

Partoens points out that the normal chronology is that after Cannae Hannibal wintered in Campania. Florus says that he did this *relictisque Roma* by which he presumably means that Hannibal failed to press home an attack on the city after Cannae. Prudentius takes *relicta* to mean that Hannibal abandoned Rome after failing to conquer it. Thus Partoens makes the case that Prudentius' unique chronology is derived from his mis-reading of Florus.

Florus appears also to be responsible for Prudentius' anachronistic reference to Baiae. Partoens notes that in Seneca (*Ep.* 51.5-7) and Symmachus (*Ep.* 1.47.1) mention is made of the weakening of Hannibal's army while condemning the moral atmosphere of Baiae but it is not said that it was at Baiae that Hannibal's army was undone. Sidonius Apollinaris (*Carm.* 5.342b-346) does connect Baiae with the downfall of Hannibal. Thus we can see that references to Hannibal's undoing in Campania came to be mentioned when writers chose to criticise life at the resort of Baiae, so that eventually the anachronistic link was made between Baiae and Hannibal, although the Symmachus passage shows that not everyone was misled in same way as Florus. The Symmachus passage reads:

Silentii nostri ratio diuersa est, sed unus effectus. Me inedit pontificalis officii cura, te Baiani otii negligentia. Neque enim minus residem facit remissio animi quam occupatio. Nec mirum, si te illa ora totum sibi uindicat, cum ipsum Hannibalem fides certa sit bello inuictum manus dedisse Campaniae. (*Ep.* 1.47.1)

Partoens shows that Florus is the earliest Latin author to connect Hannibal with Baiae and makes a good case to show that Prudentius has derived his skewed chronology from Florus. This is re-inforced by the reference to Tarentum in 748: cf n.748 Tarentum fell to Hannibal in 213 or 212 but was recaptured by Fabius in 209.

Prudentius intends to draw a comparison between Alaric and Rome's greatest foe, Hannibal. He has established that Alaric was a formidable foe in 696-702 who has already devastated parts of Italy. Alaric was more formidable than Hannibal because the

Carthaginian was defeated after his army's effectiveness had been damaged by the pleasures of Baiae. Hannibal had reached the gates of Rome. Now, through the military skill of Stilicho and the advantages of Christianity, Alaric has not been allowed anywhere near Rome (729).

Campania fertilis. Campania is the region of west central Italy. Cicero, amongst others bears witness to Campania's fertility (*Agr.* 2. 35).

748 Fabium This was Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucosus who earned the name Cunctator for his delaying tactics against Hannibal in Campania in 217 BC. In 209 he recaptured Tarentum from the Carthaginians. Livy tells the story (27.15-16). He tells also how when Fabius was asked what should be done with some huge statues of the gods depicted as warriors, he replied that the Tarentines could keep their gods who were clearly angry with them. Livy makes no claim for Jupiter protecting Fabius.

Tarentus Prudentius attributes its recapture to Hannibal's troops being weakened by its pleasures. Partoens (2000 p.346) notes that in no other account of the campaign is it said that Hannibal's men were undermined by the pleasures of Tarentum apart from Florus. Tarentum had the Campanian reputation for soft-living. (Cf. Hor. *S.2.4.34 pectinibus patulis iactat se molle Tarentum*; Serv.A. 3.551: *Tarentum, in quo molles et luxuriosi nascuntur*; Claudian *Cons. Manl.Theod.* 158 *famosum Oebalii luxum pressere Tarenti*). Partoens notes the argument of Stärk (*Kampanien als geistige Landschaft. Interpretationem zum antiken Bild des Golfs von Neapel (Zetemata. Monographien zur klassischen Altertumswissenschaft 93)* München 1995 p.195) where Prudentius' confused chronology and the mention of Baiae are considered to be the only errors he makes in his account of Hannibal in Italy. Stärk says that Tarentum often appears together with

mention of Campania in Latin literature. Thus since Hannibal's army was weakened by its stay in Campania in general it was possible to say it was weakened by Tarentum since it too was notorious for loose living. However, given Partoens' other two connections with features unique to Florus, it seems more likely than not that this reference to Tarentum owes something to him too.

Tarentus is feminine, as it is the name of a city (cf. Gildersleeve and Lodge (1895) § 34).

749 quae dedit...calcare tyrannum There must be an understood *ei* here referring to Fabius. The *OLD* (*do* 15) gives the meaning of to make available, allow, give (time, scope, opportunity etc and provides an example from Terence (*Hec.* 684) *quam longum spatium amandi amicam tibi dedi*. A similar sense is used here.

751 uile est It is unusual to find an elision in the last foot of the hexameter. The use of *uile* three times is very emphatic, as is the later response with *uiua* (756). It is a word that Prudentius uses quite a lot (e.g. *Ps.* 619; *Per.* 6.65; *Per.* 10.77). He links it with gold in *H.* 633-4 where he speaks about the corruption of the *mens bona* (*H.* 629) which *malit adulterium fuluo et se munere uilem/ uendat*. The worthlessness of gold and silver to the Christian occurs also in *Ps.* 526-8.

751-755 Cameron (1970) as mentioned above (n.726) speaks of inscriptions from statues erected in the Roman Forum to commemorate the victories of Honorius and Stilicho. Claudian mentions the statue of Stilicho (*Cons. Stil.* 3 11). Perhaps Prudentius was also thinking here of Claudian himself. In 400, when Claudian was about 30 there was a bronze statue of him erected in the Forum of Trajan (*Claud.B.Get. Praef.* 7; *CIL.* 6.1710). The corruption of statues through time seems to have been a popular theme with Prudentius. He mentions it in book 1 (*C.S.* 1.433-441). However he is also keen that the

statues of the gods should be preserved as works of art (*C.S* 1.502-505). Laws were promulgated by Arcadius and Honorius ordering the preservation of pagan statues as works of art. (Cf. *CTh.* 16.10.15. and n.17-65)

756 princeps Prudentius addresses the emperor, Honorius whom he goes on to call *regnator mundi*. He seems to have forgotten that Arcadius was ruling the eastern part of the empire.

760-1 Symmachus approached the imperial court *sub legati specie* in 384 when he was sent to plead for the pagan cause at the court of Valentinian II at Milan. Prudentius says it was *sub legati specie* presumably because he was not an official ambassador of the Senate but the representative of the pagan party. For discussion of the evidence for Symmachus making an approach in the early fifth century see the introduction above.

763 nostram temptare fidem Claudian also has the phrase *temptare fidem* (*Get.* 87). Claudian uses it to speak of Alaric and how he had hoped to corrupt the loyalty of the Roman army but was himself defeated (at Pollentia). Likewise Prudentius uses it of Symmachus as an enemy of the state (as he sees him). However Prudentius uses *fidem* to mean the Christian faith of Rome and her emperor rather than the loyalty of the soldiers that Claudian speaks of. In a few lines Prudentius will make a connection between being a loyal Christian and being a loyal Roman (816-90). So for him *fides* covers both situations.

764 cui A dative of interest.

765 clausimus On 24 February 391 Theodosius ordered the temples to be closed and sacrifices, both public and private, to be abolished. (*CTH.* 16.10.10 *nemo se hostiis*

polluat, nemo insontem uictimam caedat, nemo delubra adeat, templum perlustrat et mortali opere formata simulacra suspiciat....).

767 Romuleas..... arces Claudian speaks of the golden age of Rome flourishing in *Romuleis arcibus* now that Stilicho guides the young Honorius (*Cons. Stil* 3. 124). Prudentius uses the same phrase in a passage speaking of the Christian faith reigning in the imperial court. This is similar to his use of *temptare fidem* above. There is a slight problem in the text of Claudian in that some read *Romuleis artibus* here but I think the Prudentius reference makes the *arcibus* variant more likely.

770-2 Symmachus' credentials as a legate sent by a soothsayer from the shrine of Jupiter would sound perfectly respectable to pagan ears but then in the next line Prudentius makes the important distinction that this legate was not sent by his country. This would be a difficult concept for anyone raised in the traditional religion of Rome since the shrine of Jupiter on the Capitol was the heart of Rome. Prudentius drives home his point in the rest of l.772 with the statement that *patriae nam gloria Christus*. Christ has replaced Jupiter as the god of Rome. The reading given by Bergman *patriae sua gloria Christus* is rejected by Cunningham in favour of the manuscripts' reading of *nam* which makes good sense whereas *sua* is rather difficult and it is hard to see what reason there is to favour it.

773-909 Reply to Rel.3.10 on the path(s) to truth.

Roma ends her speech and in this next section Prudentius addresses himself to another of Symmachus' arguments: that there are many paths to God and that as all people live under one sky so all worship should be regarded as one. (cf. *Rel.* 3. 10 n. post 780).

Prudentius replies by agreeing with and elaborating Symmachus' point that life and nature are common to all. Prudentius insists that nature is morally neutral and serves all mankind regardless of merit (773-842). However just as there is a world of difference between the barbarian and the Roman so too there is between the pagan and the Christian although they all enjoy the same benefits of nature. Although the same sun shines on a palace and a prison that does not make them the same thing (836-837), so too there is a world of difference between pagan worship and the cult of the one true God. He concludes the section by saying that far from there being many ways to the truth, there is only a single path (843-909). He describes the other, multiple paths of paganism and belief in the rule of chance. Symmachus' point appears to be that since all mankind shares the same world so it shares the same God too and it does not matter how one finds him because all paths must lead the same way in the search for him. Prudentius emphatically rejects this in 820-821.

Post 780 The manuscripts here include a quotation from *Rel.* 3.10

SYMMACHUS: Aequum est quidquid omnes colunt unum putari. Eadem spectamus astra. Commune caelum est. Idem nos mundus inuoluit. Quid interest qua quisque prudentia uerum requirat? Uno itinere non potest perueniri ad tam grande secretum.

783 The same sentiment is in the Gospel of Matthew (5.45) *Ut sitis filii Patris uestri, qui in caelis est, qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos, et pluit super iustos et iniustos*. Gar. also points to the same sentiment in Tertullian (Apol. 41.3 (sc. Deus) *communia uoluit esse et commoda profanis et incommoda suis ut pari consortio omnes et*

lenitatem eius et seueritatem experiremur) and Seneca (*Ben. 4.26.1* *`si deos` inquit `imitaris, da et ingratis beneficia; nam et sceleratis sol oritur et piratis patent maria`*).

784 Unas capit inpius et pius auras. For *unas* cf. n. 611.

786 ..myrmillonis The *myrmillo* or *mirmillo* was a gladiator who was distinguished by his helmet with its fish crest and his Gallic equipment (cf. Paul. ex Fest.s.v. *retiario* p.284)

788-789 Symmachus has spoken only about there being one sky and the same stars for all. Prudentius develops this to speak about the weather being indifferent to the moral worthiness of mankind. This is an interesting development as later Prudentius has to refute the argument of Symmachus that since there has been a famine since the public funding of the cult of Vesta has ceased. Prudentius will point out that there were always famines and the like, as this is just the result of the morally neutral way that nature works. Prudentius is arguing rhetorically as he does elsewhere see the hand of God in natural events. Thus, for example, in the preface to the first book, he speaks of God calming the storm which had enveloped St. Paul's boat (*C.S.1.Praef.10-11 sed cum caerulei proelia gurgitis/ iussisset Domini dextra quiescere*). In the *Hamartigenia* (*H. 216-256*) Prudentius attributes the lack of harmony in nature to original sin. Augustine sees `natural evils` as part of the mystery of existence whose purpose is hidden from us but which have their part to play in the plan of a good God (*Civ.Dei 11.22*). However this poem is generally marked by a lack of emphasis on divine intervention (cf.n.25).

794-5 capax utriusque rei natura Prudentius asserts that nature is morally neutral and is at the service of both the good and the bad.

794 Ergo The short `o` is a characteristic of later Latin although Lav. comments that a short `o` in *ergo* was known since the time of Ovid (e.g. *Her. 5.59 uotis ergo meis, alii rediture, redisti?*).

habet discernere For this use of *habeo* to mean to have the ability or means to do something cf. L.&S *habeo* ll.A.2. An example given is *haec fere dicere habui de natura deorum* Cic. *N.D.* 3.39.93. Lav § 640 says that the meaning here is that of *devoir* and says that this is a use found in the Fathers. He quotes Tert. *Apol 39 Si inimicos ... iubemur diligere, quem habemus odisse?* and says that the use of *habere* and the infinitive is found in Cicero with the sense *pouvoir*. I think the idea of ability rather than obligation is the point here, especially as Prudentius goes on to speak of nature being a servant rather than a judge (797). We do not know whether nature has the ability to make moral judgements but ought not to or whether it is simply incapable of doing so as it is passive in this regard. I think it would complicate Prudentius' world picture more than he would otherwise allow if he thought that nature was a moral force. The point he goes on to make is that God alone makes such judgements (798).

...natura creandis/ se praebet populis.. For the use of the dative of the gerundive to express purpose cf. n. 387.

796 iussa est. Elision in the last foot with a monosyllable at the end.

797 seruit enim mundus, non iudicat The idea that the world exists for the benefit of mankind goes back in Judaism and Christianity to God speaking to Adam and Eve in Genesis (*Gen. 1. 28 Benedixit illis Deus, et ait: Crescite et multiplicamini, et replete terram, et subiicite eam, et dominamini piscibus maris et uolatilibus caeli, et uniuersis animantibus, quae mouentur super terram*).

The *seruit* at the start of this line is echoed in the *seruat* at the end of the next line, in a kind of paranomasia. Lav. (§ 1542) gives other examples of this in Prudentius. (E.g. *Quos feminarum prima primos procreat H.pr.2.*)

801 ueliuolum mare A common epithet for the sea (e.g. Ov.*Pont.* 4.16. 21, Liv. And. ap. Macr. *S.* 6.5 *maria alta velivola*). Vergil has *mare ueliuolum* (*A.* 1.224). This occurs in a passage where Jupiter looks down on the Trojans newly arrived on the shore of Carthage after the storm. He is then addressed by Venus who reminds Jupiter of his omnipotence while begging him to improve the lot of the Trojans. As this passage is a demonstration of the laws of nature set by the *summus naturae Dominus* this phrase may have reinforced that idea.

807 uiuere commune est, sed non commune mereri. Another of Prudentius' lines intended to sound like a proverb. Cf. *ll.* 35, 315, 471. For *mereri* cf. n.122.

808-809 Prudentius gives a list of peoples surrounding the empire and the Romans themselves to give a picture of the whole of humanity.

Daha The Dahae were a Scythian tribe living beyond the Caspian Sea. Cf. Pliny *HN* 6,17,19 § 50 and Vergil *A.* 728 *indomitique Dahae*.

Sarmata The Sarmatians largely ceased to be a threat when Constantine I settled many of them within the empire. They lived east of the river Tanais until 250 BC when they moved West and settled near the Danube. Under Augustus and Nero they were contained and became Roman clients. They fought Rome again in the second and third centuries AD.

Vandalus A people living in Northern Germany in the time of Tacitus (who refers to them as *Vandili* *G.*2) they appear not to have fought the Romans until they crossed the

Rhine on Dec. 31st 406 together with the Suebi and Alans. They spent three years devastating Gaul and then they moved into Spain where in 411 they divided the country between the three groups. They went on to take north Africa where they settled until defeated by Belisarius in 533.

Hunnus The Huns were of Mongolian origin and appeared in Europe in 370 AD when they drove out the Goths who lived near the Euxine sea, forcing them to move into the Roman empire. Ammianus has a famous passage (*R.G.* 31.2) on their way of life. In the early fifth century they moved further into Europe establishing under Attila an empire which stretched from the Rhine to the Ukraine.

Gaetulus The Gaetuli lived in north-west Africa in modern Morocco. They are mentioned by Sallust (*J.* 18) and Vergil (*A.* 5.192).

Garamans Another African tribe but one which lived beyond the Gaetuli, in the interior (Fezzan). Cornelius Balbus, in the time of Augustus and Valerius Festus, in the time of Vespasian, had campaigned against them (Pliny *HN* 5.36-8).

Alamannus A famous Rhineland confederation of tribes, known from the third century AD. They began serious raids on Roman territory after 250. They continued to be a problem for Rome throughout the fourth century.(e.g. Amm. *R.G.*16.2) In the fifth century they settled in Alsace and northern Switzerland.

Saxo. A German tribe who attacked Gaul and Britain in the fourth century AD. Cf. Amm. *R.G.* 27.8.5 and Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 2.255.

Galaula. Orosius (1.94) speaks of these people as the Galaules living in the west of Africa south of the Atlas mountains in Mauritania. He says they used to be known as the

Autololes. Claudian mentions the Autololes as part of the army of the rebel Gildo (*Cons. Stil.* 1. 356) Also cf. Pliny *HN* 5,1,1, §9.

811 nostrum qui continet orbem Bergman notes that Lucan has the phrase *quae totum continet orbem* (*B.C.* 1.110) which is the reading of the majority of Lucan manuscripts. Another reading of the Lucan, favoured by Housman, is *quae totum possidet orbem*. Thus *orbem* may be the only word in common here and even if *continent* is the right reading in Lucan these are two such ordinary words it is difficult to believe that there could have been an allusion intended here. Lucan is speaking of the *populi potentis fortuna* which possesses the whole sea and earth but which could not contain Caesar and Pompey. Prudentius is speaking of the whole world including the non-roman world and an allusion to civil war adds nothing.

812 Addo aliud This is not a new point but a further emphasising of the point that good and bad, Roman and barbarian, all share the same benefits of nature. Prudentius takes it the argument one stage further and says that animals also share the same world but that they are as far different from humanity as the barbarian is from the Roman or the pagan from the Christian.

813 ipso rore. In this sentence *ipso* has the force of 'the same' and one might expect *eidem*. Lav. (§ 474) notes other examples of this phenomenon in Prudentius (*Per.* 2.428, 5.481, *C.* 9.11 and *H.* 126). He says it is a usage found in ecclesiastical Latin, although he gives no other examples, and thinks it may derive from the influence of Greek which uses ὁ αὐτός in both these senses. Plater and White (1926) are of the same opinion as to the cause of the confusion and give examples from the Vulgate (e.g. *ex ipso ore procedit benedictio et maledictio Jac.* 3.10).

814 suis The normal nominative is *sus*. L. & S records this as a form of the nominative only in this passage of Prudentius. Some manuscripts (T) have *sues* which is just as unusual while a few do have *sus* (E) but change the adjective to *sordida* as *spurca sus* would not scan. Metrically, there is nothing to choose between *suis* and *sues* but *suis* is the reading of the older manuscripts such as C (9th cent.) whereas *sues* is found in 10th cent. manuscripts)

818 tantum *StM* Thomson, Lav. and Gar. prefer this reading to *quantum* favoured by Bergman, Cunningham and the rest of the manuscripts The subject of the sentence is the difference between the Roman and barbarian which is then compared to that between a four-legged beast and a two-legged creature, or that between the dumb and speaking. If we follow Bergman and Cunningham this comparison is then extended so that the difference between the Roman and barbarian is then compared to that between a Christian and a pagan. With Thomson the sense changes so that the difference between a Christian and a pagan is likewise compared to that between the two kinds of beasts and the dumb and speaking. I think Thomson, Lav. and Gar. are right here and that *tantum* makes better sense. To say that the difference between a Roman and barbarian is as vast as that between a Christian and a pagan is not so interesting a point to make and *tantum* aligns Roman and barbarian with Christian and pagan the point of comparison for both being the animals and the dumb.

826-28 The work of the Father referred to here must mean the elements as listed in l.782. Prudentius says that these gifts are freely given because they were given by God before the Fall of Adam (*sordesceret Adam*) which caused disharmony throughout nature (cf. *H.* 216-256). This idea goes back to St. Paul (*Rom.* 8.19-22) Although there may be problems

with nature since the Fall the original elements given by God have not been withdrawn.(cf.n. 773-909 for faults in nature.)

835 The idea of the light of the sun entering dark places is regarded by Prudentius as a sign of hope in *Per.* 11. 163-168 in his description of the tomb of the martyr Hippolytus. Gar. points out that this idea is also present in Tertullian (*Spect* 20 *Sane, sol in cloacas defert nec inquinatur*).

837-9 The construction is interesting here. In the first clause there is a future verb which Lav. (§ 594) says is an example of the future used to express a general truth. To illustrate the usage he quotes Cicero (*Tusc.* 3.15) *aegritudo perturbatio est animi; semper igitur ea sapiens vacabit*. However the *illud....quod* construction is notable. I can find no parallel to it.

842 iustitiamque litant The verb *litare* means to sacrifice, especially a favourable sacrifice. Normally it takes as direct object the thing which is offered in sacrifice (e.g. *exta, salsa*). Here Prudentius gives the abstract *iustitia* as the object. This is an unusual usage although there is a precedent in Tertullian (*Paenitentia* 10 *honorem deo*). Later in the poem Prudentius also uses the verb in a slightly strained sense again in 1125 where he speaks of the deaths of wretched men being sacrificed when it would be more natural just to speak of the men being sacrificed rather than their deaths. Here the sense must be those who make justice their sacrifice.

843-46 Prudentius paraphrases Symmachus' argument that there is no single path to God. (*Rel.* 3. 10 *Vno itinere non potest peruenire ad tam grande secretum*.). Cunningham makes clear that it is Symmachus who is being presented here by putting this sentence in

inverted commas which is a help in preventing the reader being confused into thinking this is Prudentius still arguing against Symmachus.

847-909 Prudentius replies to the point made by Symmachus, insisting that there is only a single path to God.

847 Three elisions in the line makes the line stand out as Prudentius begins his rebuttal of Symmachus.

849 simplex. This is one of Prudentius' favourite words. It generally means pure or single. He contrasts what is *simplex* with that which is complex (e.g. l.854 *multifida*). He is fond of describing God as *simplex* (l.239) or the soul that has not known sin (A.909). human beings with their nature divided between what is good and bad, he describes as *non simplex* (Ps.904). Here the contrast is between the way which is *simplex* and lacks error or straying, and the way of paganism which is *anceps*, the basic meaning of which is two-fold but which comes to mean 'uncertain' and eventually 'dangerous'. Thus it is best to translate *simplex* here as single with undertones of pure or undivided.

Gar. points out that Claudian speaks of the path of virtue being long and winding (IV.Cons. Hon. 227 *longis illuc ambagibus itur*) but for Prudentius the path of truth, while it may appear difficult at first, becomes *simplex*.

854 multifida. In 774 Prudentius has said that Symmachus insists on saying that the road to God is *multifidum uariumque*. Prudentius uses this word twice (and nowhere anywhere else in his work) while *simplex* occurs three times in this section as he sets out the choice between his vision and Symmachus'.

858-881 Prudentius now outlines some of the false paths in the search for God. There are three groups: the first consists of riotous cults (858-864), the second those of Egypt (865-

872) and the last that of Fortune (873-879). In *C.S.1* when Prudentius lists the cults for whose restoration Symmachus pleads he lists some of the same ones as here (*C.S.1* 625-631). Thus he mentions Cybele, Bacchus and Isis among others. We must reckon these to be among Prudentius' favourite targets when he attacks paganism. Tertullian also picks out the cults of Bacchus and Isis for attack because they were originally banned by the Roman authorities (*Apol.* 6.7-8) and so cannot be said to represent the ancient religious life of Rome.

858 thyrsigeri Bacchus was depicted carrying a staff (*thyrsus*) decorated with ivy and vine-shoots (cf. Hor. *C.2.19.8*).

Dionysia Bacchi Here Prudentius uses the Greek name for the festival which the Romans also used (cf. Plaut. *Curc.* 5.2.45). The riotous Bacchanalia, introduced from Greece, was forbidden by the Senate in 186 B.C. (cf. Livy 19.8-18). However it must, eventually, have started to be celebrated again. Ovid says that the Liberalia, celebrated on 17th March was feast of Bacchus (*F.3.713*) (For more details cf. Beard, North and Price 1998 pp.91-96.)

859 Saturnalia A festival which began on December 17th and lasted several days during which time the normal social order was reversed in that masters would wait on their slaves, while the toga was abandoned in favour of informal clothes and much time was spent in eating and drinking. While not as licentious as the Bacchanalia it was a time of merry-making and over-turning of normal social conventions and so belongs for Prudentius with these other cults. (Cf. *OCD* Saturnus.)

860-1 Diespiter infans This refers to the ceremonies of Cybele. For the Curetes cf. n. 515. The cult of Cybele was known for its noisy ceremonies as described by Ovid (*F.*

4.179-214 who tells of how the statue of the goddess was carried in procession by her armed eunuch priests some of whom hit drums and clashed cymbals. For the eunuch priests, known as Galli cf. n. 523.

862 Lupercales At the ancient Roman festival, the Lupercalia, celebrated on February 15th a group of young men known as the Luperci ran around the Palatine hill wearing only girdles made from the skin of goats which (together with a dog) had been sacrificed at the Lupercal, which was the traditional site of the cave where Romulus and Remus were said to have been suckled by the she-wolf. As they ran, the Luperci struck any nearby women with strips of goat-skin (cf. Ovid *F.* 2.267-452). The ceremony lasted until 494 when Pope Gelasius abolished it (cf. Gelasius: *Letter against the Lupercalia* Sources Chrétiennes 65 (1960)).

863 Megalesius The Megalesia was the name for the festival of Cybele celebrated on April 4th (cf. Liv. 29.14). The name was derived from Cybele's title Megale Meter, or the Magna Mater. *Caeca responsa* is similar to other phrases used of oracles such as in Cicero *Div.* 50, 115 *Apollinis operta*.

865-872 Prudentius now considers those who worship Egyptian gods.

quadriviis brevioribus Prudentius is talking about those who seek the way to God by shorter crossroads. This is a curious phrase. Presumably it can only mean shorter roads as it is difficult to see how a crossroad can be longer or shorter. This raises the question of how worship of Egyptian gods can be a shorter path to the one God than any other. Porphyry had said that theurgy was an easier path to purification of the soul than philosophy (cf. Aug. *C.D.* 10.27). Theurgy had Egyptian associations as shown in Porphyry's Letter to Anebo, a possibly fictitious Egyptian priest (cf. Smith (1995) p.105),

on matters of theurgy and the reply, the *De Mysteriis* defending it against Porphyry's criticism's written by Iamblichus, in the guise of an Egyptian priest Abammon, meant to be Anebo's superior. Iamblichus claimed that philosophy alone could not unite a man with the gods but that the ritual actions of theurgy were necessary too (*Myst.*2.11). As Augustine discusses the arguments regarding theurgy and especially those of Porphyry in the *City of God* (10.10-11;27-28) such ideas must have been familiar in the Latin West and thus could be the background to Prudentius' mention of Egyptian religion being thought of as a shortcut to union with the gods.

866 holuscula Prudentius claims that Egyptians worship vegetables. It seems that he has taken this idea from Juvenal 15. 1-11. The next line with its quotation from that poem indicates he has the Juvenal passage in mind at this time. Juvenal writes: *o sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis/ numina* (15. 10-11). Ferguson (1979) notes that the Elder Pliny also recorded *alium caepasque inter deos iureiurando habet Aegyptus* (NH.19.32.101) and that Diod. Sic. (1.89) wrote of Egyptians who abstained from lentils, beans, cheese and onions. Juvenal will go on to claim that the Egyptians practise cannibalism but Prudentius does not follow him on this point. The worship of leeks, onions and garlic by the Egyptians also crops up in *Per.* 10 259-60 *adpone porris religiosas arulas/ uenerare acerbum caepe, mordax allium*.

867 porrum et caepe A quotation from Juvenal (15.9), noted by Bergman (p.465), who writes *porrum et caepe nefas uiolare et frangere morsu*. The phrase also occurs in Horace (*Ep.*1.12.21) but Prudentius' line of thought here is more indebted to Juvenal than Horace.

868 serapen The manuscripts read *serapen*. Meyer suggested *senapin* although it does not fit metrically but makes good sense. Although *senapin* does not scan, *serapen* would if it is taken with a short `a` as Prudentius likes to take it (cf.n. 532). Thus, as Cunningham comments, *locus nondum sanatus*. Since *senapin* makes such excellent sense and *serapen* is easily explained by attraction to *Serapis* in the next line I think *senapin* is to be preferred although the normal spelling would be *sinapin*. Gar. mentions an ingenious idea by Verdière (1971). Verdière quotes a passage of Pliny (N.H. 26.62 (9), 95): *Sed inter pauca mirabilis est orchis herba siue serapias*. He thinks that the word was glossed as *serapias* but that once this gloss was made part of the text it was then drawn to

Serapis in the next line to give the reading *serapen*. *Orchin* has the advantage of fitting into the metre. It means a kind of plant, the orchid, which is shaped like the testicles. It is possible that the word was also glossed and replaced if it was thought to be somewhat obscene. It is a very clever solution to the problem. Cunningham thought that this suggestion rendered all discussion of the passage obsolete (Cunningham (1971) 67). My only reservation is that Prudentius does indicate that he is talking about vegetables here (866 *holuscula*) rather than flowers and so I think the problem cannot be said to be resolved

869-872 Roman writers were often scathing of Egyptian religion for the part that animal worship played in it. Although the Romans often assimilated foreign gods into their own pantheon the Egyptian cults retained their own identities when they arrived in Italy. Prudentius says that Isis, Serapis, Thoth (one of his theophanies was as an ape) and Sebek (the crocodile god) were the same as Juno, Laverna and Priapus. Clearly there is no simple correspondence as four Egyptian gods are mentioned and only three Roman. Apuleius shows us that worshippers of Isis thought that she was the goddess who was worshipped as Minerva, Venus, Diana, Proserpine, Ceres, Juno, Bellona as well as others (*M.* 11.5)

869 *grandi Simia cauda* Prudentius is alluding to the *cercopithecus*, the monkey with a large tail which was worshipped by the Egyptians and which Juvenal mentions too (15.4 *effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopithecici*).

870 *Crocodillus* Prudentius follows Juvenal 15 again where this animal is mentioned as worshipped by the Egyptians. Ferguson (1979) refers to Hdt.2, 68-70 and Strabo (17.811-12) for further references. The one creature Prudentius omits from Juvenal's list is the

ibis. At *Per.*10. 256-58 Prudentius lists the monkey, the crocodile, ibis and dog as being considered divine by the Egyptians.

872 Vna superstitio. This may be an allusion to the *Aeneid* (12.817) where the same phrase is found. Bergman (p.465) marks it as such. Juno, while she agrees to abandon Turnus, swears that she never intended Juturna to use weapons to help him against Aeneas. She swears by the Styx which she says is the *una superstitio* by which the gods may make oaths. Juno uses the word in an unusual sense as Prudentius' use is the normal one: some unreasonable religious belief. (For more on the concept of *superstitio* cf. Beard, North & Price (1998) 215-19, 371). However, by using this phrase which marks a high point in the *Aeneid* and using it in its normal sense, Prudentius is stressing how for him paganism is a *superstitio* and taking Vergil's words, although out of context, gives authority to his claim.

Here Prudentius parts company with Juvenal who had berated the Egyptians for their ridiculous religion saying that while whole cities might worship dogs, none of them worships Diana, the 'mistress of the hounds', as Ferguson (1979) points out (p.317). For Prudentius, worshipping Diana would be just as bad as worshipping the gods of the Egyptians, although he concedes it may be less ridiculous, when he says the *error* of the Romans is *non concolor* (872).

873-881 Prudentius' third target is the idea that all is ruled by chance. This, he says, is a path for animals not men who use reason. It is not clear here whether Prudentius is attacking the cult of Fortuna or whether he means the Epicureans. I think the Epicureans are more likely the object of his attack since he says of this path *haec putat esse Deum nullum* whereas Fortuna was venerated as a goddess. Ambrose speaks of Epicureans as if

they were existing at the time he wrote (*Off.*13.47). The evidence for Epicurean activity at the time of Prudentius is not strong. Claudian (*In. Rufin.*112-19) claims to have been attracted to Epicureanism, although this looks as if it is said purely for rhetorical effect. Smith (1995 p. 32) notes that a speech by Himerius (*Or.*48 Colonna 23-4) indicates that courses in Epicureanism (as well as Platonism, Aristoteleanism and Stoicism) were still available in Athens in the 350's but this does not mean that the traditional philosophic schools were still active at this date. Rapisarda (1950) has shown how Prudentius' work reflects the influence of Lucretius especially in terms of structure and vocabulary. However, as we see here, there is no question of Prudentius approving of the doctrines of Epicureanism, although at times he seems to have some sympathy for it.

879 haudquaquam magno discrimine Prudentius has said that the first two paths are virtually the same thing, the only difference being that the first is the worship of the traditional pantheon while the second is the worship of Egyptian gods instead. The third path is different as it has no place for any kind of divinity which can influence the state of things. However Prudentius says that this path is not so far away from the first two. The reason he gives is that because the first two believe in a horde of gods. The contrast comes with Christianity which holds that there is only one God who rules over all. Thus in terms of a lack of a central ruling divinity in the first three paths they can all be said to be the same thing.

880 teritis For Prudentius' use of the plural when debating cf. n.540.

881 portenta For the use of this word in the sense of monsters to refer to Egyptian gods there is a precedent in Cic. *Rep.* 3.9.14 (*multa aliaque portenta*).

882 *Simplicis..uia dux est deus.* Prudentius regularly stresses that the path of truth is *simplex* (cf. ll. 849, 854,). Cf n. 849 above.

884 The hill on the right is a strange detail. Thomson sees this as a reference to *H.* 789ff. In that passage Prudentius speaks of two brothers who take two different paths. The right-hand one is steep, narrow and among brambles, while the other on the left is a path with shady trees, a gentle descent and crosses a wide plain. The first is the way to the stars while the second suddenly turns into bogs. The idea of the path on the right being the path of truth is found elsewhere in Prudentius: in *Per.* 11. 35-8 the martyr Hippolytus urges people to follow the Catholic faith and reject the schism of Novatus (*ib.* 23-4) of which he himself had been a follower. Prudentius presents this as Hippolytus urging people to follow the right-hand path instead of the left with all its windings. In the next few lines we see that here too the path on the right is also difficult and unattractive

885 Gar. draws a comparison here with Matth. 7.13-14 (*Intrate per angustam portam quia lata porta et spatiosa uia est quae ducit ad perditionem et multi sunt qui intrant per eam! Quam angusta porta et arcta uia est quae ducit ad uitam, et pauci sunt qui inueniunt eam!*) However the other parallel he chooses is closer: Seneca *Const.* 1.2 'At ardua per quae uocamur et confragosa sunt.' *Quid enim? plano aditur excelsum? Sed ne tam abrupta quidem sunt quam quidam putant. Prima tantum pars saxa rupesque habet et inuii speciem, sicut pleraque ex longinquo speculantibus abscisa et conexa uideri solent, cum aciem longinquitas fallat, deinde propius adeuntibus eadem illa quae in unum congesserat error oculorum paulatim adaperiuntur, tum illis quae praecipitia ex interuallo apparebant redit lene fastigium.*)

subhorrida L.& S lists this as a *hap. leg.* appearing in Cic. *Sest* 9.21.

889 *multiplici* This picks up and balances the *simplicis* of 1.882

dux daemon The problem is extended in that not only is the choice between the ways of the *duplex iter* but the way of error is now shown to have a guide who is the devil. Occasionally Prudentius' much spoken about paths have guides. For example in *Per.* 11, the former schismatic Hippolytus is now a *dux* for the way of truth whereas as formerly he led people down the path of error (*Per.* 11.35-8).

890 *sophistas* In his list of those whom the devil drags down the wrong path Prudentius includes sophists. He lists them among the rich and those who indulge in divination and astrology. Since there were rich Christians this need not mean that sophists in themselves were evil in the eyes of Prudentius.

By the time of the Second Sophistic, while there could still be an overlap with philosophy which had been a mark of the first sophists (cf. Anderson (1993 133-143), a sophist was a practitioner of declamatory rhetoric (cf. OCD Second Sophistic). Declamatory rhetoric was still alive in the 5th century. It had seen a renaissance in the fourth century (cf. Kennedy (1994 p.242). As such it was a neutral term and part of a normal education.. However for Christians there was a dilemma because the training of a sophist meant acquiring a knowledge of pagan literature.

That there were Christians who practised sophistry is clear since the emperor Julian banned Christians from teaching rhetoric and grammar since sophistry used pagan texts and he said they should only lecture on the Bible. The most famous Christian sophist of the time, Prohaeresius, was granted an exception, apparently because the emperor thought so highly of him (cf. *ib* p.244-45). The Christian Ausonius praised his former teachers of rhetoric without denouncing their art in itself (*Prof*). Augustine in his *De Doctrina*

Christiana, (especially book 4.2) accepted the study of pagan literature as useful for the purpose of acquiring skill in rhetoric.

Yet there was still a lingering suspicion of sophistry among Christians. Jerome complains about sophists (*Ep.* 53.7) saying that they are among the people who think they can interpret the Bible without any formal training.

Prudentius only refers to sophists twice: here and at *A. Prf.* 30, where he paraphrases the view of St Paul that God has chosen what is foolish to overthrow the wise (cf. *I Cor.* 1.27):

idcirco mundi stulta delegit Deus

ut concidant sophistica

This shows that for Prudentius sophistry was linked to pagan wisdom. In the preface to book two of the *Contra Symmachum* (44-66) he has spoken of Symmachus' great eloquence as a danger to his own position. However he does not say that eloquence is bad in itself.

Prudentius' sophists are bearded. All the other references to beards in Prudentius are in the context of paganism (e.g. *A.*200; *C.S.* 1.350; *Per.* 10.272, 1044) and so it is reasonable to assume that the sophists Prudentius has in mind are pagans. The beard was often seen as the mark of the philosopher (*Juv.* 14.12, *Aul. Gell.* 9.2.4). Philosophers and sophists as representatives of pagan culture may both be intended here. Eunapius, an opponent of Christianity in the fourth century, had linked them in his *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*.

From this it is clear that in this passage the bearded sophists that Prudentius lists as being on the devil's path are representatives of pagan learning.

892-895 Prudentius gives a run through some of the typical Roman methods of divination. He mentions the *haruspex* interpreted prodigies and inspected the entrails of sacrificed animals. He also speaks of augury and the Sibylline books which were also used for official state divination. He includes magic arts and astrology, which were private matters, in this collection of pagan enticements to lead the rich and philosophers down the wrong paths.

892 et uolucrum linguis. Bergman (p.465) says that two passages of Vergil are recalled by this phrase: A.3.361 *et uolucrum linguas* and A. 10.177 *linguae uolucrum*. Both passages are about seers interpreting bird song and the stars, in the first case by Helenus and in the second by one Asilas. The Vergilian echo adds nothing more than a certain recollection of the apparatus of the soothsayer as recalled in the *Aeneid* passages.

893 Sibyllae The Sibylline books, housed in the temple of Palatine Apollo by Augustus, were destroyed by Stilicho (cf. Rut. Nam. 2.52: the only source for this deed). Presumably this was in a fit of Christian zeal, but Christians seem to have been quite well disposed to these books as they believed that they foretold the coming of Christ (cf. Aug. *Civ.Dei.* 18.23). A reference to the Sibyl even got into the Roman liturgy in the *Dies Irae* of the Requiem Mass (*teste David cum Sibylla*). Prudentius is perhaps echoing Stilicho's known view in speaking so disparagingly of these books.

896 Cernis Prudentius reverts to the second person singular and so has changed back to addressing Symmachus rather than his imaginary crowd of pagans he often addresses with the second person plural (cf. n.540).

una uia All the different pagan cults are revealed to be one path of error with many branches.

est Although this appears to be an indirect question and so one would expect the verb to be in the subjunctive, it is of a type of expression where the main verb is to do with seeing and then what follows looks like an indirect question but is more of a parataxis. For examples cf. Vergil A. 6.771 *quantas ostendant aspice uiris*; 6.779 *uiden, ut geminae stant uertice cristae*. However late Latin is not averse to the indicative in an indirect question and examples can be found in Prudentius himself e.g. H. 486 *si nescit quis lapis ille est*.

901 ite procul Prudentius switches to the plural again after addressing his opponent in the singular a few lines before (896 *Cernis*). I think the clue to this switching between plural and singular is that Prudentius is addressing Symmachus as the leader of the pagan faction and so refutes his points addressing him in the singular but addresses all the pagans now and again when making more general points (cf.n.540). He uses the plural for the rest of this concluding section (down to 908).

902 plebs dei The expression *plebs Dei* is an early Christian term for the Church. The idea is found in 1 Peter 2.10 *Qui aliquando non populus, nunc autem populus Dei*. The term *plebs* meaning the lower classes became in late Latin a synonym for *populus* as meaning the whole nation (cf. *Vulg. Luc. 2.32 gloriam plebis tuae Israel*).

903-906 The way of error is the way of darkness for Prudentius while the way of truth is the way of light. This is not a theme invented by Prudentius but is very common in the New Testament: e.g. *Vulg. Ioh. 12.35 Dixit ergo eis Iesus: Adhuc modicum lumen in uobis est. Ambulate dum lucem habetis, ut non uos tenebrae comprehendant; et qui ambulat in tenebris, nescit quo uadat*. Solmsen (1965) 252 lists some of Prudentius' other use of this theme.

906 simplex Cf. n. 849

907-909 Gar. notes that a connection between Faith and Hope has already been made by Prudentius at 120-128.

908 ueniunt A somewhat rare but not unknown use of *uenire* to mean reach or attain. For an example cf. Cic.*Fam.*11.24.2 *dum tibi litterae meae ueniunt*.

909 nec currunt pariter capta et capienda uoluptas Apart from an example of the gerundive with future sense, this line is notable as Prudentius brings a section to an end with a striking turn of phrase. It is *uoluptas* that is on offer but that which has been taken is not to be compared with that which is to come in heaven. The use of *uoluptas* may seem odd for the joys of heaven as we might think that the word is more closely associated with earthly joys rather than spiritual. There is some justification for this viewpoint in Prudentius himself. For example at C. 1.93-5 we read *aurum, uoluptas, gaudium/opes, honores, prospera/ quaecumque nos inflant mala*. In C.6.23-4 he writes, in speaking of sleep, *ut temperet laborem/ medicabilis uoluptas*. *Voluptas* is thus an essentially neutral idea in Prudentius and can refer to either sensual or spiritual joy. In this there is a Christian precedent in Lactantius' discussion of *uoluptas* (*Inst.*6.20-23) where amid a description of the dangers of various kinds of *uoluptas*, he concedes that there is a *uoluptas*, which is the friend of virtue, in singing the praises of God. He writes:

Itaque si uoluptas est audire cantus et carmina, dei laudes canere et audire iucundum sit. Haec est uoluptas uera quae comes est et socia uirtutis (*Inst.*6.21.9-10).

Cf. Evenepoel (1993 41-42).

Post 909 The manuscripts all have an extract from *Rel.* 3.11 and 15-17 here.

SYMMACHUS: Quanto commodo aerarii uestri uestalium uirginum praerogatiua detracta est? Sub largissimis imperatoribus denegatur quod parcissimi praestiterunt. Honor solus est in illo uelut stipendio castitatis. Vt uitae earum capiti decus faciunt, ita insigne ducitur scaerdotii uacare muneribus. Nemo me putet tueri solam causam religionum. Ex huius modi facinoribus orta sunt cuncta humani generis incommoda. Honorauerat lex parentum uestales uirgines ac ministros deorum uictu modico iustisque priuilegiis. Stetit muneris huius integritas usque ad degeneres trapezitas qui ad mercedem uilium baiulorum sacrae castitatis alimenta uerterunt. Secuta est hoc famis publica et spem prouinciarum omnium messis aegra decepit. Non sunt haec uitia terrarum. Nihil inputemus austris. Nec rubigo segetibus obfuit, nec auena fruges necauit. Sacrilegio annus exaruit. Necesse enim fuit perire omnibus quod religionibus negabatur. Quid tale proai pertulerunt cum religionum ministros honor publicus pasceret?

910-916 Restatement of Rel.3.11-13,15-17

910-12 Prudentius highlights the beginning of a new section with much alliteration.

legati Cf. n l.17 & 770-2

911 Palladiis..focis Cf. n. 544 for background to the Palladium. Since the presence of the Palladium had been understood to be the key to Troy's safety, so for the Roman mind failure to honour the Palladium by abolition of sacrifice in the temple of Vesta could not be good for the city.

stipis Symmachus alleges that the funds formerly used for the Vestals' upkeep has now been taken by the money-changers to hire porters. (*Rel.3.15 stetit muneris huius integritas usque ad degeneres trapezitas, qui ad mercedem uilium baiulorum sacra*

castitatis alimenta uerterunt) Matthews (1975 p.204 n.2) notes that some have assumed this to be a reference to the imperial transport system. The Theodosian code (2.27) uses the word *baiulus* to refer to a letter-carrier and so it could be the imperial postal system that is referred to here.

Especially important for the pagan outlook was the notion that state funding was necessary if a religious rite was to be valid. Zosimus' *New History* mentions the occasion when Theodosius stopped state funding for pagan rites. He claims that senators at Rome complained that without such funding the rites themselves would not be valid (Zosimus 4.59.3). Divine aid was given to the state if the state itself paid for the religious rites.

912 castisque choris Thomson (1953), p.78 n.a, has a note referring to the choruses of boys and girls referred to by Horace (C. 1.21;4.6,29ff C.S. 5-8). Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) in their commentary on Horace C. 1.21 (p.253) give a lot of evidence for choruses of boys and girls at shrines.

913 Vestales..... ignes Vesta was the Roman goddess of the hearth. The sacred fire in her temple signified the permanence of Rome. If the fire went out it was taken to be evidence of the impurity of one of the virgins who was then entombed alive (Plin. *Ep.*4.11). The virgins served the cult for a minimum of thirty years. In 382 Gratian abolished state-funding for the upkeep of the virgins as part of his offensive against state paganism. The cult was abandoned in 394.

914-16 Symmachus makes the following claim regarding the abolition of the state subsidies for the Vestals and other pagan priests: *secuta est hoc factum fames publica et spem prouinciarum omnium messis aegra decipit. Non sunt haec uitia terrarum, nihil*

imputemus austris, nec rubigo segetibus obfuit, nec aduena fruges necauit: sacrilegio annus exaruit. (Rel. 3.15-16).

914 steriles frugescere rarius agros An echo of Vergil (A.3. 141 *steriles exurere Sirius agros*) picked up by Bergman (p.465). The Vergil passage concerns the landing of the Trojans in Crete, when Anchises leads them there, having misunderstood the oracle of Delphi. They are just settling down when plague breaks out. Sirius, the dog-star, is said to be responsible for the fields being barren. If the reader makes the link with Vergil from this line it would remind him that there had been *steriles agros* even in the days of Aeneas and that thus this had nothing to do with the termination of subsidies to the Vestal virgins.

rarius] **parcius** *t ut vid., M rarios Q* Cunningham (1971) 67 points out that some have preferred *parcius*, notably Thraede, on the grounds that it echoes Symmachus' *Rel. 3.11 sub largissimis imperatoribus denegetur, quod parcissimi praestiterunt*. However, as Cunningham points out, the passage that Prudentius is addressing is *Rel. 3.15 secuta est hoc fames publica et spem prouinciarum omnium mesis aegra decipit*. He reasonably concludes that *parcius* may have been introduced into the text as a gloss on the less common *rarius*. The presence of *parcissimi* in the passage of Symmachus which is inserted after 909 in many manuscripts may have influenced the choice of word.

917-1063 Reply to Rel.3.15-17

Prudentius now addresses himself to Symmachus' claim that abandonment of this funding has led to crop failures as the gods are angry. He reverses Symmachus' order here, so that he talks about the Vestals last as this allows him to move into a discussion of the gladiatorial games and the appeal for their abolition which ends the poem.

Prudentius begins by asking whether there has been any notable famine recently (917-950). Then he suggests that there have always been good and bad years for the harvest and that this has nothing to do with divine intervention (951-1000). From this he moves on to ask why, if the gods really are angry, then why do they not just attack the fields of Christians and to point out that even where pagan agricultural cult objects have been overthrown, there is still a good crop (1001-1015). He ends the section by saying that it is more important to cultivate the soul than the ground and uses the parable of the sower to bring these themes together (1016-1064).

917-20 When Prudentius wonders which famine Symmachus could be referring to we run up against the difficulty of the historical context of the poem. Symmachus' appeal was written in 384. Prudentius wonders what present famine Symmachus could be referring to. Does this mean that Prudentius is replying to Symmachus as if he also was writing in 384? Given the references to the battle of Pollentia this cannot be so. So is this evidence that there was a renewed appeal by Symmachus for the restoration of the altar with perhaps a re-issuing of *Rel.3*? Symmachus gives evidence of later food shortages in Rome after 384 in his letters. *Ep.* 6.14 written in 396 speaks of a *defectus annonae* and *ep.* 6. 18 of 395-398 also refers to *defectu alimentorum* but there is nothing to suggest that 402 was a bad year. I think Prudentius is making a general point that there have not been continual famines since the abolition of state subsidies to the Vestal Virgins. And we cannot see this passage as evidence of a renewed appeal by Symmachus in 402. Ambrose concedes that there had been the food shortages Symmachus refers to, but says

that the next year things had returned to normal and that such fluctuations were nothing unusual (*Ep.* 18.21 *Quis ergo tam nouus humanis usibus uices stupeat annorum?*).

918 Triptolemus A son of Celeus, king of Eleusis, who, being taught by Demeter, was regarded as the inventor of agriculture (cf. Ovid *F.* 4.550-560).

922 stagnare This is normally an intransitive verb but a transitive use similar to the one here is found in Tacitus (*A.* 1.76 *Tiberis plana urbis stagnauerat*) and Ovid (*M.* 15. 269 *quaeque sitim tulerant stagnata paludibus ument*).

921-36 Prudentius has an extended rhetorical section on the state of the Nile. Rome had been supplied with grain from Egypt since 30 BC. However, with the founding of Constantinople, Egypt's grain went exclusively to the new city while Rome relied now only on Africa. Thus the state of the Nile would have been of no significance to Rome in the fourth century. Claudian knew this. In the *De Bello Gildonico* he gives a brief history of Rome's corn supply (which Gildo in 397, in Africa, was threatening to withhold). He says that Egypt's corn-supply went to the new city of Constantinople:

cum subiit par Roma mihi diuisaque sumpsit

aequales Aurora togas, Aegyptia rura

in partem cessere nouae. spes unica nobis

restabat Libyae, quae uix aegreque fouebat (*Bell. Gild.* 60-4)

However, there may have been an occasional supply from Egypt in times of emergency. Symmachus speaks of Rome waiting for Egyptian grain in 384 after the famine of the previous year (*Rel.* 9 10 *Hanc (sc. classem) uero in Tiberinis ostiis mixtus populo senatus excipiet. Venerabimur tamquam sacras puppes, quae felicia onera Aegyptiae frugis*

inuexerint). Rickman (1980) seems to take this passage of Prudentius as an example of Rome looking for grain from Egypt in a time of emergency (p. 201 n.17).

921-2 Nilum.... Canopi Bergman (p.465) sees here an echo of Vergil's *gens fortunata Canopi /accolit effuso stagnantem flumine Nilum* (G.4.287). The Vergil passage comes in a description of how bees are produced from the carcasses of bulls and makes mention of the Nile as this process happens in Egypt. The Nile is depicted as making Egypt green. Thus Prudentius uses Vergil's picture of the fertility of the Nile to back his own argument that there is no food shortage in the empire.

Pharios Pharus was an island near Alexandria, on which was built the famous lighthouse, and so here it simply means Egyptian (cf. L.& S. *Pharus* 2).

923 sicco ...flumine There is a conditional sense here with this ablative. "If the river was dry...."

925 nec Pelusiaca...paludis Pelusium was an Egyptian city at the eastern mouth of the Nile. There were salt-pans in the area. (Cf. *OCD* Pelusium.) It is now Tell el-Farama. There is an echo of the *Georgics* (1.228) here. Vergil is talking of the right time to plant certain crops and here speaks of the Pelusian lentil. Prudentius speaks of Pelusian marsh-land. There is not much in common in the passages except that this reference to the *Georgics* 1 re-inforces the picture of the fertile land.

926 arcano ...operto An *opertum* is a secret place so to call it *arcanum* too is an example, noted by Lav (§ 1574) of a pleonasm, which sometimes gives extra emphasis to an idea or other times just seems rather clumsy. It is doubtful that *arcano* adds much to our understanding here.

928 ripas This must, unusually, mean shores rather than river-bank as it would be strange to talk of a river running along the river-banks of another river.

929 Indos Prudentius is talking of the Nile going back on its course (*refugus*) and if it did this it would end up in Ethiopia. *Indos* could also mean Indians but that would make the geography difficult. Mynors (1990) notes that ancient authors “sometimes write as though the two peoples inhabit a continuous tract of land from south to east (as we would term it) of the Mediterranean world, and are not always particular which name they use” (n.291-3). He gives an example from Ovid where Andromeda is at one time called Indian (A.A. 1.53) and another Ethiopian (M.4.669).

The mention of Ethiopians shows a similarity with Vergil's Georgic 4.292 although Vergil's Nile is not running backwards but comes from Ethiopia.

935-6 An echo of Claudian's *uestit iter comitata seges* (Rapt. 1.190) noted by Bergman (p.465). Claudian is describing how Ceres travels in her chariot and as she passes her path is covered by sprouting stalks and crops. Again we have an image of fertility, although a little more complex, as Prudentius is attacking the idea that Ceres is offended by the loss of support to the Vestals. This Claudian image suggests that Ceres is the source of fertility in nature.

crinitisagris The comparison between hair and plants of various kinds is very common but more often with *comae* than *crinis* : e.g. Cat. 4.12 *comata silua*. The idea goes back as far as Homer who compares the leaves of a tree to hair (*Od.* 23.195).

936 aequor This word is most commonly used to mean the sea but here it cannot mean that and so just means an even level surface.

937-43 Prudentius reviews the traditional suppliers of grain to Rome and asks whether they are experiencing any shortages. These were Egypt and Africa, as mentioned above, as well as Sardinia and Sicily.

939 mittere.....in pastum An example of the use of *in* and the accusative to denote purpose or destination (cf. Gildersleeve and Lodge (1953) § 418.1 (a) and L.& S. in II.2)

940 Leontini A town on the east of Sicily. Gar points to Cic. *Verr* 2,1-7 for evidence of the abundance of the Sicilian grain crop.

941 Lilybeo ex litore Lilybaeum was a promontory on the south of Sicily with a town of the same name.

942 nec horrea rumpat An echo of Vergil's *illius immensae ruperunt horrea messes* (*G.* 1.49). The *Georgics* speaks of a successful farmer whose granaries are bursting with produce. Prudentius imitates this expression as a way of saying that normally the granaries at Rome are full to bursting. This phrase is later copied by Sidonius (1.6) who writes *frugibus rupta congestis horrea*.

944-50 A series of rhetorical questions asking whether the food supply of the empire is in a desperate state. This takes up Symmachus' remark about Dodonean acorns, illustrating the plight of the populace during the famine. (*et rursus ad Dodoneas arbores plebis rusticae inopia convolauit* (*Rel.* 3. 16). Ambrose takes up the theme when he speaks of the populace being forced to eat the acorns of Chaonia (in the north-west of Epirus) (*Ep.* 18. 17 *Propterea Chaonia frugem glande mutant, rursus in pecudum pastus et ad infelicis uictus alimenta reuocati*). Both Chaonia and Dodona were linked in the ancient mind with acorns and acorns were taken to be the food people ate before agriculture was discovered. Vergil speaks of the *Chaoniam glandem* (*G.* 1.8) being replaced with crops by

Ceres, as does Claudian (*Rapt. Pros.* 3.47 (*Chaonio statui gentes auertere uictu*). Dodona also occurs in this context in Vergil (*G.*1.147-49). Symmachus' point is thus that neglect of the ancient gods has caused them (or Ceres in particular) to revoke their gift of agriculture. Prudentius ignores this Epirus theme and has his acorns sent from Sardinia. Gar. notes that Prudentius takes the three areas that he has mentioned as suppliers of grain to Rome and asks whether they now send the type of foodstuffs associated with times of famine and primitive times.

945 auulsas.....herbas Gar. notes that this is found in Vergil (*A.* 3.649-50 *uulsis pascunt radicibus herbae*). Achemenides tells Aeneas and his companions how he has had to survive on food he found in the woods while hiding from the Cyclops.

946 quernas glandes The *Georgics* (1.305) speaks of *quernas glandes*, as one of the things one collects to store up for the winter. Mynors (1990 p.70) notes that these were stored to feed pigs whose favourite food they were. Bergman points out this reference (p.465).

947 corna.... lapidosa Gar. notes that Vergil speaks of *lapidosa....corna* (*G.* 2.34, *A.* 3.649). Mynors (1990) p.105 explains that it is a small red fruit with a large stone which made for a poor diet but was often preserved for winter use.

949 gradibus uacuis The places from which the food-dole was given out were known as *gradus*. The *Codex Theodosianus* (14.17.3) has a law of April 4th 368 insisting that the distribution of bread be at the *gradus* (*Vniuersi panem gradilem de gradibus adipiscantur neque cuiquam haec aut deferatur aut inponatur iniuria, ut de pistrino accipiat*). Tengström (1974) pp.82-84 discusses what kind of a building a *gradus* was and concludes that it was a tall building, consisting of a series of ledges, rather like a theatre.

Prudentius' description of the *gradus* in *C.S.* 1. 582 (*panis... gradibus dispensus ab altis*) is one of his key pieces of evidence.

950-55 Prudentius asserts that the food-supply in the empire is working very well and that the provinces are fertile. Tengström (1974) in his survey of the Roman corn-supply of the late fourth century, concludes: "I think that Prudentius is, on the whole, quite correct in his judgement of the situation. Famines had occurred many times before in the long history of the city of Rome. The remarkable thing is, however, that these famines were comparatively few. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to use a certain famine in anti-Christian propaganda. I think this fact illustrates the relative regularity with which the corn-supply of Rome was managed until as late as A.D. 400."

950 Ianiculi mola That Prudentius knew about the mills on the Janiculum is evidence of his personal acquaintance with the city. For more on this theme cf. Cerri (1963) 314.

953 annona P.Clodius Pulcher, as tribune, established in 58 BC a free distribution of grain to the needy male citizens of Rome. They became known as the *plebs frumentaria*. Septimus Severus added free olive oil at the end of the second century AD. and Aurelian added free pork and wine in the 270's while the monthly grain distribution he changed to a daily bread distribution.

publica *re* is presumably understood as the only use of *publica* as a substantive is to mean a public woman (Sen. *Ep.* 88.37).

955-964 Ewald (150-53) speaks of this as the Ceres episode and sees Prudentius much indebted to Ovid in this section. However there have been echoes of Ceres already from the *Georgics* in the passages just discussed above. There are no exact verbal parallels with Ovid but there is a similarity in the line of thought. For example the idea of betrayal

or deception is present in both sections. The prayers of the farmer in Prudentius are betrayed by the *sterilis stipularum silua* (964) while in Ovid Ceres, in her anger over the loss of Proserpine, asks the fields to betray their trust (*M.* 5.480). In the *Fasti* Ovid tells of how the prayers of the farmer were often betrayed by the crops in the time of Numa until the king offered sacrifice to Earth (*F.* 641-72). Ovid writes: *saepe Ceres primis dominum fallebat in herbis* (*F.* 645). In the *Ars Amatoria* (1.450) the lover is told to pretend to make promises to the girl but not do so and this is compared to the field which cheats the farmer of his crop (*sic dominum sterilis saepe fefellit ager*). This quotation shares *sterilis* and *fefellit* with Prudentius and he may be alluding to it. Its purpose would be to show that the deceiving crop is proverbial and thus this fits in with his sentiment that crop failure is *nil mirum nec nouum*.

956-973 Prudentius reflects on how nature varies in its fertility but says this has nothing to do with the gods and that this happened, he presumes, even before the cult of Vesta began, or before even Troy or Athens were built. (These were the cities where the cult of Vesta began). We can imagine that a pagan would reply that famines may well have happened before the cult of the Vestals was established but through this cult mankind now had a way of averting such famines. It is strange that Prudentius does not rather say that famines occurred even when the cult of Vesta was practised. Great famines were known to have happened at Rome (e.g. 67 BC and 5-9 AD cf. *OCD* famine) but for a variety of reasons, crop failure being only one possibility. (Others were war, storms at sea, speculation by grain importers, pirates and plague at the place of production.)

The same complaint had been dealt with earlier by Arnobius cf. Arnobius 1.13.1-3:

“Christianorum, inquiunt, causa mala omnia di serunt et interitus comparatur ab superis frugibus”. - Rogo, cum haec dicitis, non calumniari uos improbe in apertis conspiciatis manifestisque mendaciis? Trecenti sunt anni ferme, minus uel plus aliquid, ex quo coepimus esse Christiani et terrarum in orbe censi: numquid omnibus his annis continua fuerunt bella, continuae sterilitates, pax nulla in terris, nulla protinus uilitas aut abundantia rerum fuit? Hoc enim primum efficiendum est ei qui nos arguit, perpetuas et iuges calamitates fuisse has, numquam omnino respirasse mortalia et sine ullis, ut dicitur, feriis multiplicium formas sustinuisse discriminum.

In C.3., the hymn before a meal, Prudentius speaks of how the produce of the earth is provided in abundance for Christians to eat without any mention of crop failures (e.g. C.3. 51 *fundit opes ager ingenuas*).

957 tabidus aër This would seem to be derived from Lucretius' *morbidus aër* (DRN. 6. 1097) which comes in the same position in at the end of a line and would recall Lucretius passage on the origin of pestilence. There is a curious similarity in tone between Prudentius and Lucretius here as Prudentius speaks of pestilence in an impersonal way. He says it is the result of nature not being immortal (996) and so can be expected. Unlike Ovid, he does not see pestilence as a sign of divine displeasure.

957-58 The Lucretian echo continues with the mention of *nubes* as the word occurs in the next line of Lucretius too but they perform a different function as Lucretius only refers to them as a simile for how diseases spread. Prudentius offers a more scientific account of the origin of pestilence blaming it on the sun shining through thin clouds when the air is *tabidus* which prevents the spring rain falling.

960 fruge noua et uiridi Ovid speaks of young shoots being blighted now by too much sun and then by too much rain. (*M.* 5.482-83) Cf. Ewald (151).

963-64 inrita uota/ agricolae sterilis stipularum silua fefellit. Ambrose writes: *Re uera quando ante uacuis auenis seges auari uota lusit agricolae?* (*Ep.* 18.17). Ambrose's point is the same as Prudentius': these things have always happened. Prudentius omits the idea of the farmer being greedy, maybe because it implies some guilt on the farmer's part and a divine judgement on that whereas he insists these things have nothing to do with divine intervention. It is more significant to see him omit this idea when we consider the echo here of Vergil (*G.* 1.47) *illa seges demum uotis respondit auari/ agricolae* which is noted by Ewald (p.151).

inrita uota Ovid writes *inrita decepti uota colentis erant* (*F.* 4.642) when he speaks of the situation in agriculture before the sacrifice by Numa to the Earth (cf. Ewald *ib.*). He also has the same line at *A.* 3.10.34 in a poem about Ceres which tells how agriculture declined while Ceres pursued her love for Iasius. Again we see Prudentius has Ovid very much in mind here. Prudentius' farmer is deceived by the crop of straw: Ovid's is deceived because his work has not been rewarded by a good crop and in the *Amores* we get a further reason for this; Ceres was inattentive. Thus the pagan gods could neglect their worshippers despite their worship of them. This point from the *Amores* gives Prudentius more ammunition against Symmachus' simple equation of worship of the gods with a good harvest.

Steriles.....siluae are found in the *Georgics* (*G.* 2.440) (cf. Ewald (*ib.*)). Vergil says that even woodland which produces no fruit still has many uses for mankind in building

houses and ships and other items. Prudentius' *silua* is of straw and he says nothing positive about it: it only serves to show that the prayers of the farmer have been useless.

fefellit Symmachus had included an element of deception too. He had written: *spem prouinciarum omnium messis aegra decepit*. He added: *Non sunt haec uitia terrarum* (*Rel.* 3.15-16). Prudentius makes quite clear his argument that these crop failures were due to *uitia terrarum* and not to any divine intervention.

965-75. Prudentius pushes home his point that pestilence is a design fault in the earth rather than divine punishment although his argument is rather difficult to follow. There is a firm rebuttal of Symmachus with *his.....ager uitii corruptus* as Symmachus has said *Non sunt haec uitia terrarum* (*Rel.* 3. 16).

966-72 Prudentius says the earth was subject to these failings even before the cult of Vesta began in Troy and Athens. At this point one could imagine Symmachus saying that that is his point too: with the cult of Vesta the crops have been safeguarded. Prudentius' point is presumably that these blights occurred even after the cult of Pallas was instituted: they are more ancient than the pagan gods and are part of the nature of things.

966 Palladium cf. n.544-46

968 conductis.....fabris The workmen were Poseidon and Apollo whom Laomedon later refused to pay. The story is found in Homer (*Il.* 21.441-57).

973 elementa Here *elementa* seems to mean the weather as explained in the following section where there are examples of *antiqui errores* of the *elementa* which all involve unseasonal weather. It is used with the same meaning at 804 and also at *Per.* 3.184 and *H.* 237 and elsewhere.

976-988 This section describes the failings of nature which damage food production. Prudentius says that this is just the way things are and thus by implication, nothing to do with the gods or God. The sentiment is reminiscent of Lucretius (5. 195-221) when he argues that the world was not designed by the gods for mankind as so much is unsuitable about it, although there are no verbal echoes of the passage in Prudentius. Prudentius makes no attempt in this passage to attribute the imperfections of nature to the Fall although he gives an exhaustive account of the results of the Fall on nature elsewhere (H.216-56). Nor is there any Christian equivalent of Vergil's advice to the farmer: *in primis uenerare deos* (G. 1.338). Thus we can say that Prudentius' aims here are rhetorical. This is especially seen to be the case when this passage is compared to others such as *Per.*10.941-945 where he speaks of how God can change the laws of nature at will since he is their creator.

antiquis erroribus These *errores* are *antiqui* because they have existed as long as the world. They are synonymous with *his uitiiis* mentioned in 965. This phrase recurs later in a different context: at 1007 we learn that *antiquus error* was accustomed to make a god (*Terminus*) out of the boundary stone of a field. In this context the phrase refers to the faults in nature but it is striking that the same phrase is used later to speak of pagan worship. The only conclusion to be drawn is that somehow both the problems in nature and pagan worship are linked in Prudentius' mind. He must see them both as characteristic of the natural state of things and problems which the Christian has to learn to deal with.

976/985 segetem rubigo/ tribuli.... carduus horrens The vocabulary here recalls *Georgics* 1.150-59 (cf. Ewald p.152). Vergil only uses *carduus* in one other place

(E.5.39) but other vocabulary in common (*rubigo*, *tribuli*, *horrens*,) points to the Georgics passage as being more of a model here. In that passage Vergil says that Ceres taught mortals how to grow crops after their supply of acorns and strawberries ran out, but that soon afterwards mankind found that they had to deal with mildew (*rubigo*), caltrops (*tribuli*) and thistles (*carduus*) and which could only be overcome by hard labour (G.1.155-56). There was, of course, the festival of Robigalia on April 25th (Ovid F.4.901ff), to pray that the crop might be free of mildew, but Vergil here only talks about the labour involved in agriculture and so the allusion here re-inforces Prudentius' picture of the vulnerability of crops to pests and weeds in all ages, even allowing for the cult of Ceres. It is worth noting that Symmachus has said *nec rubigo segetibus obfuit, nec avena fruges necauit. sacrilegio annus exaruit* (Rel. 3.16) and so in 976 where he writes *nunc consumit edax segetem rubigo maligni* Prudentius is offering a direct attack on Symmachus' thinking.

983 superfit A rare word mainly found in Plautus e.g. Ps. ll. 455-56 *erum saluto primum, ut aequomst; postea, si quid superfit, uicinos impertio*.

989-1000 Prudentius compares the ills of nature with those suffered by the human body saying that as they both are perishable then it should come as no surprise that they both are subject to disease. Thus he uses the example of sickness in the body as a reminder that since the body knows decay so we should not be surprised to find the same principle at work in nature. Prudentius has adapted into Christian terms the idea of flux in nature put forward by Pythagoras in Ovid (M. 15.199-258), where the development of the human body from birth to death is compared to the changes in nature. For a summary of

ancient views of the link between the macrocosm and microcosm, cf. Wright (1995 56-74).

991 excessu moderaminis A tortuous way of expressing the idea of illness.

994 de nihilo It is a frequently recurring aspect of Prudentius' polemic that he speaks of the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Three times in this book he speaks of created matter being made out of nothing and returning to it (131 and 243) cf. n.243.

996 nec natura caret uitio. As nature is not immortal and will one day end, so being mortal it shares the weakness of mortal things which includes imperfections of one kind or another from which natural disasters arise. This Christian view of nature is different to pantheistic pagan views which held that the universe was immortal such as was the belief of the Neoplatonists. (Cf. Wallis (1972) p.102.)

1000-1014 This section begins by asking why the gods have not simply singled out the farms of Christians for retribution, as they were responsible for the ceasing of public payments to the Vestals, and goes on to point out that there is no such blight on Christian farms even though the pagan cult-objects in the fields stand unused.

1002 ab infido.....mundo Prudentius restates his belief that a *pestis* does not come from the gods but from the nature of the world which is untrustworthy and which is just as likely to provide abundant crops or to make farmers frustrated by its behaviour (997-1000).

1003 Christicolum This word is coined by Prudentius and occurs sixteen times in his work where it is simply a synonym for a Christian (e.g. *Per.3.28 Christicolasque cruenta iubet tura cremare*) although it does occur elsewhere in the context of agriculture (*C. 3.51-57 esp. 56-57 haec opulentia Christicolis/ seruit et omnia subpeditat*). He does also

use *Christianus* nine times so *Christicola* is his preferred choice of word. Here he has a contracted form of the genitive plural.

agellos In Cicero (*N.D.3.35 minora dii neglegunt, neque agellos singulorum nec uiticulas persequuntur*) this word also appears in the context of whether the gods interfere with the small matters of life but it would be unusual to find a reference to Cicero in Prudentius.

1004 stata] statuta E, haec MO hec D Bergman and Cunningham both choose *stata* here. *Statuta* is impossible metrically. MO and D choose *haec* instead which fits the metre but Bergman and Cunningham are right to take *stata* as the correct reading as it is the more difficult reading as opposed to the rather bland *haec*. *Stata* is found in such phrases as *stata sacrificia* (Cic.Mil. .45) or *stata sacra* (Ov. F. 2.528) so while there appears to be no precedent for *stata dona* it fits in well with the other similar phrases concerning religious duties of the state. Thus the meaning is `the appointed gifts`.

1006 manum] manus EMO The plural is preferred by these three manuscripts, although Cunningham does not record this reading in E. It fits the line and could be the right reading but more manuscripts prefer the singular.

lapis The Romans marked the boundary of a field with a stone. February 23rd was the festival of Terminalia. Ovid gives a description (F. 2. 639-84) of how the god Terminus was honoured by people on either side of the boundary marker. Each group brought a garland for the stone and a cake. They built an altar and poured on the fire corn and honeycombs, while the stone was sprinkled with the blood of a lamb or pig. Ovid makes no mention of the hen`s lung that Prudentius refers to. However lungs were important in divination (cf. Cic. Div.1.39,85;2.12,29, Juv.6.549) and Prudentius is speaking about

asking the stone something (*rogare*) so he might not be referring to Terminalia but simply some other act of divination whose absurdity he emphasises by introducing the idea of addressing the stone.

1008 fasceolis *fasciola* means a little bandage for the legs. Cf. Hor.S.2,3,255.

1009 frangitur The boundary stone, as a pagan cult object, may have been broken but the harvest is as good as ever. It is likely that this boundary stone has been broken deliberately since Prudentius goes on to speak of a sacred tree being cut down by an`avenging` axe (1011 *ultrici succisa bipenni*). Thus Prudentius gives evidence of anti-pagan activity in the countryside too, where we might expect more conservative ways to prevail.

violatur Although there is an ambiguity here, presumably the sense must be that Terminus is violated by not having entrails offered to him and so he is offended, rather than that he would normally be violated if entrails were offered him because they offended his sensibilities.

1010 Prudentius mentions this custom of tying ribbons to a tree stump again in *Per*.10.302. This practice was one of the pagan observances specifically forbidden by Theodosius in 392 (*CTh*. 16.10.12.2 *redimita uittis arbore*).

1011 ultrici As Gar. points out it is not clear whom the axe is avenging that cuts down the cult tree. He suggests that the revenge may be that of Christians whose places of worship were attacked at the time of persecution. Elsewhere Prudentius sees the triumph of Christianity as revenge. Thus the army of Constantine, which enters Rome under Christian insignia, is described as being a *militia ultrix* in *C.S.*1.494 and Constantine himself is described as an *inuictus ultor* (*C.S.* 1.467). The idea of Christian vengeance is

also present in A.511 where the Christian God punishes both Jews and pagans for not believing in him. Thus the revenge mentioned here need not be associated with the destruction of Christian churches but a more general sense of revenge as the Christian God overthrows other religions which themselves have persecuted Christians.

1014 pluuius] *TMQ pluuiis* *E* Bergman favours *pluuiis*: Cunningham favours *pluuius*. It is not the wind which benefits the fields but the rain. *Pluuius uentus* conveys the nature of that which benefits the fields better than *pluuiis uentus* as the only kind of wind which will be a help is that which brings rain.

1015-1063 This section begins by saying that while the farms of Christians are fruitful, the Christians themselves live frugally as their hopes are for eternal life. Then there follows a versification of the parable of the sower which Prudentius explains allegorically to refer to the cultivation of the soul. He ends the section by referring to the Christian virgins who by their self-denial reap great rewards.

1016-1017 in gaudia...../ soluimur . The construction *solui in* is not unknown. It occurs in Ovid (*nec in aëra solvi/ passa recentem animam caelestibus intulit astris* *M.*15. 845-46) and Statius (*ita fatus in aëra rursus/ soluitur* *Th.*5.284-85). However both these examples are to do with dissolving into air. A nearer parallel is found in Vergil (*A.* 4.530) where we find *soluitur in somnos* which has the sense of `relaxing into sleep`. Thus the sense here would be `relaxing into joy`.

censu] *edd. sensu TEM (sic) Q, sensum J (sic), N Censu* is only found in the editions (although Bergman claims the authority of *M* for *censu* but Cunningham rejects this saying *lectionem nullus habet codex quem scio* and stresses his reading of *M* with the

note *sic*. However *censu* offers parallelism with *lucrum* in the next line whereas *sensu* is so bland as to be almost impossible to understand.

1018 Prudentius makes the transition from agriculture to care of the soul: the Christian is not over-concerned about bad harvests as his thoughts are more on the life to come than on the present age. However, he does cultivate both the field and the soul (cf. 1036-37).

1020 o felix nimium In Dido's final speech in *Aeneid* 4 (A. 4.657), she says she would have been *felix, o nimium felix* if the Trojan boats had never landed at Carthage. Bergman notes this echo (p.465). Dido has just listed her achievements in founding her city and in avenging her husband. Prudentius uses this phrase just after his assertion that what matters is eternal happiness and that for the Christian the goods of earth are of small consequence. The use of Dido's exclamation here is useful in strengthening this point, given that her earthly achievements could still not give her strength to overcome her sorrow over Aeneas.

sapiens et rusticus Bergman (p. 465) suggests this is an allusion to Horace *Sat.* 2.2.3 *rusticus abnormis sapiens*. It would be an appropriate allusion as the theme of the satire is frugality, which ties in with Prudentius' praise of the same virtue in 1015.

1022 Prudentius has praised the man who tends both land and soul and this allows him to introduce his version of the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13. 4-9. Mark 4.3-9. Luke 8.5-8). The parable in the Gospel takes the picture of a sower whose sowing is rather haphazard as more seed falls on various unsuitable sites than on rich soil. Prudentius transforms this picture of a sower into advice from Christ on how to sow and then goes on to show how this advice is to be applied to the spiritual life. Thus Prudentius treats the reader to a virtuoso performance as he transforms a discussion of whether neglect of the

pagan gods has resulted in bad harvests into a demonstration that nature is of itself prone to problems but that Christianity is not unconcerned about good agricultural practice, as shown by this parable. Prudentius then uses it to show that it is really about the cultivation of the soul which is a more important matter. He has Christ tell the sower to avoid stony ground or areas where there are thorns, advice which the sower in the parable failed to observe. It is somewhat surprising that Prudentius appears to offer Christ as an agricultural adviser but this ploy is soon discounted as Prudentius explains the application of the message of the parable (1040-1050). Prudentius inverts the order of the parable. In Matthew the first category of seed is that which falls on the wayside and is eaten by the birds. Prudentius puts this category last. Prudentius begins with the seed which falls on rocks and shoots up quickly which is the second category in the parable. He then moves on to the seed which falls among thorns as does the parable. It is hard to say what might have motivated Prudentius to put the birds last. Gar. suggests that this is an allusion to those who hold onto their pagan beliefs and refuse to enter the Church and that is why it is placed last but it is difficult to see what the logic of this is. Finally Prudentius omits the end of the parable which speaks of the seed which falls on rich soil, so that Christ is restricted in Prudentius to merely giving advice where not to sow rather than commenting on the seed which is fruitful. Prudentius' version is also notable for the way it avoids any verbal echo of the Vulgate version.

utrisque Lav. (§ 492) points out the use of the plural here. Normally the plural is used to speak of two groups, both of which involve a plurality (e.g. *quoniam utrique Socratici et Platonici uolumus esse* Cic. *Off.* 1.1,2). Here this is not the case and Lav. suggests that it has arisen through *terras* being a plural noun.

1023 colonis There is no record in the Gospels of Christ addressing these words to farmers: they are addressed to the crowds who have come to listen to him. As Gar. notes, the workers Christ has taken on must mean his disciples and thus advice for workmen becomes transformed into advice for the spiritual life.

1024 semina cum sulcis committitis Lav. sees an echo here of Vergil, *G.1.223 (ante) debita quam sulcis committas semina*. Vergil gives advice on the best time to plant seeds according to the position of stars. Prudentius seeks to clothe the words of Christ with the wise advice of the Georgics.

1025 dura lapillorum macie A poetic turn of phrase: `hard with the barrenness of pebbles` which Thomson renders more idiomatically as `hard, stony and poor`. *Dura arua* occurs in Vergil (*G.2.341 terrea progenies duris caput extulit aruis*) and Ovid (*M.11.33 dura lacertosi fodiebant arua coloni*).

1031 fragiles calamos These words occur in Vergil's first *Georgic* (1.76) in a passage where Vergil speaks about weeds which have been cleared by the farmer. Prudentius' *fragiles calamos* are not weeds but rather the tender shoots of corn which he says are choked by weeds, according to the parable. This may just be a vague verbal echo which serves to remind the reader of Vergil's passage about weeds.

rubus] robus *CP,DE a.c.* Cunningham does not note this variant. *Robus* is an old form of *robur* but while Prudentius uses a few archaisms (cf. Lav. § 69), it is not a major feature of his poetry. *Rubus* means a bramble bush and is more relevant here than an oak since it is a passage which deals with the dangers of *uepres*.

1032 uiaein aggere An allusion to Vergil *A. 5. 273. (uiaie deprehensus in aggere serpens)*. Both authors refer to something being left on the road. Vergil is using the image

of a snake left half-dead by being run over by a wheel or being injured by a traveller to illustrate the crippled ship of Sergestus in the boat race. Prudentius uses the phrase to pick up Christ's image of the seeds which land on the road and are eaten by the birds. Gar. thinks that what is meant by *agger* is the central spine of the road which he says would be the part that birds would see first (*il punto di maggiore visibilità da parte degli ucelli*) and he quotes the Vergil passage to make his point. However the *agger uiae* was the mound of earth over which the road was constructed (cf. Margary (1955) p. 19-20) so it generally meant the whole road. Naturally there would be a camber but it is difficult to imagine it as being raised very much higher than the rest of the road. This allusion does not add very much to the image Prudentius wishes to use except to remind the reader of Vergil and so give a general feeling that the passage is descended from Rome's literary inheritance.

1034 inmundisque iacent foeda ad ludibria coruis. It is difficult to see why ravens merit the adjective *inmundis*. Nowhere else in his output does Prudentius see ravens as unclean birds. I can find no tradition in Latin literature which sees the raven as a dirty bird. Ovid tells how the raven was originally white but turned black by the gods for treachery (*M.* 2. 531-41). Catullus speaks of how the raven will eat the eyes of a corpse (*effossos oculos uoret atro gutture coruus* 108.5). In *Per.* 5. 405 Prudentius tells of the raven which took food to the prophet Elijah and how a raven also drove away birds and even a wolf which were trying to eat the body of the martyr Vincent. However, while Prudentius also portrays the raven as a hungry bird a little later (*Per.* 5.436 *coruos uoraces*) this reference to them as foul is unique. However the line of thought here becomes clear with the *obscenisque auibus* of l.1049. Cf. n. 1049.

1035-9 Prudentius explains that these divine laws for successful sowing also apply to successful cultivation of the soul. He uses the striking expression *cordis segetem ...et agri* (1037) to make this clear.

1036 non summa aure *Summus* can mean the top of or the highest part of. This seems to be a rare usage to mean the top of something, in this case an ear, to indicate superficiality.

1037 cordis segetem....et agri *Seges* means a crop and so the use of *segetem agri* here is unexceptional. Used metaphorically, the use of the word to mean a product is more rare. Cicero refers to a *segetem gloriae* (*quid enim odisset Clodium Milo, segetem ac materiam suae gloriae, praeter hoc civile odium quo omnis improbos odimus? Mil. 35*). Prudentius elsewhere uses *seges* metaphorically: cf. *H. 258 inde seges scelerum*.

1040-50 The main verb of this sentence is *extirpamus*. It makes sense to speak of removing thorns lest the crop is smothered by them, but now we have a *ne* clause depending on the same main clause which speaks of the dangers of thin gravelly soil (*glarea*). How this is connected with the need to remove thorns is not clear. There follow two more *ne* clauses which deal with the other dangers into which the seeds of the parable fall and which also do not sit easily with the main clause. A verb such as `beware` or `take care` must be understood to govern these latter clauses.

1040 Extirpamus enim sentos de pectore uepres Prudentius now begins to apply the parable to the Christian's care for the soul. He has changed the message of the parable in that now he talks of removing the thorns whereas in the parable they are mentioned only as the place where some seeds fall and are smothered. Thus he sees the parable as an allegory for the soul and the dangers it faces (somewhat differently from the Gospel

which is about the dangers faced by the sowing of the word of God.). Allegory is one of Prudentius' main interests; the *Psychomachia* is the main example but there are others. For a discussion of Prudentius and allegory cf. Van Assendelft (1976) pp.13-21.

1041 flagella A rare but not unknown use of this word to mean a young branch or shoot as opposed to its normal meaning of a whip. For other examples of this sense cf. Verg. *G.*2.299 (*neue flagella/summa pete*) and Cat.62,52. (*contingit summum radice flagellum*)

1043 peccamine A late Latin word which is also found in Hilary of Poitiers (*in Matt.*18.10) and Jerome (*in Job* 30).

1045-50 The parable of the sower is now applied by Prudentius to the spiritual life and, in so doing, he unites the theme of agriculture with care for the soul. Good husbandry of the soul is shown to operate on similar lines to good care of crops but is more important (*cf.*1.1018-19).

1045 pectoris aestus Many diseases are caused by heat such as pleurisy or pneumonia

1046 charismata. Tertullian (*De Tr.* 11) uses this Greek word to mean grace. Prudentius uses it three times, here, *A.T.* 11 (*in populos charisma suum diffundere promptus*) and at *Per.*13.61 (*si luteum facili charismate pectus expiasti*). In the latter two cases the word means grace so we can assume that the same meaning applies in this instance. Thomson translates it here as 'spiritual gifts' but given the other passages where 'grace' is what is meant, I think grace is meant here too as spiritual gifts is rather vague whereas the Christian notion of grace, as the strength that God gives to live according to his law, could be compared to the blood that flows round the veins and is necessary for physical life. Thomson prefers a loose translation and speaks of the *charismata* being in the exhausted flesh. Prudentius speaks of the veins being exhausted here because he is

speaking of a body which is ill with fever and so corresponds to the stony ground in the parable where the seeds are scorched by the sun. Thomson could be right in taking *uenis* to be a metaphor for the inner part of the body as it makes sense to talk of veins as an inner part of the body.

1049 obscenisque auibus. Prudentius takes up the idea of the foul birds of the parable and brings it in here again as these birds feast on the hope that is within a Christian soul. Now the idea of why these birds are foul becomes clearer. The idea recalls other foul birds of antiquity, notably the birds which ate the entrails of Prometheus and the Harpies of the *Aeneid* (A. 3. 225-67). In Vergil the Harpies are described as *obscenas....uolucris* (A. 3. 241). Vergil also speaks of *obscenae uolucres* at A.12. 876 when Juturna addresses the Fury sent by Jupiter to drive her away from Turnus' side. This is the image Prudentius wants here of the birds of the parable revealed as hellish creatures who attack mankind.

1051-4 Prudentius claims that those who cultivate the soul well will also cultivate the land well so that they will not fear pests which attack the crop. It seems strange that since he has moved the discussion of agriculture onto the level of caring for the soul, he should move back to discuss the success of the harvest, especially as he will conclude this section on a metaphorical note about the spiritual *fructus* brought by faith (1060). It is not impossible that this line is meant to suggest that those who cultivate the soul well will also benefit from bigger crops, since Prudentius often has his mind on the earthly benefits of Christianity, most especially that it helps Rome to defeat the Goths (712-16). However, he has already said that crop failures, caused by bad weather, are just part of the way things are and that such natural disasters happen to the good and bad alike. Thus

it is more likely that the *centuplicatos fructus* are spiritual benefits, especially in the light of the near quotation from Matt. 6.19 (cf. n. 1053-54). In the gospel the emphasis is on the need to have treasure in heaven rather than on earth. Thus it would be rather jarring in this passage if he suddenly reverted to talking about real fields and their crops.

1051 centuplicatos The idea of a hundredfold yield from the harvest comes from Matthew 13. 8. (*et dabunt fructum, aliud centesimum, aliud sexagesimum, aliud trigesimum*).

1053-4 A clear echo of *Georgic* 1. 185-6 where Vergil mentions the dangers that can occur in the granary and specifies the weevil and the ant (*populatque ingentem farris aceruum/ curculio atque inopi metuens formica senectae*). (Cf. Bergman p.465.) Prudentius' allegorical farmer does not fear the weevil or the ant if he has done his work well. This brings to mind the passage in the gospel of Matthew about true treasure contrasting the treasure of earth which is destroyed by the moth or woodworm with the treasure a good man stores up for himself in heaven which is beyond the reach of these pests. Matthew 6.19 reads, in the Vulgate: *Nolite thesaurizare uobis thesauros in terra, ubi erugo et tinea demolitur, ubi fures effodiunt et tinea demoliunt*. Whereas the gospel speaks of neither rust nor moth being able to destroy true treasure, which is in heaven, Prudentius speaks of the weevil and the black ant but his language is surely meant to recall the gospel passage.

1055-63 As a tail-piece to his discussion of the alleged crop failure produced by the withdrawal of subsidies to the Vestal virgins, Prudentius mentions the existence of Christian virgins whose reward for their dedication is that their crops are rich and stored in barns which are safe from thieves. Thus he ties together the theme of consecrated

virginity and management of crops in a Christian context as a reply to the complaint of Symmachus about the Vestals and the crop failures that have resulted from the withdrawal of their state subsidy. Thomson translates so that the rewards of the Christian virgins are modesty and a veiled face and the other attributes listed here. It is hard to see how these can be called their rewards. Rather it is by living like this that they are eligible for rewards. Cunningham conveys this by having only a comma, instead of a colon, after *nostris*.

The consecrated virgin was a precursor of organised monastic life in the Christian world. St Jerome was famous for his involvement with the wealthy widows, Marcella and Paula, who made their homes centres for women wanting to live an ascetical life, from the 360's. (cf. Kelly (1975) p.93).

Ambrose deals with Symmachus' defence of the Vestals in a briefer way. He makes the point that the Vestals are not to be compared to Christian virgins because the virtue of virginity as practised by the Vestals is not as pure as that of the Christians because they are showered with privileges and only practise virginity for a fixed period, whereas Christians take on virginity for life and for no earthly reward. Ambrose also makes the point that, if Symmachus' request for state funding for the Vestal virgins is accepted then there ought to be similar funding for all consecrated virgins and no treasury will be able to afford that.

1060 *seni] TEQ deni M edd. plerique* Matthew 13.8 on which this is based speaks of some seed producing a hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty. Gar. notes a passage in Cyprian where it is said that a martyr receives a reward of a hundred-fold while a virgin that of sixty-fold (*Hab.21*). This idea appears elsewhere in Prudentius in his poem on St

Agnes who he says as a martyr and a virgin will receive the reward of both a hundred-fold and sixty-fold. (*Per.*14.119-122). This is very convincing and suggests that there was such a distinction of which Prudentius was aware and thus *seni* is to be preferred in this passage. However in a passage about marriage and virginity, Jerome speaks of the hundredfold reward belonging to virgins, the sixtyfold to widows and the thirtyfold to the married (*Ep.* 123.8). *Deni* gives better alliteration with the `d` of *decies* and of *rediguntur*. Cunningham prefers *seni* and I think, all things considered, it is to be preferred on the grounds of *difficilior lectio potior*.

1062-63 caelestia numquam/ fraude resignantur; fraus terris uoluitur imis The reward of the Christian virgins, being kept in heaven, is never liable to *fraus*. Why does Prudentius end this section with such emphasis on fraud? The clue lies in the first line of the next section where he says he will set out to examine the reputation (*honestas*) of the Vestals which he will set out to show is not deserved and thus they are guilty of deceit.

1063-1130 This final section examines the life of the Vestals in satirical terms ending with an account of these girls who represent purity, enjoying the blood-sports of the arena. This leads Prudentius onto his plea to Honorius to put an end to the human slaughter in the arena (1114-1129) and a prayer that Rome will dedicate herself to God. Minucius Felix had been critical of the Vestal virgins (*Oct.* 25.10) although he seems remarkably deferential in that he says that any transgressions of their celibacy were committed *inconsultius* and *Vesta sane nesciente*. However he is quite clear that pagan priests were often involved in sexual immorality (*Frequentius denique in aedituorum cellulis quam in ipsis lupanaribus flagrans libido defungitur. Oct.* 25.11)

1064-1113 Reply to Rel.3.11-13

Prudentius first describes how the Vestals are chosen and have to endure an enforced celibacy (1064-1085) and then goes on to describe their attendance at the gladiatorial games (1086-1113).

1064 Quae nunc Vestalis sit uirginitatis honestas Prudentius begins his attack on the reputation of the Vestal virgins. He does not call into question their commitment to virginity, as one might expect. Christian writers acknowledged that the Vestals lived a life of celibacy. Jerome mentions the Vestal virgins a few times in his letters but always acknowledges their chastity (e.g. *Ep.* 123.7. *Ut omittam uirgines Vestae, et Apollinis, Iunonisque Achiuae, et Dianae ac Mineruae, quae perpetua sacerdotii uirginitate marcescunt*). What Prudentius calls into question is the forced nature of their commitment (they were handed over to the service of Vesta by their parents) and their presence at the amphitheatre, which he considers to be unsuitable entertainment for anyone and least of all women. Augustine (*Civ.Dei.*3.18) refers to the Vestals being not so much honoured (*honoratae*) as condemned (*damnatae*) by their enforced service of the goddess and so makes a similar point to Prudentius. Augustine writes of the time when the temple of Vesta was destroyed by fire (242B.C.) saying that the goddess of the hearth who was honoured with a fire kept burning by the Vestals could not even save her temple from fire.

The *honestas* of the virgins is referred to by Symmachus, in one of his letters to Nicomachus Flavianus, where he speaks of how he thinks their decision to erect a statue of Praetextatus, the champion of paganism who was a friend of Symmachus and praetorian prefect of Italy in 384, was not in keeping with their *honestas* as it was against

tradition (*Ep* 2. 36 *Ego, qui aduerterem, neque honestati uirginum talia in uiros obsequia conuenire, neque more fieri quod Numa auctor, Metellus conseruator religionum, omnesque pontifices maximi nunquam meruerunt*). The statue was erected by the chief Vestal, Caelia Concordia (*CIL*, 6. 2145). If Prudentius knew this letter, which was written in 385 then there could be an allusion here to Symmachus' own questioning of the Vestals' *honestas*. However, the letters were published, after his death, around 409. It may have been generally known that Symmachus had taken this attitude to the Vestals' decision.

The Vestals' cult was abolished in 394.(Cf. p.17 n.60.) Thus while Prudentius includes this passage, since Symmachus had raised the issue of their maintenance, it was not a current issue by 402. That he treats it as if it were re-inforces the argument that the whole poem is a literary re-working of Christian anti-pagan polemic. (Cf. Intro p. 17)

1065 discutiam The L.& S. states that there are no examples in the literary language for the sense of *discutere* to mean discuss which is found in post-classical derivatives of this verb. Gar. thinks that *discutiam* here has the '*connotazione etimologica di `scrollare`* (shake). However Prudentius uses this verb in the Preface to his whole output when speaking of his soul, he writes: *pugnet contra hereses, catholicam discutiat fidem* (Prf. 39). It would make no sense for him to mean that his soul is to shake or dash to pieces the Catholic faith but rather it is to explain or discuss it. Thus I think, *pace* the L. & S., that in Prudentius at least *discutere* has acquired its later meaning of to discuss.

1066 teneris capiuntur in annis The ceremony whereby a young girl joined the Vestals was known as the *captio*. The formula used by the Pontifex Maximus ended with the

words *te..capio*. There is an account of the ceremony in A. Gellius 1.12. 9-19. Gellius says that the girls had to be between the ages of six and ten and with both parents alive.

For a possible parallel train of thought cf. Claudian's *Cons.Stil.3* 237-369 where Claudian has Diana send out her maiden companions all over the world to bring in wild animals for the games to celebrate Stilicho's victories.

1067 secta Prudentius uses the word as the literal translation of ἄρσεις meaning a 'school of thought' Galen's work Περί τῶν ἄρσεων is rendered *De sectis* in Latin translations Cf.n 93 *uerae... sectae*.

1069 condemnet] *T* (-mpn-), *ZMQ*, **contempnet** *E*, **condemnat** *posuit Bergman codici D ut vid. fisus* Thus reads Cunningham's note on this line. *Antequam* takes the subjunctive when purpose or design is intended. Thus the indicative would mean that the girls are taken before their free will condemns the idea of marriage whereas the subjunctive would mean they are taken before their free will can allow them to condemn the choice of marriage. The indicative assumes that the rejection of marriage is automatic. A subjunctive leaves the possibility open that they might not reject the bonds of marriage which Prudentius would appear to consider a good thing as he refers to them as *iusta*. The subjunctive would seem to make better sense. Lav. (§ 858) reads an indicative here which he says is rare but has precedents (e.g. *eaque ante efficit paene, quam cogitat Cic. Div.1.120*).

1073 nec requies datur ulla A direct quotation from the Aeneid (A. 6.600) noted by Bergman (p.465). Vergil is speaking of the torment of Tityos who was punished for assaulting Leto by having a vulture tear at his liver which Vergil tells us was constantly renewed. (Cf. Homer *Od.* 11.576-81 which has two vultures involved.) Prudentius uses

this allusion to illustrate the anguish felt by the Vestal on her bed who is tortured by her unmarried state.

1075-85 Prudentius notes how Vestal virgins were allowed to marry after thirty years of service. The knowledge that their virginity is not perpetual, unlike that of Christian virgins, Prudentius sees as a cause of discontent for the Vestals as they wait for their time to be up. Prudentius also remarks how Vesta is happy with their virginity but only for a time. Evidence that remains indicates that not many Vestals took the opportunity to marry. Thomson refers to Plutarch for this (*Numa* 10 1-20) and mentions Tacitus' recording a Vestal who serving for fifty-seven years (*Ann.* 2. 86). In fact there was a tradition that it was bad luck for a Vestal to marry (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 2.67.2).

caecum/ uulnus This phrase recalls the *uolnere caeco* of Lucretius (4.1120). Lucretius is describing sexual passion and says that such passion is all consuming and that those who succumb to it find no peace but wait for its next attack and while doing so they are uncertain as they waste away with their secret wound (*incerti tabescunt uolnere caeco*). It would be appropriate here for Prudentius to draw on Lucretius' passage as he describes the Vestal who lies on her bed regretting her inability to marry. The expression was later used by Vergil (*A.* 10.733) (cf. Bergman *ib.*) of a real wound but by Ovid to speak of the wound of love (*Ep.* 4.20) (cf. Ewald (1942) p. 143).

1080 tumult uigor This is a possible echo of Claudian who speaks of a bride ready to marry using the same verb. Claudian has *matura tumescit uirginitas* which is not unlike Prudentius' *thalamis habilis tumult uigor*. The Claudian passage is from an epithalamium (c.m. 25. 125).

1086-1113 Prudentius reflects on the privileges enjoyed by the Vestals, concentrating on their seats of honour in the amphitheatre, which enables him to dwell on the incongruity of pious young women enjoying the slaughter before them. In the later part of this section, he asks whether their great service to the state lies in their preservation of ancient rituals or in their attendance at the games, where they enjoy the slaughter. Prudentius follows the argument of Symmachus in that the first point raised by Symmachus is the chastity of the Vestals (*Honor solus est in illo uelut stipendio castitatis. Rel. 3.11*) which Prudentius speaks about in 1066-85, taking the opportunity to ridicule the nature of their chastity. Next Symmachus speaks of the fillets they wear in their hair (*Vt uittae earum capiti decus faciunt ib.*), which allows Prudentius to refer to the Vestals being carried on carriages with unveiled faces on the way to watch the games (1086-1101). Symmachus speaks next of their offering of sacrifice (*ita insigne ducitur sacerdotii uacare muneribus ib.*) whereupon Prudentius asks whether their great service to the state lies in the performance of these rituals or in their cheering on the gladiators at the games (1102-13).

1088-89 publica pompa plateas/ pilento Prudentius gives much emphasis here by means of alliteration and the coincidence of stress and metrical feet.

1089 pilento a carriage used by Roman ladies and also for carrying the vessels used in sacred rites. (Vergil *A. 8.666 castae ducebant sacra per urbem/pilentis matres in mollibus*) Livy explains that this privilege of travelling in these carriages was awarded to the matrons of Rome in return for their generosity at a time of crisis under Camillus when they gave their gold jewellery to the treasury and so were allowed to use the *pilentum* on the way to sacred festivals and games, on holy days and on working days. (*grata ea res ut quae maxime senatui unquam fuit; honoremque ob eam munificentiam ferunt matronis*

habitum ut pilento ad sacra ludosque, carpentis festo profestoque uterentur 5.25.9).

Servius has to explain that the word *pilentum* refers to what by his time was more commonly known as a *basterna* (*pilentis matres in mollibus pilenta sunt uehicula, sicut nunc basternas uidemus* Serv.A. 8.666). Ammianus mentions the women of Rome being carried about in the *basterna* (*matronae complures, opertis capitibus et basternis, per latera ciuitatis cuncta discurrunt*. (R.G.14.6.16)

ore relecto Ammianus mentions the *matronae* having covered heads and being carried in covered litters. Prudentius` Vestal has her head uncovered and presumably the side of her litter is open too otherwise there would be no point in calling her *spectabilis*. In drawing this picture Prudentius sets out to draw a contrast with the Christian virgins whom he has just described as having their heads covered (*sancto tectus uelamine uultus* 1056) and being withdrawn from public view (*nec nota et publica forma* 1057). Thus he paints a picture of the hypocrisy of the Vestal virgins who act in anything but the demure fashion one might expect from one devoted to a life of chastity.

1090 inputat As Lav.(§ 1359) points out, this is an unusual use of *inputare* which normally means to charge, to credit to, or ascribe. Lav. translates it here as *se faire valoir* or to assert oneself. Gar. says that the verb has a technical meaning from the world of commerce and it means to credit to someone. Thus the idea would appear to be that the Vestal thinks that the city is in her debt.

1091-1093 ...expers/ sanguinis it pietas hominum uisura cruentos/ congressus

Prudentius drives home his point that the Vestals are meant to be models of piety and innocence but that they enjoy the bloody spectacles of the arena. Women were present in

the audience at the games but Prudentius' point is that it is more shocking that these models of piety enjoy such slaughter.

1093 uulnera uendita pastu Thomson makes the point that while most gladiators were criminals or prisoners of war, it was also possible to volunteer and make a livelihood out of the arena (cf *OCD* Gladiators). However, this phrase could apply to all who fought in the arena as they all earned their keep this way.

1094 oculis. Sedet Bergman (p.465) suggests an allusion to Juvenal 10.331-6 with its picture of the unfortunate aristocrat that Messalina has decided to marry (*Messalinae oculis; dudum sedet illa parato/ flammeolo*). Thus both lines have the words *oculis* and *sedet*. It certainly strengthens Prudentius' imagery to think of the Vestal virgin at the games being as insatiable as Messalina but would a reader recognise the Juvenal from just these two words? It is remarkable that Bergman has done so.

1095 uittarum.....faleris A *uitta* was worn by a bride or a Vestal virgin as a sign of their chastity. Priests and poets also wore them. For a reference to the *uitta* being worn by a Vestal, Gar. suggests Ovid *F*.3.30

1099 iubet conuerso pollice Juvenal has a line *uerso pollice uulgus cum iubet occidunt* (3.36), noted by Bergman (p.465). He is speaking of the corrupt public officials who finance public games out of their ill-gotten gains. Prudentius could gain some extra force to his image by this reminiscence of Juvenal's unpleasant characters.

1101 secutor One of the traditional types of gladiator who was lightly armed and would chase the *retiarius* who was armed with a trident and a net. Juvenal speaks of the *secutor* (8.210).

1102 hoc illud meritum est This construction of *hic ille*, which is found in Cicero (*Att.1.18.3 instat hic nunc ille annus egregius*) and Vergil (*A.7.255 Hunc illum fatis externa ab sede profectum portendi generum*) means `Here is that famous...`. Thus here the sense is `Is this that great service....`

1103 excubias The watching referred to is that of ensuring that the flame at the temple of Vesta remained alight at all times. Cf.n.913.

Latiipalati Many manuscripts read *palatii* here which makes some sense but which does not scan. Thomson and Cunningham have *palati*. As it stands it can only be from *palatus* meaning a palate in the mouth or by extension a vault in the shape of a palate. Clearly the allusion here is to the Palatine. Thus, this is another example of the final long *i* replacing the normal *ii* (cf.n. 688). What is interesting is that he does not use such a shortening in *Latii* in the same line, despite Lav.'s (§89) rule of thumb that Prudentius always uses the `i` form for proper nouns.

1106 et licia crinibus addunt The phrase *licia addere* occurs in the *Georgics* (*G. 1. 285*) (cf. Bergman p. 465) where it means to add threads to the warp in a passage which is discussing the most favourable days for performing certain actions (*licia telae / addere*). Prudentius could be referring to the Vestals wearing their hair in the style of a Roman bride with the *sex crines*. Beard (1980 p.16.n.39) mentions a passage of Festus which, although corrupt, indicates that the Vestals wore their hair in the fashion of a bride (*Senis crinibus nubentes ornantur, quod [h]is ornatus uetustissimus fuit. Quidam quod eo Vestales uirgines ornentur, quarum castitatem uiris suis † sponoe *** a ceteris Festus p.454L*).

1107 Prudentius speaks of the Vestals offering sacrifices underground in the presence of ghosts. Thomson draws attention to the passage in Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* which mentions the Vestals offering sacrifice at the underground shrine of Consus below the Circus Maximus. Tertullian writes: *Et nunc ara Conso illi in circo demersa est ad primas metas sub terra..... Sacrificant apud eam nonis Iuliis sacerdotes publici, XII. Kalend. Septembres flamen Quirinalis et uirgines.*(*Spect.* 5). As for the ghosts, they were thought to live in the underworld (e.g. Verg. *A.* 6.390 *umbrarum hic locus est*).

Gar. mentions another theory put forward by Le Bonniec which rejects the idea that Prudentius is speaking about Consus here. Le Bonniec (1970 115-122) first argues that this is assumed to be a regular duty of the Vestals as it is in a list of their regular activities. He makes this point against Giannelli (*Il sacerdozio delle Vestali romane* Florence 1913 p.74 n.3) who said the passage was about the occasional expiation of prodigies. He then argues that this cannot be about Consus because of the terms *testibus umbris* and *pecudes lustrales* Consus was a god of grain and thus had chthonic connections but had no link to a cult of the dead, nor does Tertullian say that the sacrifices involved were expiatory which is implied by the mention of *pecudes lustrales*. His ingenious suggestion is that it relates to an entry in the calendar of Philocalus of 354 which on February 13th has the entry *Virgo Vesta(lis) parentat*. He argues that what this refers to is a rite of expiation for those Vestals who were excuted for violating their vow of chastity, citing Plutarch (*Roman Questions* 96) who speaks of priests offering sacrifice to the dead in the place where the fallen Vestals were buried alive. Although the evidence he puts forward is somewhat circumstantial, he makes a plausible case and accounts for the three elements of the rite described by Prudentius (i.e. that it was held underground,

that the shades were witnesses and that the sacrifices were expiatory) more satisfactorily than the Consus suggestion.

1108 in flammam iugulant pecudes This is a direct quotation from the *Aeneid* as noted by Bergman (p.465). The phrase occurs twice there (A.11.199 & 12. 214). The first time occurs when the army of Aeneas buries its dead during a twelve day truce in the fighting and offers sacrifice to Death. In *Aeneid* 12 the phrase is used to describe the sacrifice offered to ratify the treaty between Aeneas and Latinus which will settle the war by the combat of Aeneas and Turnus. Prudentius is asking the question why the Vestals are considered to do such important work on behalf of the city of Rome. The borrowed phrase with its Vergilian contexts adds solemnity here. The sacrifices offered by the Vestals, however, are performed under ground, with only ghosts, not the great armies of the *Aeneid*, as witnesses and so, perhaps, the use of the Vergilian phrase only serves to emphasize the less impressive nature of the Vestals' worship.

1112 perfundat Used to contrast the girl throwing her hair over her neck with the gladiator pouring out his blood in the arena.

1113 et quanto uestigia sanguine signet. This is another Vergilian allusion (Bergman p.465). At *Georgics* 3.171 we find *summo uestigia puluere signent*. The *Georgics* passage is about yoking horses to pull carts and the dust they throw up after them. It is difficult to see what is gained here by a reference to the Vergil passage except the obvious idea that the gladiators are no better off than beasts of burden.

1114 -1132 Plea to end the gladiatorial games

Prudentius ends the book with an appeal to Honorius to put an end to the slaughter of the arena. In book 1 Prudentius had referred to the games and questioned why such horror

should be allowed to continue (C.S.1.379-399). In this Prudentius follows earlier Christian writers who had described the horrors of the amphitheatre (cf. Tert. *Spect.*, Cypr. *ad Donat.*7, Lact. 6.20). For a full discussion of pagan and Christian scruples about gladiatorial games cf. Ville (1981 451-472). In 325 Constantine had issued a decree to prohibit condemned men being used as gladiators. (C.Th.15. 12. 1). It was not until 404 that such contests were finally abolished. Prudentius says that only fights with animals should be allowed in the arena. It is interesting that in the poems of Claudian, although games are regularly mentioned, they never consist of gladiatorial contests but races, fights with animals and display of military drill. (cf. *Cons. Mall. Theod.* 282-332, *Cons. Stil.* 3.223-355, VI *Cons. Hon.* 611-639). However this does not prove that Honorius had banned gladiatorial contests before Prudentius wrote the *Contra Symmachum*. There is a story in Theodoret, noted by Lavarenne (p196 n.1), about a monk, Telemachios, who jumped into the arena at the games for the sixth consulship of Honorius in 404 and separated the gladiators. He was stoned by the crowd (H.E.5.26). We know that animal fights continued into the mid-fifth century (cf. Salvian *Gub. Dei.* 6.10-11). Ambrose had made his reply to Symmachus' *Rel.* 3 to Valentinian II, while Theodosius was emperor in the east. Prudentius follows suit in only addressing the emperor under whose jurisdiction he lived.

This appeal by Prudentius has a precedent in Firmicus Maternus' *De Errore* which was also addressed to two emperors (Constantius II and Constans) and ends with a call for them to take firm action in banning pagan cult sacrifice.

1114 aurea Roma Ausonius also uses this phrase (*Ordo Urbium Nobilium* 1). Claudian also speaks of Rome in terms of the brightness of its gold *Cons. Stil.* 3.65-66 *VI Cons. Hon.* 51-52

1117 uacat For the indicative in an indirect question cf.n.896

1120 partem tibi, nate, reseruo Prudentius re-introduces Theodosius to the poem. Theodosius had been the only emperor mentioned in the first book (*C.S.* 1.28-41). Prudentius tells us that the great Theodosius wanted to leave some glory for his son to achieve and so he deliberately omitted to forbid gladiatorial games.

1124 Prudentius says that Theodosius forbade pagan sacrifice not that he forbade the slaughter of animals in the arena, which Prudentius says should be allowed to continue. This probably refers to the decree of 24th February 391 which went beyond all previous laws on the topic by its comprehensiveness. (*C.Th.* 16.10.10).

1125 The games in the arena had religious significance for pagans being originally part of religious festivals and gladiatorial contests began as part of the funeral rites of a dead warrior. This Etruscan tradition came to Rome in 264BC when three pairs of gladiators fought at the funeral of D.Iunius Pera

litare cf.n.842

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