

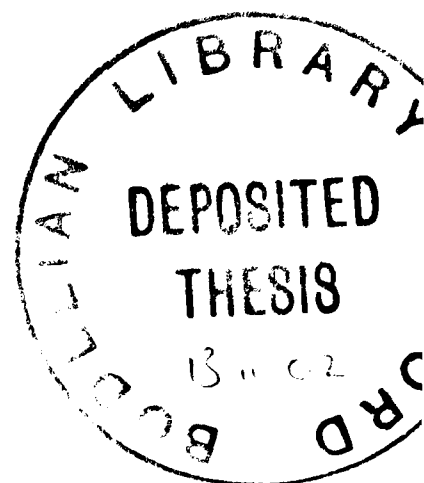
**DOCTRINE, POLEMIC AND LITERARY TRADITION  
IN SOME HEXAMETER POEMS OF PRUDENTIUS**

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### ABSTRACT

#### **“Doctrine, Polemic and Literary Tradition in Some Hexameter Poems of Prudentius”**

The thesis, the topic of which is restricted to the polemical didactic poems, *Apotheosis*, *Hamartigenia* and *Contra Symmachum* 1-2, aims to establish the attitudes of Prudentius to the literary tradition and argues for his relationship with the Latin classical poets. Its main argument is that the hexameter poems as a group can be profitably studied from a stylistic angle, since they show how Prudentius combined, and used with innovation, the styles of several poets, namely Lucretius, Virgil and Juvenal, and in many cases engaged with the literary tradition as a whole. Chapter I surveys, as reflected in the poems, Prudentius' awareness of the political, religious and literary milieu in the Christian Empire of the West in his day. Chapter II examines how Prudentius employed the style of argument and imagery in the *D.R.N.* to present Christian doctrines on the body and the soul, and to reject pagan superstition. Chapter III shows how with much imagination and respect Prudentius adapted Virgil's phraseology and techniques to give new Christian interpretations of some mythical and historical themes in the *Aen.*, such as the 'Golden Age' and the battle of Actium, and of topics on agriculture from the *Georg.* Chapter IV argues that, like other fourth century Christian writers, the poet entered into the spirit of Satire and alluded to Juvenal's themes and language in his treatment of the topics of sin and sexuality. Finally, in Chapter V Prudentius' adaptations of the biblical accounts in *Gen.* 19 and of *Ps.* 136 are used to demonstrate how allegory, which is a main feature of his poetry, was combined successfully with different classical techniques. In conclusion, the hexameter poems demonstrate that Prudentius did not reject classical poetry on the basis of its content, but used both its themes and poetic techniques in order to merge the ancient with the Christian literary tradition.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The biblical quotations are taken from the Vulgate, but the references to the Books in the Bible are the accepted English abbreviations.

### Abbreviations of Prudentius' poems:

<i>Apoth.</i>	Liber Apotheosis.
<i>De Trin.</i>	Liber Apotheosis. Praefatio I. <sup>1</sup>
<i>Ham.</i>	Hamartigenia.
<i>Praef.</i>	Praefatio.
<i>Praef. Apoth.</i>	Apotheosis. Praefatio II.
<i>Praef. Ham.</i>	Hamartigenia. Praefatio.
<i>Symm. 1</i>	Contra Symmachum I.
<i>Symm. 2</i>	Contra Symmachum II.
<i>Tituli</i>	Tituli Historiarum.

### Other abbreviations:

<i>BAGB</i>	Bulletin de l'Association G. Budé.
<i>CCL</i>	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Turnhout (1954- ).
<i>CPh</i>	Classical Philology.
<i>CQ</i>	Classical Quarterly.
<i>CR</i>	Classical Review.

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<sup>1</sup> See Cunningham (1966), para. 116.

- CSEL* Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna (1866- ).
- CTh* *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges Nouellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, edd. Th. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer, Berlin (1905).
- Forcell.* *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon Aegidii Forcellini*, Prague (1858-75).
- Forcell. Onomast.* *Forcellini Supplementum Onomasticon*, Prague (1913-20).
- HSPh* Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.
- JbAC* Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum.
- LS* *A Latin Dictionary* (revised), Ch. Lewis and Ch. Short, Oxford (1969 impression).
- NT* The New Testament.
- OCD* *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edd. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, Oxford (1996<sup>3</sup>).
- ODCC* *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edd. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, Oxford (1997<sup>3</sup>).
- OT* The Old Testament.
- PG* *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris (1844).
- PL* *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris (1844).
- RAC* Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart (1941- ).
- RecAug* Recherches Augustiniennes.
- REAug* Revue des Études Augustiniennes.

<i>REL</i>	Revue des Études Latines.
<i>RhM</i>	Rheinisches Museum.
<i>SChr</i>	Sources Chrétiennes, Paris (1940- ).
<i>TAPhA</i>	Transactions of the American Philological Association.
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> , Leipzig (1900- ).
<i>TLL Onomast.</i>	<i>Supplementum Onomasticon C-D</i> , Leipzig (1907-13).
<i>VChrist.</i>	Vigiliae Christianae.
<i>Vulg.</i>	<i>Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam</i> , Paris (1927).

## *Introduction*

For the purposes of this research I have used the critical edition of Cunningham.<sup>1</sup> This edition was warmly welcomed by classical scholars as the first re-assessment, since Bergman's edition, of the manuscript sources.<sup>2</sup> In addition, I have found helpful the bilingual editions of Thomson and Lavarenne.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the efforts in the 1930s of Deferrari and Campbell, on the one hand, and Lavarenne, on the other hand, research into the poetry of Prudentius has been greatly facilitated.<sup>4</sup>

The description of this thesis is preceded by a survey of the most representative works in the field of Prudentian studies. Previous literary studies can be grouped into several categories, one of which includes studies on Prudentius' imitation of the language of various classical poets, mainly that of Virgil and Ovid. Such were the works written in the 1930s by Mahoney and Ewald, both of whom did their research at the Catholic University of America and were influenced by Professor Deferrari.<sup>5</sup> They and Schwen<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, ed. M. Cunningham, CCL 126 (1966). The other main critical edition is *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, ed. J. Bergman, CSEL 61 (1926).

<sup>2</sup> Both Fontaine: *REL* 44 (1966) 469-71 and Hudson-Williams: *CR* 17 (1967) 293-6 agree that the main contribution of Cunningham's edition is in the *apparatus*. It provides readings from five manuscript sources, two from the sixth century represented by the *Puteanus* (A) and the *Ambrosianus* (B), and three from the ninth represented by the *Thuaneus* (T), the *Egmondanus* (E) and the *St. Gall* (S). Despite the lack of a *stemma*, the *apparatus* consists, not only of the most important variants, but also of some interesting readings from other sources and, generally, has a clear structure. Cunningham retains, almost unchanged, Bergman's text, but he is more sparing in his use of punctuation. Despite its merits, some criticisms are expressed about his preferred orthography, the complete omission of a full and up-to-date *Index Verborum et Locutionum* and the need for fuller pre-1950 bibliography and indices. However, the *Index Rerum Notabilium* is useful. For a relatively critical review, see Thraede: *Gnomon* 40 (1968) 681-91.

<sup>3</sup> *Prudentius*, with an English translation by H. J. Thomson, vols. 1-2, Loeb Classical Library, London (1969<sup>3</sup> and 1979<sup>3</sup>). *Prudence*, texte établi et traduit par M. Lavarenne, tomes 1-4, Collection Budé, Paris (1955<sup>2</sup>-63<sup>2</sup>). In R. Palla's *Hamartigenia: Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Pisa (1981) the text and the *apparatus* are based on Bergman's edition.

<sup>4</sup> R. J. Deferrari and J. M. Campbell, *A Concordance of Prudentius*, Cambridge, Mass. (1932). M. Lavarenne, *Étude sur la langue du poète Prudence*, Paris (1933).

<sup>5</sup> A. Mahoney, *Vergil in the works of Prudentius*, Washington (1934). M. L. Ewald, *Ovid in the Contra Orationem Symmachi of Prudentius*, Washington (1942) who admits that Mahoney was the prototype for the classifications of thought and linguistic parallels in her study.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. Schwen, *Vergil bei Prudentius*, Diss., University of Leipzig (1937).

aimed at demonstrating Prudentius' knowledge and use of Virgil and Ovid, by sorting all the linguistic parallels into groups according to greater or lesser certainty about the borrowings, in respect of language and/or thought, and to the length of the imitations and their position in the line. However, descriptions of Prudentius as the 'Christian' Virgil or Ovid rather misrepresent the poet as being merely a slavish imitator of his precursors.<sup>7</sup>

In another group of studies, interest was shown in the style of Prudentius' poetry by identifying imitations of language in the context of his poems. Hanley compiled the main examples of the influence of several classical poets on Prudentius' works and made general observations on his style.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, but more selectively, Salvatore analysed the combined influences on Prudentius's style in parts of the poet's *corpus*.<sup>9</sup>

Of a slightly different kind is the research of Ch. Gnilka, whose collected articles, the fruit of some thirty-five years of study of Prudentius' poetry, were published recently.<sup>10</sup>

In all literary studies on Prudentius the most debatable question remains that of the treatment, without any separation, of the classical and the Christian aspects of his poetry.

Thraede summed up the state of research up to 1965 and claimed that no progress had been made since the study of Puech at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Scholars have tended,

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<sup>7</sup> These studies elaborate the examples of imitation collected by Bergman in an *Index Imitationum* to his edition. Although not exhaustive, this index establishes many parallels within the whole corpus of classical poetry and has become a useful aid in the study of the influences on Prudentius. In the third chapter, Ewald summarised the results of her examination and made valuable observations on the influence of Ovid on Prudentius' *Symm.* poems.

<sup>8</sup> S. M. Hanley, *Classical Sources of Prudentius*, Diss., Cornell University (1959).

<sup>9</sup> A. Salvatore, *Studi Prudenziani*, Napoli (1958).

<sup>10</sup> *Prudentiana, Teil I: Critica*, München (2000) with *Exegetica, Teil II* forthcoming. The articles deal mainly with the question of interpolations in Prudentius' texts. It includes some new material, pp. 201-647, essays on Paulinus of Nola and Claudian and Indices of Names and Things.

<sup>11</sup> K. Thraede, *Studien zu Sprache und Stil des Prudentius* (1965), Introduction, p. 7 ff. For such works, see A. Puech, *Prudence: étude sur la poésie latine chrétienne au 4e siècle*, Thèse, Paris (1888) and E. Rapisarda, *Introduzione alla Lettura di Prudenzio*, Catania (1951).

mistakenly, to separate the form of Prudentius' poetry from its content and to take this to extremes. Whilst some of them have attributed Prudentius' originality essentially to his Christian views<sup>12</sup>, others, and among them Thraede himself, have maintained that the uniqueness of this poetry was due precisely to its literary form.<sup>13</sup> However, the Christian inspiration and significance of the poetry ought not be divorced from the poet's inevitable employment of the classical conventions and it has been argued rightly that his originality lies in a successful combination of the two, which view will be maintained in the case of the hexameter poems which are the subject of this study.<sup>14</sup>

Understandably, among the Prudentian *corpus* the *Psychomachia* has received the greatest attention from scholars.<sup>15</sup> The *Cathemerinon* has been studied for its importance in the history of Christian hymnography and for Prudentius' skilled use of the lyric

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<sup>12</sup> F. J. E. Raby, *A history of Christian Latin poetry*, Oxford (1953) p.47, "He [Prudentius] is first a Catholic and only in the second place a poet." Or J. Bergman's title, *A. Prudentius Clemens. Der grosste christliche Dichter des Altertums*, Dorpat (1921). In certain instances Thraede attributed the lack of authoritative evaluation by scholars of Prudentius' poetry as being due, primarily, to their views on religion and nationality, as expressed by Rodriguez-Herrera, *Poeta Christianus. Des Prudentius Auffassung vom Wesen und der Aufgabe des christlichen Dichters*, Diss., München (1936).

For more moderate views in favour of the Christian aspects of Prudentius' poetry, see Lana *Due Capitoli Prudenziani. La Biographia, La Chronologia delle Opere, La Poetica.*, Roma (1962) p. 88 ff. who maintained that the classical influence is secondary to the Christian sincerity of Prudentius' poetry. Lana disagreed with Puech (1888) p. 97 who upheld that the less Christian the topics, the more originality Prudentius shows. Lana felt that the use of classical language, alone, was not sufficient reason for the arguments of Rapisarda (1951) and Salvatore (1958) for its purely classical inspiration and aesthetics.

<sup>13</sup> In his interpretation of Prudentius' poetry, Thraede shows a complete lack of interest in the psychological and historical aspects, and, although his critique of the inadequacy of the distinction between the Christian content and the classical form of expression is well-founded and he feels that more attention should be given to the literary conditions of the 400's, Thraede's study appears to be one-sided; he concludes that, in his poetry, Prudentius made use of the conventional motifs found in classical authors but ignores completely the explicit religiousness of these poems. See Fontaine: *REL* 44 (1966) 571-4.

<sup>14</sup> Palmer, *Prudentius on Martyrs*, Oxford (1989) p. 1, points out that "the synthesis is deep and complete".

<sup>15</sup> The *Psychomachia* was the most influential of Prudentius' poems on the poetry of the Middle Ages. For recent publications, see C. Gnilka, *Studien zur Psychomachie des Prudentius*, Wiesbaden (1963); R. Herzog, *Die allegorische Dichtkunst des Prudentius*, *Zetemata* 42, München (1966); M. Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia. A Reexamination*, Princeton (1976); G. Nugent, *Allegory and Poetics. The Structure and Imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia*, Frankfurt (1985); M. Mastrangelo, *The 'Psychomachia' of Prudentius, A Reappraisal of the Greek Sources and the Origins of Allegory*, Diss., Brown University (1997).

metres.<sup>16</sup> Palmer has filled the need for a study of the literary, cultural and historical contexts of the *Peristephanon*.<sup>17</sup> However, in Prudentian studies there is still a lack of comprehensive research on the hexameter poems (excluding the *Psych.*)<sup>18</sup>. The study by Fabian and the commentary of Palla have repaired, in part, the lack of any profound research on the two theological didactic poems *Apotheosis* and *Hamartigenia*.<sup>19</sup> Besides the linguistic studies of Ewald and Hanley, the two Books of the politico-didactic poem *Contra Orationem Symmachi* have also provoked the interest of some historians of Late Antiquity.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst the contribution of earlier scholars should be acknowledged, the need still remains to demonstrate those aspects of Prudentius' style that result from his awareness of the

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<sup>16</sup> M. van Assendelft, *Sol Ecce Surgit Igneus. A Commentary on the Morning and Evening Hymns of Prudentius (Cath. 1, 2, 5 and 6)*, Groningen (1976); J.-L. Charlet, *La création poétique dans la Cathemerinon de Prudence*, Paris (1982).

<sup>17</sup> See note 14.

<sup>18</sup> This is a common view expressed most recently by A. A. R. Bastiaensen in "Prudentius in Recent Literary Criticism" in *Early Christian Poetry*, ed. J. Den Boeft and A. Hilhorst (1993) pp. 101-34. He mentions the commentaries of K. Smolak, *Exegetischer Kommentar zu Prudentius, Apotheosis (Hymnus, Praefatio, Apotheosis 1-216)*, Diss., Wien (1968), and of Palla (1981). He omits to mention the more recent important study of C. Fabian, *Dogma und Dichtung: Untersuchungen zu Prudentius' Apotheosis*, Diss., Frankfurt am Main (1988).

<sup>19</sup> For Palla (1981), see Palmer: *CR* 32 (1982) 175-6. In his introduction, Palla raised problems relevant to Prudentius' entire output of poetry and acknowledged the importance of the historical context for a full understanding. He views Prudentius' poetry as a literary reflection of the dynamic synthesis in the late Roman society of the classical and the Christian traditions. Prudentius' originality lies, not in the imitation, but in the amalgamation with Christian ideas of the diction and some of the values of the classical tradition.

In her introduction Fabian (1988) discussed the previous research and the up-to-date bibliography on the *Apotheosis* and stated that the literary assessment of the poem has been neglected because of its theological subject matter for which see L. Padovese, *La Cristologia di Aurelio Clemente Prudenzio, Analecta Gregoriana* 219, Rome (1980). For the structure of the poem, see R. Rank, "The Apotheosis of Prudentius: a structural analysis", *Classical Folia* (1966) 18-31. Fabian attempts to "enhance the appreciation of the theological content of the Apotheosis by literary and philological means". In the first part of her thesis she analyses the line of the theological argument within the structure of the poem and in the second, compares and contrasts Prudentius' dogmatic rhetoric with that of Lucretius.

<sup>20</sup> A number of articles have been written on the political implications of the poems. For most recent publications, see T. D. Barnes, "The historical setting of Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum*", *AJP* 97 (1976) 373-86; J. Harries, 'Prudentius and Theodosius', *Latomus* 43 (1984) 69-84; S. Döpp, "Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum*: eine Einheit?", *Vig. Christ.* 40 (1986) 66-82; D. Shanzer, "The Date and Composition of Prudentius' *Contra Orationem Symmachi Libri*", *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 117 (1989) 442-62; T. D. Barnes and R. Westall, "The Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy in Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum*", *Phoenix* 45 (1991) 50-61.

importance of his classical forebears, and it is my intention in this thesis to make a contribution to a more complete literary study of the hexameter poetry of Prudentius.<sup>21</sup> For analysing the poet's style of composition, this, to the best of my knowledge, will be the first attempt, in a single study, to discuss aspects that are common to all his three hexameter poems. As part of my presentation of conventional Christian and non-Christian subject matter in the study, Prudentius' preoccupations with dogma and polemic are identified and the influence on Prudentius' style of the foremost classical poets is discussed, in order to demonstrate his apparent originality and, at the same time, his debt to the literature of his predecessors.

What started initially as research on the Christian doctrines and imagery in Prudentius' hexameters, has evolved into a discussion of his ubiquitous use of themes and styles that lay claims to continuity with the classical literary tradition. The title of the thesis points to Prudentius' characteristic modes of writing, didactic and polemical, not so much for the purposes of presenting his Christian teaching, but in response to the classical literary heritage. My main argument will be that his hexameter poems as a group can be profitably studied from a stylistic angle, since they show how Prudentius combined, and used with innovation, the styles of several classical poets, namely Lucretius, Virgil and Juvenal, and in many cases engaged with the larger literary tradition.<sup>22</sup> Such an examination of the pre-Christian motifs and techniques, without separating them from the Christian aims and import, is an advance on previous research, as is also the setting of the poems in the broader context of fourth century culture, which is dealt with in Chapter I.

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<sup>21</sup> In view of the large amount of research available already on the *Psych*, that poem falls outside the scope of the thesis but some relevant passages will be used in the discussion of the other poems.

<sup>22</sup> For my discussion, in the Fifth Chapter, of the metamorphosis of Lot's wife in *Ham.*, I shall briefly consider the influence of Ovid.

The overall structure of the thesis reflects the methods of argument which concentrate on Prudentius' relationship with the individual poets, Chapter II is devoted to Lucretius, Chapter III to Virgil and Chapter IV to Juvenal. Nevertheless, although such a scheme of organisation has proved best for my purposes, I have also throughout the chapters stressed the combined influence of different aspects of the three poets that shaped Prudentius' unique style. Regarding the arrangement of the material within those chapters, it has to be noted that there is a gradual progression from some interesting passages which offer convincing examples, to those passages that display most successfully the poet's innovative use of the classical tradition. Finally, in Chapter V the versatility of Prudentius' technique that has been established so far, will be demonstrated in his adaptations of biblical motifs, which point to allegory as another characteristic feature of Prudentius' style. For the purposes of consultation I have attached an Appendix that deals with metre and language in the three poems, aspects which except for some general observations by various researchers and Lavarenne's study, have not been greatly discussed elsewhere.

## *Chapter I*

### *Prudentius and the Christian culture of the fourth century.*

Before dealing with the themes of doctrine, polemic and literary tradition that occur in Prudentius' hexameter poetry, it is necessary to envisage the broader context in which he wrote. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is the assessment of Prudentius' understanding of the political, religious and literary attitudes in the Christian Empire of the West in his day, as is reflected in the poems that are the subject of this thesis. It is *Symm.* 1-2 that contain most of the references to some of the main political and historical events, from the official recognition of Christianity in the West to the weakening of the Empire by the Gothic invasions in the first decade of the fifth century. However, there is very little historical detail in Prudentius' poetic portrayal of these events; for the most part Prudentius was writing under the influence of his near contemporaries, Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, and the poet Claudian, both of whom had had an insight into the political life in Milan at the Imperial court of Theodosius and his dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Together with Ambrose, Prudentius was intimately familiar with the writings of Symmachus, and these two represented for him the pagan-Christian conflict that continued until the beginning of the fifth century.

Next, it will be argued briefly that, in essence, the arguments used by Prudentius to promulgate the Christian doctrines, to refute certain heresies and to deride pagan culture and beliefs, were derived from the traditions of early Christian literature in the West.<sup>2</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Ambrose was the Bishop of Milan from AD 373 to AD 397 and Claudian was the court poet from ca. 396 AD to 404 AD.

<sup>2</sup> This part of the chapter in which the Christian doctrines and controversies are introduced, will be elementary for expert theologians but of use to critics of classical Latin literature.

his anti-pagan polemics in *Symm.* 1-2 the poet was influenced, most probably, by the Christian apologists Tertullian, Arnobius and Lactantius<sup>3</sup>; for his doctrinal teachings<sup>4</sup> and anti-heretical polemics in the *Apoth.* and *Ham.*, the influence can be traced back as far as Irenaeus and Tertullian, but also the writings of Hilary and Ambrose also provide parallels.<sup>5</sup> However, if not in the arguments themselves, Prudentius' originality lies in his allegorical treatment of biblical episodes and especially those in the Old Testament, in support of the theological arguments.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Prudentius played an important part in the dynamic development of the literary culture of the fourth century that marked the beginnings of Latin Christian poetry. It took many forms, such as Juvencus' biblical epic paraphrases of the New Testament, Proba's *Cento*-compositions, consisting entirely of Virgilian phrases, or the devotional poetry of Paulinus of Nola, written in diverse generic modes.<sup>7</sup> Prudentius, himself, experimented with the different metrical forms and poetic styles inherited from his predecessors, in order to maintain continuity with the classical literary tradition. This practice is not unlike that of the fourth century rhetorician and poet, Ausonius, who made skilful use of classical poetic techniques for a vast range of topics. On the other hand, Prudentius'

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<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* was written after Prudentius' poems, between AD 413 and AD 426.

<sup>4</sup> However, the discussion of the Nicene theology behind the doctrines of the Trinity, of Christology etc. are beyond the scope of the thesis, and will be referred to only briefly. For detailed studies of Prudentius' Christology, see Padovese (1980) and Fabian (1988) including her bibliography on each of the six refutations in the *Apoth.*

<sup>5</sup> The teachings of Ambrose and Jerome on Christian ethics, including asceticism and virginity, is yet another tradition that influenced Prudentius, and it will be mentioned only briefly *passim*. For his treatment of the themes of asceticism, see Kah (1989) p. 287 ff., and for the martyrdom in the *Perist.*, and in particular hymns 3, to Eulalia, and 14, to Agnes, see Palmer (1989) pp. 154-79, 239-41 and 250-4; M. Roberts, *Poetry and the Cult of Martyrs. The "Liber Peristephanon" of Prudentius*, Ann Arbor (1994) and J. Petruccione, "The Portrait of St. Eulalia in Prudentius' Peristephanon 3", *Analecta Bolandiana* 108 (1990) 81-104.

<sup>6</sup> This aspect of Prudentius' technique will be the subject of the final chapter of the thesis.

<sup>7</sup> There are some anonymous doctrinal, polemical and biblical poems, such as *Adversus Marcionem*, *Genesis*, *Sodoma*, *Ad Senatorem*, *De Jona et Nineue* and *De Ligno Vitae*, all to be found in *Tertulliani Opera Omnia*, PL 2 (2) (1844).

versatility in adapting and blending the didactic, epic, lyric and satiric styles, is, by far, the most outstanding feature of the technique used in his hexameter verse. Furthermore, within the whole corpus, his originality lies in the creation of the genre of martyr poetry found in the *Perist.*<sup>8</sup>

Finally, in this chapter it will be appropriate to stress Prudentius' original use of the classical poetic tradition by a brief discussion of his *Praefatio* in conjunction with Horace's *Od.* 4,1, and of the classical motifs in his *Epilogue*.

### **Contemporary Political and Historical Settings of Prudentius' poems.**

Prudentius is thought to have been born ca. 348 AD ('Saliae consulis', *Praef.* 24)<sup>9</sup> in a Christian family in the Roman province, *Hispania Tarraconensis*, in north-west Spain.<sup>10</sup> The affectionate tone with which in the *Perist.* Prudentius mentioned Calahorra (*Calagurris*), Saragossa (*Caesaraugusta*) and Tarragona (*Tarraco*), all being referred to as *nostra (urbs)*, has led scholars to think that any of these places could have been the poet's home town.<sup>11</sup> From the few autobiographical details given in the *Praef.* to the

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<sup>8</sup> Palmer (1989), Chapter 1, "Curiositas and Credulity", p. 32 ff. and especially p.53 f.

<sup>9</sup> *The Prosopography of the Late Roman Empire*, ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, vol. 1 (A.D. 260-395) Cambridge (1971) includes an entry on Flavius Salia (2), consul together with Flavius Philippus (7) in 348, see *BGU* ii 405, 456; iii 917; in *Hist. Eccles.* 2,8,54 Theodoret referred to Salia as a pious Christian.

<sup>10</sup> R. E. Messenger, "Aurelius Prudentius Clemens. A Biographical Study", *Folia* 6 (1952) 78-99. See p. 88 where the episode in *Apoth.* 450 ff. is used as evidence for Prudentius' Christian background. Although Palmer (1989) p. 13 f. has found in Augustine's *Confessions* a suitable parallel for Prudentius' spiritual autobiography in the *Praef.*, nowhere does the poet rejoice in a new faith or refer to his conversion.

<sup>11</sup> *Perist.* 1,116 'nostro...oppido' of *Calagurris*, 4,141-2 'nostrae...Caesaraugustae' and 6,143 'nostrae...urbis' of *Tarraco*. For a discussion of the autobiographical elements in the *Praef.*, see Palmer (1989) pp. 20-31.

collection of poems, it has been concluded that Prudentius came from an upper class family, was educated in the traditional subjects of grammar and rhetoric, and began his public career as a lawyer (*Praef.* 7-15). His tenure of the office of a governor ‘nobilium urbium’ (16-18) was followed by his promotion to the court of the Emperor, perhaps as a *proximus* (19-21).<sup>12</sup> At that time, ca. 380 AD, during the reign of the Spanish-born Theodosius, who had surrounded himself with members of the Spanish elite, it is not surprising that a representative of the Spanish aristocracy would have entered the higher echelons of power.<sup>13</sup> Although Prudentius began his career in the royal court during the reign of Theodosius (d. 395 AD), the majority of it was spent under the reign of his successors, Honorius and Arcadius. The year AD 405, when Prudentius was 57, is thought to have been the date of the first publication of his collected *opera*, but the individual poems must have been written earlier during his service in the Christian Imperial court. Thus, the poem, *Symm.* 1-2, that contains the most significant historical references makes it clear that the two books were written at different times during Prudentius’ career<sup>14</sup> and not only use anti-pagan polemic and Christian apologetic themes, but also reflect the attempts of the pagan party in the Senate to revive paganism and the Christian advocacy of the Emperor Theodosius and his dynasty.

As the title implies, Prudentius was inspired to compose the poem by the pagan revival in the year AD 384, when the spokesman for the pagan party in the Senate, Symmachus, pleaded with the Emperor Valentinian II for the reinstatement of the Altar of Victory in

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<sup>12</sup> For Prudentius’ terminology as a reference to the office of ‘*proximus scriniorum libellorum*’, see Palmer (1989) p. 27 f. and note 79.

<sup>13</sup> Theodosius came from Cauca in north-west Spain. For his family and the western aristocrats in Theodosius’ court at Constantinople, see Matthews (1998)<sup>2</sup>, pp. 93-4 and p. 109 ff. respectively. For a speculation about Prudentius’ relationship with the Emperor, see Palmer (1989) p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> See below, p. 17 f.

the Senate house (*Rel.* 3,3 ff.).<sup>15</sup> Its removal was one of the measures taken by the Emperor Gratian in the year AD 382 to restrict the observance of the pagan religion.<sup>16</sup> Symmachus also complained about depriving the Vestal Virgins and the priests of the former State cults of the stipend that they had received from the public purse (*Rel.* 3,11). However, as a result of the intervention of Ambrose who in his *Epp.* 17 and 18 refuted the arguments in Symmachus' petition, the Emperor did not accept the plea of the pagan Senator.<sup>17</sup> The controversy between Ambrose and Symmachus over the fate of the Altar of Victory was indicative of the gradual, but steady, progress of Christianity during the second half of the fourth century among the senatorial class of Rome. Nevertheless, the eloquence with which Symmachus expressed his strongly held convictions that the Roman State ought not be divorced from its former religion would, nonetheless, have been considered as a serious challenge to the ultimate triumph of Christianity.

The date when Prudentius composed *Symm.* 1-2 is debatable, but most likely the two books were written between AD 395 and AD 402/3, the earlier date is the year when Theodosius I<sup>st</sup> died and the latter, the years when Honorius defeated the Goths and the

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<sup>15</sup> Symmachus was the prefect of Rome in AD 383-4 and consul in AD 391. For the texts of his *Relatio* 3 and Ambrose's response in *Epp.* 17 and 18, see *Prudence*, Tome 3, ed. M. Lavarenne, *Collection Budé* (1963<sup>2</sup>) pp. 107-31. Parts of the texts are found also in Stevenson, *Creeds and Councils* (1989) pp. 120-4.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Matthews (1998)<sup>2</sup> p. 203 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Strictly speaking, *Ep.* 18 was a direct refutation of Symmachus' claims in *Rel.* 3, and when he wrote *Ep.* 17, Ambrose did not possess a copy of *Relatio* 3. In this letter he told the Emperor where the latter's duty lay and asked him to prove his Christian faith, by refusing Symmachus' claim. Ambrose said that as a bishop, 'Christi sacerdos' (*Ep.* 17,10), in order to defend the integrity of Christian senators, he was intervening in a religious dispute, 'causa religionis' (17,13). Symmachus maintained that he was acting, both as *praefectus urbi*, and as the delegate, *legatus*, of the Senate (*Rel.* 3,1-2). In 17,10 Ambrose underlined the absurdity of the position adopted by Symmachus. The Bishop maintained that the majority of the senators were Christians (17,8-9). In support of this claim, he provided an example from the past, when, in a letter to Pope Damasus of AD 382, the Christian group of the Senate dissociated itself from the protestations of the pagan faction against Gratian's legislation.

time of another pagan revival.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, why two decades later Prudentius took up the well documented debate between Ambrose and Symmachus, has been a matter of serious argument among scholars. One school of historians, inspired by Barnes, believes that there was a renewed pagan opposition in AD 402.<sup>19</sup> Another school, represented by Alan Cameron, maintains that Prudentius composed the poem with a purely literary aim in mind, for which he must have consulted the texts of Symmachus and Ambrose.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the actual books differ in content and genres, the subject of *Symm.* 1 being Theodosius, whilst that of *Symm.* 2 is his sons Honorius and Arcadius, and the only direct historical reference that helps to date the final draft of the poem to AD 402/3 is the account of the battle of Pollentia.

The way I interpret the poem is as a document recording the friction that existed between pagans and Christians at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. Perhaps, that explains why *Symm.* 1, as well as being a satire against the pagan gods, contains a panegyric of the anti-pagan legislation of Theodosius. The tone is strengthened by the portrayal of the Emperor, familiar both from pagan and Christian texts, as the suppressor of two tyrants, the usurpers Maximus and Eugenius (*Symm.* 1, 410, 462-3)<sup>21</sup>:

cum princeps *gemini* bis uictor caede *tyranni*                      410

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<sup>18</sup> Shanzer (1989) p. 443 ff. argued that there were two drafts of the poems; see also Barnes (1976) p. 376. Harries (1984) p. 75 ff. used historical evidence to date *Symm.* 1 to AD 394-5, between the time of the defeat of Eugenius and Theodosius' death, and *Symm.* 2 to AD 402. Alan Cameron (1970) p. 240 claimed that Prudentius' works were written in AD 402/3. Barnes (1991) p. 61 argued that the description of the conversion to Christianity of the Roman aristocracy in *Symm.* 1,552-65 points to the poem being first drafted ca. 384 AD and revised later in AD 402/3.

<sup>19</sup> Both Barnes (1976) pp. 381-2 and Matthews (1998)<sup>2</sup> p. 240 maintained that pagan revivals persisted at least until the end of the fourth century. In AD 391 a second delegation approached Valentinian II with the request, which was rejected, that the Altar to Victory be returned to the senate-house. In connection with this attempt, Ambrose stated that 'legatio a senatu missa intra Gallias nihil extorquere potuit' (*Ep.* 57, 5).

<sup>20</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 240 pointed out that the second poem ends with an "impassioned appeal" to Honorius for the abolition of the gladiatorial contests (*Symm.* 2, 1114 f.), but does not deal with a later debate.

<sup>21</sup> For Theodosius' victories, see Ambr. *Ob. Theod.* 56; Claud. *Prob.* 108, *III Cons.* 88; *Get.* 284 etc. Maximus was defeated on 28<sup>th</sup> August 389 at Poetovio (Ptuj).

colla *tyrannorum* media calcemus in urbe.

For Christians his miraculous victory over Eugenius in the battle of the Frigidus on the fifth of September AD 394 has significance as a Christian victory that put an end to a period of pagan revival. From the very beginning of *Symm.* 1 Prudentius praised Theodosius as the suppressor of pagan superstition, ‘monet ut deterrimus error/ utque superstitio ueterum procul absit auorum’ (*Symm.* 1,38-9), and only later in the poem referred to the battle according to the legend (*Symm.* 1,538-9)<sup>22</sup>:

ergo triumphator latitante ex hoste togatus  
clara tropaea refert sine sanguine...

In similar terms in his Funeral Oration for the Emperor Theodosius, Ambrose stressed the former’s role as the suppressor of all pagan superstition and praised his victory over the usurper Eugenius ‘Christo adhaerente’.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, both Ambrose and Prudentius compared this victory with that of Constantine at the battle of the Milvian bridge (*Symm.* 1,464 ff.).<sup>24</sup> This was the event that brought Constantine to power, and thus established Christianity as the new religion of the Empire, and, thereafter, the battle was celebrated as the first victory gained with the assistance of Christ. Constantine was a model emperor, whose army won victories under the new standard (*labarum*) to protect the ‘salus reipublicae’.<sup>25</sup> Theodosius was the only emperor after Constantine, whose service

<sup>22</sup> For this Christian panegyric theme, see Ambr. *Ob. Theod.* 10; Claud. *III Cons.* 93-101 and Cameron (1970), p. 217; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 5,25 (end) and Oros. *Hist.* 7,35 (in PL 31). For an account of the battle, see also Ruf. *HE* 11,33, where Theodosius’ ‘religio’ is contrasted with Flavianus’ ‘superstitio’. For the pagan revival under the prefecture of Nicomachus Flavianus, see Matthews (1998)<sup>2</sup> p. 241 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Ob.Theod.* 4 ‘...et nos celebramus Theodosii quadragesimam,...qui abscondit simulacra gentium; omnes enim cultus idolorum fides eius abscondit, omnes eorum ceremonias oblitteravit’.

<sup>24</sup> See below p. 27 and Ambr. *Ob. Theod.* 39-41. Oros. *Hist.* 7,36.

<sup>25</sup> *Apoth.* 498 ‘...signum Christi se ferre fatetur’ and see Kah (1989) p. 110.

to Christianity in terms of personal piety and Christian legislation could rival that of his predecessor.<sup>26</sup> Paulinus of Nola composed a panegyric honouring Theodosius' victory, in which the Emperor's faith and piety were his powerful 'instruments of war'.<sup>27</sup> Like these contemporary Christian writers, Prudentius accepted and made use of the official interpretation of the victory at the Frigidus, which might support the view that the *Symm.* poem was written in response to these historical events.

#### The intended audience of *Symm.*: educated pagan and Christian aristocrats.

These pronouncements on the topicality of these two books have an influence on the question about their intended audience.<sup>28</sup> Two things have to be borne in mind, firstly, that the poem was composed at different times and underwent a revision to form a single entity ca. 402 AD and secondly, it serves both apologetic and protreptic purposes. Thus, although the first book seems to have been composed, initially as a literary variation, on Christian apologetic themes with wealthy audiences in mind, it may well have served to convert members of the literary circles of the Spanish elite.<sup>29</sup> In this way it preserves

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<sup>26</sup> The Christian writers attributed Theodosius' military victory at the Frigidus to his faith in Christ. Thus, Ambr. *Ob. Theod.* 5 'fides fuit uestra uictoria', Aug. *Civ. Dei* 5,25 'magis orando quam feriendo pugnauit' and Oros. *Hist.* 7, 35 'signo crucis signum praelio dedit...uictor futurus'.

<sup>27</sup> D. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola (353-431): life, letters and poems*, Transformation of the classical heritage: 27, Berkeley (1999) p. 111 and notes 35 and 36.

<sup>28</sup> Palmer (1989) pp. 33-4 argued that in the case of the *Perist.*, Prudentius was not concerned solely with his own salvation, but also with that of his intended audience.

<sup>29</sup> Lavarenne (1963) p. 100 rejected the possibility that the apologetic arguments against the old cults could have been intended to convert the pagans in the audience. "Il semble bien qu'en fait elles n'aient été pour lui qu'un exercice littéraire, une sorte de variations sur un thème connu."

the two themes mentioned above. The two aims are reflected even better in the invective and panegyric styles in the second book, which is more striking, as is the new version of the first book that stresses the continuing conflict between the Christian policy of Theodosius and that of the pagan circles. The themes and imagery of war occur at the end of the first and throughout all of the second book.<sup>30</sup> The latter strikes a note of greater urgency and mentions the contemporary military triumphs and imperial legislation. If one sides with the thesis of those critics who talk about another pagan revival and further debates about the Altar of Victory in Rome ca. 402-3 AD, then it is logical that the poem was intended as the poet's contribution to the contemporary pagan-Christian conflict.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, Prudentius' concerns, expressed in poetry, must have been directed at a wider audience yet again with the aim of attacking the old religion in defence of the new one. If so, the *Symm.* poem can be taken as evidence for the existence, at the beginning of the fifth century, of a pagan provincial aristocracy in Spain.<sup>32</sup> However, it has been suggested that these books were more likely composed in Italy at the time of the pagan revival, rather than in Prudentius' own home town.<sup>33</sup> Cunningham even argued that the *Symm.* poem had been commissioned by Christian senators in Rome.<sup>34</sup> Like other critics of Prudentius he took at face value the poet's alleged visit to the tombs of the martyrs in Rome, of which accounts are given in *Perist.* 9, 11 and 12.<sup>35</sup> *Perist.* 9 which is dedicated

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<sup>30</sup> Notice the metaphorical language in *Symm.* 1,643-55.

<sup>31</sup> It has been argued that *Symm.* 1 was written to attack Nicomachus Flavianus. See Shanzer (1989) p. 450.

<sup>32</sup> Although Tert. *Adv. Iud.* 7,4-5 provides the evidence for the Christianisation of Spain from the beginning of the third century AD.

<sup>33</sup> Puech (1888) p. 195. He used Symmachus' evidence for his stay at the court in Milan in February 402 AD (*Ep.* 5, 95-6) as the reason behind Prudentius' portrayal of Symmachus as addressing the two Emperors at the beginning of *Symm.* 2.

<sup>34</sup> Cunningham (1976) p. 56 f. argued for the social context of all Prudentius' poems and assumed that they would have addressed real audiences.

<sup>35</sup> See Palmer (1989) pp. 29-31. It is possible to think that Prudentius made not one, but two pilgrimages to Rome.

to St. Cassian of Imola, has often been quoted as the most explicit reference to Prudentius' journey to the City (103-6):

et post terga domum dubia sub sorte relictam  
et spem futuri forte nutantem boni.  
audior, urbem adeo, dextris successibus utor;           105  
domum reuertor, Cassianum praedico.

Although herself being in favour of such interpretation of the information in the *Perist.*, Palmer warned against mistaking for historic truth the spiritual experience of the poet as “the typical pilgrim”.<sup>36</sup> However, she also found plausible the possibility of Prudentius' visit to Rome, as well as his service in the court at Milan, by which time, according to her, he had written at least some of his poems on the Spanish martyrs which might have helped his advancement as an imperial official.<sup>37</sup>

Because of the scarce and allusive autobiographical details in the *Perist.*, the occasional references to historical events in *Symm.* 1-2 must be given greater weight and, on the basis of the account of the battle at Pollentia, it can be concluded that Prudentius composed these books last. As in the *Perist.*, ‘antiqua fanorum parens/ iam Roma Christo dedita’ (2,1-2), there the poet took pride in Rome as the Imperial capital of the Christian world.<sup>38</sup> But wherever the place of composition, it is clear that, if in Rome in the early fifth century there was pagan senatorial opposition of any kind, this could be even more true of the provinces of Spain and Gaul. The extensive religious legislation introduced during the period of Theodosius' dynasty supports this viewpoint. However, some other

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<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 26 f. In these terms Prudentius' career might have been similar to that of Ausonius.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Perist.* 2,413 ff. and *Symm.* 2,620 ff.

critics have expressed doubts as to the historical relevance of the *Symm.* poem and considered it as mere poetry.<sup>39</sup>

As far as the *Ham.* and the *Apoth.* are concerned, there is very little in them to relate the subject matter to contemporary events. Yet, despite the missing references to the then current heresies, both poems allude to the constant struggle for unity within the Christian Church and appear to be in line with the official reaction against unorthodox teachings.<sup>40</sup>

Also in the *Perist.* Prudentius made use of the documentary and oral traditions about the *Passiones* of the martyrs during the pre-Constantinian persecution of the Christians.

Although in this context his purpose was to create poetic, rather than historically accurate, accounts of the martyrs' lives and deaths, Prudentius referred to the celebrations of the Saints' feast days, both in Rome and Spain, that took place during his lifetime and pointed to the widespread ascetic movements in the fourth century.

To some extent, the anti-heretical polemic in the *Apoth.* goes hand in hand with the anti-pagan polemic and in particular Prudentius shows his concern about the continuing conflict between Christianity and paganism in an episode from the reign of the Emperor Julian (AD 361-3).<sup>41</sup> Whilst, elsewhere, the poet did not hesitate to denigrate Roman Emperors for their anti-Christian policies in the past<sup>42</sup>, there is far more force in his

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<sup>39</sup> See above p. 18 and note 20. Lavarenne (1963) p. 90 was in favour of such view, because of the equivocal attitude of Prudentius' poetry: "c'est l'habitude de notre poète d'éviter l'actualité dans le choix de ses sujets". However, Lavarenne wanted to be on the safe side and added that his was only a remark to prevent the reader from exaggerating the importance of the poems as historical documents, and that it would be difficult to make any definitive statement about the "actualité" of the poems.

<sup>40</sup> See below, p. 62 ff.

<sup>41</sup> The passage is discussed in Chapter IV, p. 231 ff.

<sup>42</sup> *Symm.* 2,668-74 which lines refer to the persecutions of Christians during the reigns of Nero and Decius. Compare the favourable portrait of Augustus in *Symm.* 2,413 ff. For possible interpolations in this passage that summarises the political history of Rome up to the Principate, see Ch. Gnilka (1965) p. 247 ff.

criticism of Julian's apostasy in *Apoth.* 449 ff. Firstly, because it happened after the official recognition of Christianity and it was initiated by the Emperor himself whose political power had to be sanctioned by Christ. Secondly, because it was a warning to the future Emperors that pagan revivals could be a threat and therefore measures should be taken against such attempts. The latter explanation is especially relevant to the debate about the Altar of Victory and Prudentius may have wished to remind the Emperors Honorius and Arcadius of Julian's apostasy in the light of Symmachus' renewed appeal in AD 402. It is noticeable that when he mentions events that happened during his lifetime, Prudentius does not use the names of the Emperors; Theodosius is never named in the *Symm.* 1, nor are Honorius and Arcadius in *Symm.* 2.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, for metrical reasons Prudentius omitted the name of Julian and his identity is inferred only from the portrayal in the *Apoth.*<sup>44</sup>

The portrait of Julian as a skilful general and ruler, but not a devotee of Christ (450-3), can be easily contrasted with that of Honorius whom, after the battle of Pollentia, Prudentius eulogised as the triumphant general and *Christipotens* (*Symm.* 2,709-10). Further, the attack against Julian's devotion to pagan superstition might be understood in more general terms, as an attack against the cult of the Emperor also known as the cult of Sol Invictus. In *Symm.* 2, 434 ff. Prudentius gave all the titles of Augustus as though in a panegyric, but his true aim was to contrast the cult of the Princeps with the worship of Christ (432-5; 441-2)<sup>45</sup>:

appellans patrem patriae, populi atque senatus

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<sup>43</sup> *Symm.* 1,4 'principis'; 36 'dux sapiens'; *Symm.* 2,7 'dominos'; 17-18 'fratrum/...ducum'; 764 'Auguste'; 1115 'Ausonii dux augustissime'.

<sup>44</sup> The reference to the poet's childhood, 'me puero' (450), must be used solely to give Prudentius a literary persona. Where could he possibly have seen the Emperor performing a sacrifice?

<sup>45</sup> Kah (1989) p. 165 ff.

rectorem, qui militiae sit ductor et idem  
dictator censorque bonus morumque magister<sup>46</sup>,  
tutor opum, uindex scelerum, largitor honorum. 435

nam subdita Christo 441  
seruit Roma Deo cultus exosa priores.

Although the language used in Prudentius' portrayal of Julian's qualities is not dissimilar to that in the passage on Augustus, there can be no sincere eulogy in the mock-laudatory passage on Julian who was seen by contemporary writers as the proverbial enemy of Christianity. The charges against Julian were heavy, since the persecutions were long since over, Christianity had become the official state religion and he had apostatised after having been instructed it.<sup>47</sup> By far the most damaging of his anti-Christian measures was the law of 17 June 362 AD that prohibited Christians from all over the Empire from teaching in schools and that also encouraged apostasy. It provoked the anger not only of the victims of this ban, but also of sympathisers of Julian, such as Ammianus Marcellinus.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Julian was seen as an usurper, which gave Prudentius plenty of material and ample opportunity to satirise the Emperor and to build a contrast between him and a Christian Emperor.

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<sup>46</sup> Perhaps the contrast is between Augustus and Theodosius who is also referred to as 'magistro/...gubernanti' (*Symm.* 1,37-8).

<sup>47</sup> *Amm. Marcel.* 21,2,4 narrated how Julian pretended to have embraced Christianity, whilst he was secretly involved in pagan divination, haruspices and augury. For Julian's adoption of paganism and sacrifices to the gods, see *op. cit.* 22,5,1-2 and 22,12,6.

<sup>48</sup> *Greg. Naz. Or.* 4,5,100 f.; *Amm. Marcel.* 22,10,6 'Illud autem erat *inclemens*, obruendum perenni silentio, quod arcebat docere magistros rhetoricos et grammaticos, ritus Christiani cultores' and 25,4,20 'Inter quae erat illud *inclemens*, quod docere uetuit magistros rhetoricos et grammaticos Christianos, ni transissent ad numinum cultum.' See *CAH* vol. 13 (1989) pp. 66-7 and p. 77 that in the Christian tradition the death of Julian was seen as God's justice.

Immediately before the episode of Julian's superstitious behaviour, the image of an emperor is portrayed as one who worships the Christian God and accepts the Cross as the new symbol of power (*Apoth.* 446-8):

iam purpura supplex  
sternitur Aeneadae rectoris ad atria Christi  
uexillumque crucis summus dominator adorat.

This portrayal of the new religious affiliation of an Emperor and the supernatural power he gains from it serves as a transition to the episode of Julian's apostasy (449 ff.) and is used to illustrate his failure to become a 'summus dominator' (448) due to his mistaken religious beliefs.<sup>49</sup> The mention of the Sign of the Cross on the Imperial standards in a passage that introduces the account of the temporary cessation of the recognition of Christianity during the reign of Julian appears to be particularly apposite, since one of his anti-Christian measures was to have the Sign of the Cross removed from the Imperial standards.<sup>50</sup> The point of the account of Julian's worship of pagan gods and nocturnal sacrifices was to demonstrate how weak was his power compared to that of Christ (501-2). Christianity was seen as an integral part of the power of the Emperors, other than the Apostate, and of Roman rule. These Emperors were God's representatives on Earth and the Roman Empire, God's heavenly kingdom. Therefore, the opening lines (450-4) help the criticism of Julian by a satiric, rather than a flattering portrayal.<sup>51</sup> The satiric tone of the attack is strengthened by the fact that a Christian member of the Julian's Praetorian

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<sup>49</sup> Kah (1989) p. 114 ff. has suggested that in *Apoth.* 446-8 the implication is to the contrast between Theodosius and Julian. However, it is more likely that Prudentius had in mind all Christian Emperors after Constantine, or Constantine himself.

<sup>50</sup> *Soz.* 5,17,2; *Jul. Ep.* 48.

<sup>51</sup> Although Kah, p. 111 defines the characterisation of Julian as rather flattering, the antitheses in lines 452 and 454 act as limitations to this complimentary portrayal of Julian.

Guard was the cause of the disrupted sacrifice.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in his attack on Julian Prudentius seems to have used the historical evidence purely for the purpose of ridicule. He presents Julian's zealous participation in and the performance of both private and public sacrifices to the pagan gods, not, like Libanius<sup>53</sup>, in laudatory terms of Julian's over-enthusiastic performance of the office of *pontifex maximus*, but in mocking terms, as a disgraceful and ridiculous humiliation and servitude, and denigration of the imperial institution.

Most likely, lines 446-8 suggest a comparison between Constantine and Theodosius that Prudentius developed fully in *Symm.* 1. In *Apoth.* the progression from the mythical founding figure of Rome to the line of Christian Emperors, beginning with Constantine, is seen from a historical perspective. 'Vexillum...crucis' (448), the military standard in the shape of the Cross, recalls the account in *Symm.* 1 of Constantine's vision of the Cross on the eve of the battle of the Milvian bridge. In the poem, in a speech addressed to Roma, Theodosius speaks of Constantine's defeat of Maxentius by the power of the victorious sign of Christ (*Symm.* 1,464-9):

agnoscas, regina, libens mea *signa* necesse est,  
in quibus effigies crucis aut gemmata refulget                    465  
aut longis solido ex auro praefertur in hastis.  
*hoc signo* inuictus transmissis Alpibus ultor  
seruitium soluit miserabile Constantinus,  
cum te pestifera premeret Maxentius aula.

Prudentius may have been aware of two versions of Constantine's victory; most likely he based his account of the battle of the Milvian bridge on that in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* I,28-41, dealing with the miracle that brought about the defeat of Maxentius in 312 AD

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<sup>52</sup> It is known that Julian had banned Christians from service in the Praetorian Guard, see *Soc.* 3,13,1; *Jul. Ep.* 50.

<sup>53</sup> *Or.* 12, 80-82; 18, 126-9.

and the Emperor's subsequent conversion to Christianity.<sup>54</sup> There, the historian related the visions of the sign of the Cross that appeared to Constantine, both in the middle of the day, and in a dream (VC I,28,2-I,29). According to the other source, Lactantius, whose version, not long after the event, recorded the dream experienced by Constantine before the battle of the Milvian bridge, the Emperor was given, as a divine sign, some form of the *chi-rho* (*De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44,5-6)<sup>55</sup>:

commonitus est in quiete Constantinus, ut caeleste signum dei notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret. facit ut iussus est et transversa X littera, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in scutis notat. quo signo armatus exercitus capit ferrum.

Although in his account, Prudentius made no direct mention of either vision, at least by 'effigies crucis' (1,465) and 'hoc signo invictus' (1,467) he may have alluded to the "cross-shaped trophy formed by the light, and a text attached to it which said, 'By this conquer' (VC I,28,2). In VC I,29,1-I,31,2, where there is a constant parallel between Moses and Constantine<sup>56</sup>, in the dream the Emperor is instructed to make a copy of the *chi-rho* that he had seen in his vision, and Eusebius proceeds to describe what was to become subsequently the standard representation of the *labarum* (VC I, 31 in PG 20)<sup>57</sup>:

Ἦν δὲ τοιῶδε σχήματι κατασκευαμένον. ἕψηλὸν δόρυ χρυσοῦ κατημφιεσμένον, κέρασ εἶχεν ἐγκάρσιον, σταυροῦ σχήματι πεποιημένον. ἄνω δὲ πρὸς ἄκρω τοῦ παντός, στέφανος ἐκ λίθων πολυτελῶν καὶ χρυσοῦ συμπεπλεγμένος κατεστήρικτο, καθ' οὗ τῆς σωτηρίου ἐπηγορίας τὸ σύμβολον, δύο στοιχεῖα τὸ Χριστοῦ παραδηλοῦντα ὄνομα, διὰ τῶν πρώτων ὑπεσήμενον χαρακτήρων, χιαζομένου τοῦ ρ κατὰ τὸ μεσαίτατον. ἃ δὴ

<sup>54</sup> For Eusebius' account I have used the text and notes in Averil Cameron and S. G. Hall (1999) pp. 80-6 and pp. 204-19. In VC I, 28, 1 the historian claimed that he, alone, was told the story of the miracle by the Emperor (ca. 336 AD).

<sup>55</sup> The Christogram as a Christian sign came in use later and is found rarely represented on Constantinian coinage, see Cameron (1999) p. 210. For the effect of Lactantius' account, see *op. cit.* p. 207.

<sup>56</sup> See *op. cit.* p. 205 and pp. 209-10.

<sup>57</sup> For the translation, see *op. cit.* pp. 81-2. For depictions of the *labarum* on coins of the time of Constantine, e.g. coins of Constantinople of 327 AD, see *op. cit.* p. 208-9, Fig. 2 (=Roman Imperial Coinage 7, Constantinople no. 19).

κατὰ τοῦ κράνουσ φέρειν εἴωθε κὰν τοῖσ μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνοισ δ βασιλεύσ. Τοῦ δὲ πλαγίου κέρωσ, τοῦ κατὰ τὸ δόρυ πεπαρμένου, ὀθόνη τισ ἐκκρεμῆσ ἀπηώρητο, βασιλικὸν ὕφασμα, ποικιλία συνημμένων πολυτελῶν λίθων, φωτὸσ αὐγαῖσ ἐξαστραπτόντων, καλυπτόμενον. σὺν πολλῶ τε καθυφασμένῳ χρυσῶ, ἀδιήγητόν τι χρῆμα τοῖσ ὀρώσι παρεῖχε τοῦ κάλλουσ. Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τὸ φᾶροσ τοῦ κέρωσ ἐξημμένον, σύμμετρον μήκουσ τε καὶ πλάτουσ περιγραφὴν ἀπελάμβανε, τὸ δ ὀρθιον δόρυ τῆσ κάτω ἀρχῆσ ἐπὶ πολὺ μηκυνόμενον, ἄνω μετέωρον ὑπὸ τῆ τοῦ σταυροῦ τροπαίῳ πρὸσ αὐτοῖσ ἄκροισ τοῦ διαγραφέντουσ ὕφάσματοσ, τὴν τοῦ θεοφιλοῦσ βασιλέωσ εἰκόνα χρυσῆν μέχρι στέρνων, τῶν τ' αὐτοῦ παίδων ὁμοίωσ ἔφερε.

“(1) It was constructed to the following design. A tall pole plated with gold had a transverse bar forming the shape of a cross. Up at the extreme top a wreath woven of precious stones and gold had been fastened. On it two letters, intimating by its first characters the name ‘Christ’, formed the monogram of the Saviour’s title, *rho* being intersected in the middle by *chi*. These letters the Emperor also used to wear upon his helmet in later times. (2) From the transverse bar, which was bisected by the pole, hung suspended a cloth, an imperial tapestry covered with a pattern of precious stones fastened together, which glittered with the shafts of light, and interwoven with much gold, producing an impression of indescribable beauty on those who saw it. This banner then, attached to the bar, was given equal dimensions of length and breadth. But the upright pole, which extended upwards a long way from its lower end, below the trophy of the cross and near the top of the tapestry delineated, carried the golden head-and-shoulders portrait of the Godbeloved Emperor, and likewise of his sons.”

Similarly, Prudentius described the form of the Imperial standard as being in the shape of the cross, its two poles of solid gold and set with precious stones (1,465-6). Later in the passage when he praised Constantine’s victory won by the power of the Sign, he mentioned that *Christus*, a likely reference to the *chi-rho*, was embroidered in gold and set in precious stones on the purple cloth of the *labarum* (1,486-7).

At the end of his description of the *labarum*, Eusebius declared how this representation of the Sign of the Cross became symbolic of victory and was adopted by the Emperor and his army (VC I,31):

Τούτῳ μὲν τῷ σωτηρίῳ σημείῳ, πάσης ἀντικειμένης καὶ πολεμίας δυνάμεως ἀμυντηρίῳ διαπαντὸς ἐχρήτο βασιλεὺς, τῶν τε στρατοπέδων ὑπάντων ἡγεῖσθαι τούτου ὁμοιώματα, προσέταπτεν.

“This saving sign was always used by the Emperor for protection against every opposing and hostile force, and he commanded replicas of it to lead all his army.” This is why Prudentius depicted the *labarum* in the context of the battle of the Milvian bridge, when for the first time the Roman army triumphed through the power, ‘maiestate’, of the Christian God, that is symbolised in the ‘victorious trophy’. Therefore, Constantine as the Christian general is portrayed as bearing the standard in the shape of the Cross, high in front of the army, and the Sign, made of gold and precious stones, as shining above the helmets, javelins and shields of the army (Symm. 1,481-8):

testis christicolae ducis aduentantis ad urbem  
Mulius<sup>58</sup> exceptum Tiberina in stagna tyrannum  
praecipitans, quanam uictricia uiderit arma  
maiestate regi, quod signum dextera uindex  
praetulerit, quali radiarint stemmate pila. 485  
Christus purpureum gemmanti textus in auro  
signabat *labarum*, clipeorum insignia Christus  
scripserat, ardebat summis crux addita cristis.

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<sup>58</sup> For the personification of the bridge as a witness to the battle, see *Tib.* 1,7,7 ff. Such personification of an object as the witness to a battle was known much earlier at the time of Aeschylus.

Even if Prudentius was influenced by Christian sources that likened Theodosius' victory over the two usurpers, Eugenius and Maximus (1,462-3), to that of Constantine over Maxentius, panegyric techniques have been used in the passage. Consequently, it is more plausible that for Constantine's campaign against Maxentius in AD 312 and the Emperor's triumph in Rome, Prudentius knew some versions, such as *Panegyrici Latini* 12 (9) of AD 313 and 4 (10) of AD 321, as well as the treatment of similar themes in contemporary panegyric and invective poetry, such as that of Claudian.<sup>59</sup>

In *Symm.* 1,467 ff. the portrayal of Constantine as the avenger, 'ultor' and 'uindex', of the tyranny of the usurper and also as the liberator of the people is a standard theme in panegyric. At some length, Prudentius depicted Maxentius' mistreatment of the Senate, whereby the poet followed both the historical account and the tradition of invective (*Symm.* 1,470-80):

lugebas longo damnatos carcere centum,	470
ut scis ipsa, patres. Aut sponsus foedera pactae	
intercepta gemens diroque satellite rapta	
immersus tenebris dura inter uincla luebat;	
aut, si nupta torum regis conscendere iussa	
coeperat inpurum domini oblectare furorem,	475
morte maritalis dabat indignatio poenas.	
plena puellarum patribus <sup>60</sup> ergastula saeui	
principis. abducta genitor si uirgine mussans	
tristius ingemuit, non ille inpune dolorem	
prodidit aut confessa nimis suspiria traxit.	480

<sup>59</sup> See 12 (9) 14-20 and especially 16-17 for the actual battle, and 4 (10) 28-35 and especially 29-30 for the actual battle, in *Panegyrici Latini*, ed. R. Mynors, OCT (1964).

<sup>60</sup> Here, for metrical reasons, Prudentius lengthened the final vowel ū. In this case the irregular prosody of the hexameter followed the practices of some classical Latin poets. See below the Appendix, p. 282 ff.

In VC I,33-6 Eusebius detailed the crimes committed by Maxentius against the holders of the highest positions in the Senate, these crimes included the imprisonment of senators and the sexual abuse of their wives and daughters. According to the historian, Maxentius' cruel tyranny held in servitude the members of the upper classes and caused the death of thousands, mostly in order to confiscate their property (I,35). Prudentius begins his portrayal of Maxentius' crimes by reducing the number of victims to a hundred and yet manages to achieve a gloomy and grievous account of the tyrant's abominable behaviour (*Symm.* 1,470). He portrayed graphically the fiancés, husbands and fathers who were sentenced to imprisonment and even death for their justifiable anger at the tyrant's illicit passions, and he conveys the atmosphere of terror. The portrayal of the senators' sufferings is especially powerful thanks to the alliteration of 'p' sounds (*Symm.* 1,477-8). For his adverse portrayal of Maxentius as a *tyrannus*, the poet used the conventional themes and vocabulary of Roman literature and especially that of Roman invective. Thus, 'furorem' (*Symm.* 1,475) as only one of the characteristics of a tyrant conveys Maxentius' madness and insatiable passion. Another standard feature of a tyrant's behaviour is cruelty or lack of clemency, 'saeui/principis' (*Symm.* 1,477-8), which finds expression in the imprisonment and the execution of innocent people. Therefore, the account in *Symm.* 1 abounds in references to prison cells, chains and fetters (473, 477 and 491-2). This picture of the tyrant's cruel and abominable behaviour can be compared to Claudian's portrayal of the tyrant's crimes in *In Rufinum* 1-2 and *In Eutropium* 1-2, where he used the topoi of the tyrant's greed and the torturers. According to Alan Cameron, the poems were not written strictly in the genre of invective that inverts the

themes of panegyric, but rather display the features of epic poetry.<sup>61</sup> Of the two poems, *Eutr.* is the more original composition, since the subject of the attack is an influential eunuch, whilst *Ruf.* portrays the more conventional figure of a tyrant.<sup>62</sup> In *Ruf.* 1,188-95 and 221-3 the tyrant's insatiable avarice is the theme of invective and the whole world is said to suffer under his yoke and to fear his anger, 'si semel e tantis poscenti quisque negasset,/ efferata praetumido quatuebat corda furore' (224-5).<sup>63</sup> Even stronger is the invective against Rufinus' cruelty and his murderous desire that hardly satisfies his bloodlust (*Ruf.* 1,230-250), and the exaggerated rhetoric of invective is used to depict the unlawful killing of many a citizen of Rome. Prudentius' account of Maxentius' crimes is less detailed than that of Rufinus' *nefas*, who revels in the scenes of torture and the deaths, especially of children and relatives.<sup>64</sup> If in *Symm.* 1 the tyrant's sexual indulgences and greed caused the sufferings of the senators, their wives and daughters, in *Ruf.* the picture becomes much worse. Whilst Prudentius mentioned the prison cells and chains, Claudian gave a list of instruments of torture (*Ruf.* 1,235) that contributed to the portrayal of the tyrant's abominable lust for blood (*Ruf.* 1,230-6):

non coniunx, non ipse simul, non pignora caesa      230  
sufficiunt odiis; non extinxisse propinquos,  
non notos egisse sat est; excindere ciues  
funditus et nomen gentis delere laborat.  
nec celeri perimit leto; crudelibus ante  
suppliciis fruitur; cruciatus, uincla, tenebras      235  
dilato mucrone parat...

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<sup>61</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 255 ff.

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 301-2.

<sup>63</sup> For the theme of avarice, see *Eutr.* 1,196-207. Cameron (1970) pp. 257-8 points out the flexibility of the genre of invective, by stressing the contrast in tone between the two poems, that of *Ruf.* is more solemn and grim, whilst that of *Eutr.* is less serious and comic.

<sup>64</sup> *Ruf.* 2,67-8 'nec canos prodesse seni puerique cruore/ maternos undare sinus'.

Whilst in his account of Maxentius' crimes Prudentius' purpose was to portray Constantine as a liberator in order to create his panegyric of Theodosius, in *Ruf.* Claudian had mainly political reasons. The court poet needed to isolate Theodosius from the crimes of his Praetorian Prefect of the East, Rufinus, and, therefore, he contrasted the Emperor's mercy with the Prefect's 'crudelitas' and 'nefas', 'neu perderet ullum/ Augusto miserante nefas' (*Ruf.* 1,244-5). Further, to heighten the portrait of Rufinus' opponent, Theodosius' general, Stilicho, Claudian intensified the denigration of the character against whom the invective is directed.

In his account of the battle of the Milvian bridge, Prudentius used a traditional motif in reference to Constantine's approach to the City. 'Transmissis Alpibus' (*Symm.* 1,467) presents the traditional idea of the Alpine chain as the gateway to Rome, both for its enemies, as in the case of Hannibal, and for its liberators, as in the case of Constantine. Perhaps for the implied comparison between the military successes of Constantine and Theodosius, the poet was influenced by Claudian's frequent portrayal of the Alps as being a difficult obstacle for an enemy to surmount and, hence, a line of defence for Rome. Thus, after his victory at the battle of Frigidus in these mountains, Theodosius was praised by Claudian, both as the conqueror and the liberator of the Alps from the usurpers (*Prob.* 73-4 and 104-8)<sup>65</sup>:

Postquam fulmineis impellens uiribus hostem  
belliger Augustus trepidas laxauerat Alpes,

qua fine sub imo  
angustant aditum curuis anfractibus Alpes  
claustraque congestis scopulis durissima tendunt,

105

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Claud. *Gild.* 230 ff.

non alia reseranda manu, sed peruia tantum  
Augusto geminique fidem mentita tyrannis.

The Alps acted as a barrier against access to Rome, not only during civil wars, but also during invasions by foreign enemies, of which the pagan writers viewed as the worst Hannibal's crossing of the Alps and his near entry into Rome. Hence, at the time of the danger from the Gothic invasions during the reigns of Theodosius and his successors, Honorius and Arcadius, these examples from Roman history were used both to suggest the importance of the danger and, above all, to extol the military achievements of these Christian Emperors and their general Stilicho. Claudian's *De Bello Getico* was written to celebrate Stilicho's victory at the battle of Pollentia in April 402 AD.<sup>66</sup> Instead of a historical account of the event, Claudian composed a panegyric of Stilicho's military success, in which in a rhetorical manner he used well-known examples from Roman history.<sup>67</sup> On the one hand, the *exemplum* of Hannibal's invasion of Italy served to point to Alaric's march on Rome as an even greater threat than the Carthaginian's (*Get.* 154 ff.), on the other hand, the success of the tactics used by a revered Roman general, Fabius Maximus Cunctator, in his battle against Hannibal, was disparaged in favour of Stilicho's military success and virtues (*Get.* 138 ff.). In the context of the Gothic invasions of Italy reference to the crossing of the Alps occurs frequently.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> However, the poem only describes the actual battle towards the end and even then but briefly in 17 lines. See *Get.* 580-97 and Cameron (1970) p. 180 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 350 ff.

<sup>68</sup> Claud. *Get.* 261 'ruptas...Alpes', 471 'post Alpes...apertas', 547 'Alpibus...ruptis', 563 'Alpinum...pudorem'. In *Get.* 194-98 and 532 both the Alps and the river Po are portrayed as gateways to Rome.

The passage on the Roman victory at Pollentia found in *Symm.* 2, 696 ff. was also written as a panegyric of Honorius and Stilicho and was influenced strongly by the techniques that Claudian had used in *Get.* and *VI Cons.*<sup>69</sup>

The account of the victory at Pollentia was given as an example of how the abandonment of the old religions was felicitous for the might of Rome. Similar to the rhetorical tone in *Get.*, Prudentius made use of the two well-known examples from history when Rome came closest to being conquered by a foreign enemy, the Senones and Hannibal (*Symm.* 2,684 ff.)<sup>70</sup>:

nullus mea barbarus hostis      692

cuspage claustra quatit, non armis ueste comisque  
ignotus capta passim uagus errat in urbe  
transalpina meam rapiens in uincula pubem.      695

By using 'transalpina' (2,695), a version of the topos of the crossing of the Alps as being dangerous for the safety of Rome, Prudentius developed the Christian themes of victory and peace, and used Honorius' triumph as their guarantee. Like Claudian, Prudentius did not describe the battle, but in a rhetorical manner praised the victorious general, Stilicho, and the Emperor Honorius.

Although Honorius did not have a military profile, he celebrated with Stilicho the victory at Pollentia in a triumph in AD 404.<sup>71</sup> Claudian narrated the defeat of Alaric in the epic *Get.* and also in the panegyric *VI Cons.* 122 f. dealing with the aftermath of Pollentia.

Although he was composing a panegyric of Honorius's triumphs, Claudian remained the

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<sup>69</sup> For the dating of these poems as being written before Prudentius' *Symm.* poems, see Cameron (1970) pp. 469-73 and Palmer (1988) p. 198.

<sup>70</sup> The speaker is personified Roma; *Symm. Rel.* 3,9 '...haec sacra Hannibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Senonas reppulerunt.'

<sup>71</sup> For Honorius being credited with the military achievements of his general, see Cameron (1970) p. 96, Claud. *Gild.* 349 ff. and 458 ff. Oros. *Hist.* 7,37,2 reported that the battle took place on Easter Sunday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of April AD 402.

protagonist of the general Stilicho, with reference to whom the account of the triumph began, ‘arma Getarum/ nuper apud *socerum* plectro celebrata recenti’ (*VI Cons.* 123-4). Prudentius opened his account of the Gothic invasion by describing the leader of the Goths, Alaric, as the ‘Geticus tyrannus’. Ironically Alaric is portrayed in pagan rather than Christian terms, although Prudentius must have known that the Goth was converted to a form of Christianity, Arianism. The reasons behind such representation are not only literary but also doctrinal, since in all Prudentian hexameter poems the polemic is directed against both pagans and heretics, including the followers of Arius<sup>72</sup> (*Symm.* 2,696 ff.):

Temptauit Geticus nuper delere tyrannus  
 Italiam patrio ueniens iuratus ab Histro  
 has arces aequare solo, tecta aurea flammis  
 soluere, mastrucis proceres uestire togatos.  
 iamque ruens Venetos turmis protriuerat agros       700  
 et Ligurum uastarat opes et amoena profundi  
 rura Padi Tuscumque solum uicto amne premebat.

Prudentius portrayed the ferocity of the barbarian hords in the conventional terms of epic poetry, that the enemy had sworn a solemn oath to conquer Italy.<sup>73</sup> Although the picture

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<sup>72</sup> Arianism was tolerated at the court of Milan during the regency of Justina, the mother of the future Emperor Valentinian, and the Gothic garrison there was Arian. It was not until Theodosius’ law of AD 380 (*CTh* 16,1,2) that Arians became regarded as heretics and Arian clergy were persecuted. For the conflict between the Nicene party led by Ambrose and the Arian party, see Williams and Friell (1994) p. 51 ff.

<sup>73</sup> Virg. *Georg.* 2,497 ‘aut coniurato decendens Dacus ab Histro’.

in *Symm.* 2,697 echoes closely that in *Georg.* 2,497, the expression ‘patrio...Histro’ recalls also Claudian’s language, ‘pollicitus patrii numen iurauerat Histri’ (*Get.* 81). Indeed, there are many motifs common to the accounts of both poets; one is the image of Italy as a land that had been laid waste for thirty years by Alaric and his Goths, ‘illic *ter denis* gens exitiabilis *annis*/ Pannoniae poenas tandem deleta *pependit*’ (*Symm.* 2,715-16)<sup>74</sup>, another is the image of the regions through which Alaric had passed, including the crossing of the river Po, which like the Alps was a gateway to Rome (*Symm.* 2,700-3)<sup>75</sup>. Yet another motif has an historical basis, such as the similarities between Alaric and Hannibal, or between Stilicho and Honorius, on one hand, and Camillus, on the other.<sup>76</sup> Lastly, in *Symm.* 2,718-20 the idea that later generations will wonder at the sight of the corpses littering the fields of Pollentia is based on Virgil’s vision of the Emathian fields in *Georg.* 1,497, which also Claudian recalled at the end of *Get.* 635 ff. (*Symm.* 2,717-20)<sup>77</sup>:

corpora famosis olim ditata rapinis  
in cumulos congesta iacent; mirabere seris,  
posteritas, saeclis inhumana cadauera late,  
quae Pollentinos<sup>78</sup> texerunt ossibus agros.     720

Lastly, in *Symm.* 2,732-7 the picture of the liberation of the populace portrayed as prisoners in chains is reminiscent of *Get.* 616-22.

By portraying Stilicho as the general at Honorius’ side, Prudentius showed that he was cognisant of Claudian’s panegyric themes, such as the official recognition of Stilicho’s

<sup>74</sup> Claud. *Get.* 633-4 ‘unoque die Romana rependit/ quidquid ter denis acies amisimus annis’.

<sup>75</sup> Claud. *VI Cons.* 141 ff. where Alaric is said to retreat from the areas he had invaded.

<sup>76</sup> For Hannibal cf. *Symm.* 2,738 f. and *passim* in *Get.* and *VI Cons.*; for Camillus, see *Symm.* 2,722-3 and *Get.* 430 ff.

<sup>77</sup> *Georg.* 1,497 ‘grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris’.

<sup>78</sup> For *Pollentinus*, see Claud. *VI Cons.* 127 and Stat. *Silv.* 2,6,63. Cameron (1970) p. 182 is sceptical about the claims of Claudian and Prudentius for the heavy losses of Alaric after Pollentia.

overriding contribution in the victories of Theodosius and his successors<sup>79</sup>, and his loyalty to the former that won him the hand of the Emperor's adopted daughter, Serena, and after his death, the guardianship of his sons. Thus, by referring to Stilicho as the *parens* of Honorius Prudentius must be alluding to his role as Honorius' adoptive father and also by implication his father-in-law. Similarly, in the *VI Cons.* 579 ff. where Claudian portrayed the joint triumph of Honorius and Stilicho, he praised the latter both as the father-in-law and the guardian of the Emperor.<sup>80</sup> Prudentius repeats the scenes of triumph in order to promote Christian political propaganda and also makes clear where he differs from Claudian, in that it was Christ rather than the goddess Victory, as claimed by Claudian in his account, that stands at their side, both on the field of battle and in the hour of their triumph. Honorius is described as *Christipotens* who, like his father, did battle under standards that bore the Sign of the Cross (*Symm.* 2,709-14)<sup>81</sup>:

dux agminis imperique  
Christipotens nobis iuuenis fuit, et comes eius        710  
atque parens Stilicho, deus unus Christus utrique.  
huius adoratis altaribus et cruce fronti  
inscripta cecinere tubae: prima hasta dracones<sup>82</sup>  
praecurrit quae Christi *apicem* sublimior effert.

<sup>79</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 56 that Claudian made use of a popular theme that persisted long after Theodosius' reign. *CIL* vi. 1730 (AD 398) '[Stilicho] comiti diui Theodosii Augusti in omnibus bellis adque uictoriis' and *CIL* vi. 1731 (AD 406), 'socio [Stilicho] bellorum omnium et uictoriarum [Theodosius]'.

<sup>80</sup> Claud. *VI Cons.* 580 'triumphantem generum' (of Honorius) and 582-3 '...tibi [Stilicho].../infantem genitor [Theodosius] moriens commisit alendum'. Cf. *III Cons.* 152-3 'tu [Stilicho] curis succede meis [Theodosius], tu pignora solus/ nostra foue: geminos dextra tu protege fratres' and 157-8 'indue mente patrem, crescentes dilige fetus/ ut ducis, ut soceri'; *VI Cons.* 92 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Harries (1984) p.77, Prudentius is consistent with contemporary conventions in his representation of Honorius as a soldier of Christ. The consular diptych of Fl. Anicius Petronius Probus (AD 406) shows Honorius in full armour, flanked by a globe and Victory on one side and, on the other, the military standard, *labarum*, with the words, 'In nomine XPI uincas semper.'

<sup>82</sup> For the banner of the Roman Imperial army, see *Cath.* 5,55-6 'signaque bellica/ praetendunt tumidis clara draconibus' and *Amm. Marcel.* 16,10,7, where the Roman army is seen through the eyes of Constantius during his first visit in Rome, 'Eumque post antegressos multiplices alios, purpureis sub tegminibus texti,

Briefly, by means of the techniques of panegyric Prudentius alluded to the triumph celebrated by Honorius and Stilicho in AD 404 (*Symm.* 2,731 ff.):

scande triumphalem curram spoliisque receptis  
huc Christo comitante ueni...

at noster Stilicho congressus comminus ipsa  
ex acie ferrata uirum dare terga coegit.

hic Christus nobis deus adfuit et mera uirtus. 745

.....

uiua tibi, princeps, debetur gloria, uiuum 756

uirtutis pretium decus inmortale secuto.

regnator mundi Christo sociabere in aeuum,

quo ductore meum trahis ad caelestia regnum.

Here, Prudentius stresses the Christian aspect of this victory, gives the event a new spiritual meaning and transfers his eulogy to a different plane; clearly for the poet the Roman Empire is identified with the eternal Kingdom of God. In order to condemn the pagan religions, in his account of the battle Prudentius launched an attack on the belief in the help of pagan deities in achieving Rome's victories. As in *Symm.* 2 where the two Emperors argue it was not the goddess of Victory but the military competence of the soldiers that ensured Rome's domination of the world<sup>83</sup>, the poet again rejects pagan myths as the explanation for the triumphs (*Symm.* 2,705-7):

sed uis cruda uirum perfractaque conredientum 705

pectora<sup>84</sup> nec trepidans animus subcumbere leto

pro patria et *pulchram* per uulnera quaerere laudem<sup>85</sup>.

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circumdedere *dracones*, hastarum aureis gemmatisque summitatibus illigati, hiatu uasto perflabiles, et ideo uelut ira perciti sibilantes, caudarumque uolumina relinquentes in uentum.'

<sup>83</sup> *Symm.* 2,24-6 'labor impiger, aspera uirtus,/ uis animi excellens, ardor, uiolentia, cura/ hanc tribuunt, durum tractandis robur in armis'.

However, the reference to 'uis cruda uirum' raises some questions, for with it the poet must have had in mind the savagery displayed by Stilicho's troops, many of whom were barbarians. Moreover, the ironical implications of 'crudus' are strengthened by the fact that the word was used largely in satiric works.<sup>86</sup> Since often Prudentius combines different styles of writing, the satiric tone in the passage must have served to ridicule both the enemy and the pagan beliefs. Thus, the prevailing panegyric tone is used to stress that the victory at Pollentia was won by Christ's will and the valour of Stilicho (2,745).<sup>87</sup> At the same time Prudentius may have wanted to dispel any suspicion of treachery on Stilicho's part by allowing Alaric to escape after the battle.<sup>88</sup> Again in the context of the battle, Honorius is portrayed as the victorious Emperor rendered invincible by his belief in Christ and by being accompanied by Christ in his victory at Pollentia.

The use of personifications is another technique that is common to both Prudentius and Claudian. Here, my main concern will be the personifications of Rome used in the *Symm.* poems and not the allegoric personifications for which the *Psych.* has become so well-known and which are found also in the other poems of the *corpus*.

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<sup>84</sup> Virg. *Aen.* 11,614-15 '...perfractaque quadrupedantum/ pectora pectoribus rumpunt...' This is a good example of the way Prudentius combines the styles of epic and satire.

<sup>85</sup> Here the patriotic ideal is expressed strongly. Although in Christian terms the same concept is to be found in *Perist.* 1,25 'hoc genus mortis decorum...'; 28 '*pulchra* res ...' and 51 'dulce..., dulce ferrum perpeti'. In both *Symm.* 2 and *Perist.* 1 the idea and the language are reminiscent of Hor. *Od.* 3,2,13 'dulce et decorum est pro patria mori'. See also the discussion of Horace's line by R. C. M. Nisbet in *CR* 36 (1986) 227-33 and the responses by S. J. Harrison in *RhM* (N.F.) 136 (1993) 91-3 and Ch. Gnilka in *RhM* (N.F.) 138 (1995) 94-5. For a discussion of the connections between *Od.* 3,2 and *Perist.* 1,25 ff., see Palmer (1989) p. 148 ff.

<sup>86</sup> *Juv. Sat.* 1,143 and 6,203 where it means 'over-full'; *Mart.* 3,13,3 (on the two meanings 'uncooked' and 'over-full'). But it can be used with another meaning, *Juv. Sat.* 15,83 'cadauere crudo' in his account of Egyptian cannibalism; *Mart.* 4,49,4; *Ov. Her.* 9,67.

<sup>87</sup> *Symm.* 2,712 where both Honorius and Stilicho sacrifice on a Christian altar. In 2,756-7 idolatry is rejected by everlasting glory in Christ and in 2,766-8 the Imperial palace is the centre of Christian worship.

<sup>88</sup> Claudian tactfully dealt with this by using the '*clementia* topos' to explain why Stilicho allowed Alaric to escape in the battle of Pollentia, *Get.* 120 ff. and *VI Cons.* *passim*.

Prudentius included the account of Pollentia in a speech by the personified Roma (*Symm.* 2,655-768) addressed to the Emperors, Honorius and Arcadius. Whilst the motif of personification becomes the poet's means of emulating the dramatic figure of Roma in Symmachus' *Rel.* 3<sup>89</sup>, in the account of the Roman victory here, its use recalls Claudian's frequently employed technique of presenting the personification of the City of Rome. However, following the pagan tradition that Symmachus made use of, Claudian's Roma is often portrayed as an aged lady, who during the times of danger plays the role of a humble suppliant.<sup>90</sup> For instance in Book 1,17 ff. of the unfinished *De Bello Gildonico*, the aged Roma is sad and weakened by starvation and fear, which is the way Symmachus portrayed her, and pleads with Jupiter to come to rescue her from Gildo. In Prudentius' poem for the purpose of his argument against pagan religious practices, the wellbeing and safety of Roma is put in the hands of the Christian Emperors and the one God, and her personification is in contrast with that of Symmachus (*Symm.* 2,640-54)<sup>91</sup>:

nec enim spoliata prioris	640
robore uirtutis senuit nec saecula sensit	
nec tremulis cum bella uocant capit arma lacertis	
nec tam degeneri uenerandis supplicat ore	
principibus, quam uult praenobilis ille senator <sup>92</sup>	
orandi arte potens et callida fingere doctus	645
mentitumque grauis personae inducere pondus,	

<sup>89</sup> The personification of the grey-haired supplicant Roma is found earlier in Luc. *Phars.* 1,186 f.

<sup>90</sup> For Claudian's personifications of Roma, see Cameron (1970) p. 365.

<sup>91</sup> *Symm. Rel.* 3,9 'Romam nunc putemus adsistere atque his uobiscum agere sermonibus: optimi principes [Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius], patres patriae, reueremini annos meos in quos me pius ritus adduxit! utar ceremoniis auitis, neque enim paenitet! uiuam meo more, quia libera sum...ad hoc ergo seruata sum, ut longaeua reprehendar?' Cf. *Symm.* 2,83-4.

<sup>92</sup> Prudentius paid frequent compliments to the orator for his skill, e.g. *Symm.* 1,648-9 'inlaesus maneat liber excellensque uolumen/ obtineat partam dicendi fulmine famam', *Praef. Symm.* 2,56 ff. and *Symm.* 2,760-2.

Si uocem simulare licet, nempe aptior ista  
 uox Romae est quam nunc eius sub nomine promam. 650  
 quae, quia turpe putat templorum flere repulsam  
 aegidaque in dubiis pro se pugnasse periclis  
 dicere seque grauem senio inclinante fateri,  
 ductores complexa suos sic laeta profatur

Prudentius' Roma does not decry the ban on pagan forms of worship but, quite on the contrary, rejoices and becomes rejuvenated (*Symm.* 2,655-8):

'O clari saluete duces generosa propago 655  
 principis inuicti, sub quo senium omne renascens  
 deposui uidique meam flauescere rursus  
 canitiem...

Still, as Cameron also observed, Prudentius simply adapted the topos of the traditional personification of Rome that becomes Christianised by her representation as *Roma renascens*.<sup>93</sup> Here and, also in general, in his use of this theme, Prudentius was influenced by the tradition of Latin panegyric as represented by Claudian. The Christian Roma is represented as deserving of respect and vigorous in her military power (*Symm.* 2, 661-5)<sup>94</sup>:

nunc, nunc iusta meis reuerentia conpetit annis,  
 nunc merito dicor uenerabilis et caput orbis<sup>95</sup>,  
 cum galeam sub fronde oleae cristasque rubentes  
 concutio uiridi uelans fera cingula serto

<sup>93</sup> Cameron (1970), p. 365-6 and note 2, where there are examples of the motif of a rejuvenated Roma from pagan literature.

<sup>94</sup> Around 416 AD the imperial official and poet Rutilius Namatianus described his journey from Rome to his native Gaul in his unfinished poem *De Reditu Suo*, where he also made use of the motif of *Roma renascens*, 'erige crinales lauros seniumque sacrati/ uerticis in uirides, Roma, refinge comas.' (*Red.* 1,115-16). The poet portrayed a sad Roma after she had been sacked by Alaric, 'abscondat tristem deleta iniuria casum:/ contemptus solidet uulnera clausa dolor' (*Red.* 1,119-20), and urged her recovery, 'ordo *renascendi* est crescere posse malis' (1,140).

<sup>95</sup> *Ov. Am.* 1,15,26 'Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit'.

atque armata deum sine crimine caedis adoro. 665

Finally, in *Symm.* 2,656 ff. the motif of Roma *renascens* echoes closely the passage in Claudian, where she regains her youth and strength, and is portrayed in her armour (*Gild.* 208-12):

Dixit et adflavit Romam meliore iuuenta.  
continuo redit ille uigor senique colorem  
mutauere comae. solidatam crista resurgens 210  
erexit galeam clipeique recanduit orbis  
et leuis excussa micuit rubigine cornus.

Both Claudian's and Prudentius' accounts mention her rejuvenation (*Symm.* 2,656 and *Gild.* 208), the change in colour of her grey hair (*Symm.* 2,656-7 and *Gild.* 209-10) and her armour. In Prudentius' portrayal of Roma's helmet with its red plumes the phrase 'cristasque rubentes' (*Symm.* 2,663) may be a conscious imitation of 'crista resurgens' (*Gild.* 210). The olive branch and the garland of green leaves, as Christian symbols of peace, are the only elements of her appearance that differ from Claudian's treatment. These symbols Prudentius used to stress that the personification of Roma was to be seen henceforth in a new light.<sup>96</sup> The suggested imitation of Claudian's use of the motif is reinforced by the original context in which Honorius will become Roma's protector, '...communem prosternet Honorius hostem' (*Gild.* 205).

As in *Symm.* 2, in *Symm.* 1 Roma's rejuvenation is portrayed as a consequence of the anti-pagan laws and the military achievements of Theodosius. The Emperor addresses

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<sup>96</sup> *Symm.* 2,667 ff. She remembers the great Christian persecutions (before AD 313) during the reigns of Nero, Decius, Valerian and Diocletian, 'hac me labe ream modo tempora uestra piarunt./ uiuo pie uobis auctoribus...' (2,678-9).

Roma in a speech, at the beginning and at the end of which, the City is praised as the queen of the world (*Symm.* 1,415 ff.)<sup>97</sup>:

‘exue tristes,                    415

fida parens, habitus. equidem praediuite cultu  
inlustrata cluis spoliisque insigne superbis  
attollis caput et multo circumfluis auro;

censeo sublimem tollas super aëra uultum                    425

sub pedibusque tuis nimbosa elementa relinquo.

In *Symm.* 1,410 ff. the situation is extraordinarily like that in Claudian’s *Prob.* 73 ff. where, after the Emperor liberated Italy from the two usurpers, ‘geminis...tyrannis’ (*Prob.* 108), he and Roma conversed with each other, with Theodosius addressing her first (*Prob.* 126 ff.).<sup>98</sup> Similarly, Prudentius portrayed the Emperor’s return to the City after his defeat of the ‘gemini...tyranni’ (1,410), and his address to Roma who, however, does not speak.

The change in the demeanour of Roma is prompted by the rejection of the old cults and she is promised eternity by the worship of the Christian God. Prudentius offers the most vivid portrayal of personified Roma who experiences human emotions, such as embarrassment and repentance, and becomes rejuvenated by leaving behind the past (*Symm.* 1,506 ff.):

tunc primum senio docilis sua saecula Roma                    511

erubuit, pudet exacti iam temporis, odit  
praeteritos foedis cum religionibus annos.

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<sup>97</sup> Rut. Nam. *Red.* 1,47-8 ‘exaudi, regina tui pulcherrima mundi,/ inter sidereos Roma recepta polos’, cf. *Symm.* 1,430 ‘regina’. However, in *Red.* 1,50 ff. the eternity of Rome is due to the worship of the pagan gods.

<sup>98</sup> For the personification of Rome, see *Prob.* 83-99.

iam sit anus, norit ne gloria parta senectam.

As much as Prudentius' enthusiasm for the Spanish martyrs in the *Perist.* has been interpreted as conclusive evidence of the poet's Spanish identity and national pride, Prudentius must have thought and felt like any member of the elite of the Roman Empire. Although it is likely that he visited the City on at least one occasion, there is no evidence in his poems for his personal knowledge of Rome.<sup>99</sup> He used commonplace epithets and phrases, and poetic images to portray the City and its topography that again show the influence the Latin poets and, in particular, Virgil had on his poetry. He appropriated this standard repertoire to portray Rome, both as the capital of the civilised World and the centre of Christianity.

This is especially true of the Latin panegyric as typified by Claudian, whose personifications and eulogy of Rome, Prudentius must have known. According to the convention Prudentius referred often to the City as 'rerum maxima Roma' (*Perist.* 9,3) which Virgil used also, 'nunc maxima rerum/Roma colit' (*Aen.* 7,602-3), and 'egregium caput orbis' (*Symm.* 1,496), to quote but a few examples.<sup>100</sup> Prudentius seems to have used this vocabulary to echo the panegyric technique of Claudian, who also described the

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<sup>99</sup> *Perist.* 11,1-2 'innumeros cineres sanctorum Romula in urbe/ uidimus'. Gnilka (1994) pp. 86-8, argued that for his description of the Temple of Roma and Venus and the group of Statues of the gods in *Symm.* 1,215-37, Prudentius drew on his personal knowledge of the sacred centre of Rome. See also D. Fishwick, "Prudentius and the Cult of Divus Augustus", *Historia* 39 (1990) 475-86.

<sup>100</sup> Epithets of panegyric type for Rome are found in *Apoth.* 385 and *Symm.* 2,1114 'aurea Roma'; *Symm.* 1,553 and *Symm.* 2,357 'Roma inclyta' (cf. *Enn. Ann.* 155 (Sk); *Virg. Aen.* 6,781); *Apoth.* 507 'imperii dominam...Romam'.



Eusebius also celebrated the enthusiasm in Rome after the defeat of Maxentius and described the building of a monument to victory (VC I, 39-41)<sup>103</sup>:

39...Πάντες δ' ἀθρόως αὐτὸν, οἱ τ' ἀπὸ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς, οἱ τ' ἄλλως ἐπιφανεῖς καὶ διάσημοι τῶν τῆδε, ὡσπερ ἐξ εἰργμῶν ἠλευθερωμένοι, σὺν παντὶ δήμῳ Ῥωμαίων, παιδοῖς ὄμμασιν, αὐταῖς ψυχαῖς, μετ' εὐφημιῶν καὶ ἀπλήστου χαρᾶς ὑπεδέχοντο...40. Γραφῆ τε μεγάλη καὶ στήλαις, ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις τὸ σωτήριον ἀνεκηρύττετο σημεῖον, μέση τῆ βασιλευούσῃ πόλει μέγα τρόπαιον τουτὶ κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἐγείρας, διαβρῆθην τε ἀνεξαλείπτοις ἐγχαράξας τύποις, σωτήριον τουτὶ σημεῖον τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς καθόλου βασιλείας φυλακτήριον. Αὐτίκα δ' οὖν ὑψηλὸν δόρυ σταυροῦ σχήματι ὑπὸ χεῖρα ἰδίας εἰκόνας ἐν ἀνδριάντι κατειργασμένης, τῶν ἐπὶ Ῥώμης δεδημοσιευμένων ἐν τόπῳ στήσαντας, αὐτὴν δὴ ταύτην τὴν γραφὴν, ῥήμασιν ἐγχαράξαι τῆ Ῥωμαίων ἐγκελεύεται φωνῇ. Τούτῳ τῷ σωτηριώδει σημείῳ, τῷ ἀληθεῖ ἐλέγχῳ τῆς ἀνδρίας, τὴν πόλιν ἑμῶν ζυγοῦ τυραννικοῦ διασωθεῖσαν ἠλευθέρωσα. ἔτι μὴν καὶ τὴν σύγκλητον καὶ τὸν δῆμον Ῥωμαίων, τῆ ἀρχαίᾳ ἐπιφανείᾳ καὶ λαμπρότητι ἐλευθέρωσας ἀποκατέστησα. 41. Ὁ μὲν οὖν θεοφιλὴς βασιλεὺς ᾧδὲ πη τοῦ νικοποιοῦ σταυροῦ ὁμολογία λαμπρυνόμενος, σὺν παρρησίᾳ πολλῇ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς γνώριμον ἐποίει. Πάντες δ' ἀθρόως δὲ τὴν πόλιν οἰκοῦντες, αὐτῇ συγκλήτῳ καὶ δήμων πλήθεσιν, ἔσανεῖ πικρᾶς καὶ τυραννικῆς ἀναπνεύσαντες δυναστείας, φωτὸς ἀπολαύειν ἐδόκουν καθαρωτέρων αὐγῶν, καινοῦ τε καὶ νέου βίου παλιγγενεσίας μετέχειν...

“(39)...Immediately all the members of the Senate and the other persons there of fame and distinction, as if released from a cage, and all the people of Rome, gave him a bright-eyed welcome with spontaneous acclamations and unbounded joy...(40) He announced to all people in large lettering and inscriptions the sign of the Saviour, setting this up in the middle of the imperial city as a great trophy of victory over his enemies, explicitly inscribing this in indelible letters as the salvific sign of the authority of Rome and the protection of the whole empire. He therefore immediately ordered a tall pole to be erected in the shape of a cross in the hand of a statue made to represent himself, and this text to be inscribed upon it

<sup>103</sup> For the translation, see Averil Cameron and Hall (1999) pp. 85-6.

word for word in Latin: ‘By this salutary sign, the true proof of valour, I liberated your city, saved from the tyrant’s yoke; moreover the Senate and People of Rome I liberated and restored to their ancient splendour and brilliance.’ (41) The Godbeloved Emperor, proudly confessing in this way the victory-bringing cross, was entirely open in making the Son of God known to the Romans. All the city’s population together, including the Senate and all the people, as they recovered from bitter tyrannical repression, seemed to be enjoying beams of purer light and to be participating in rebirth to a fresh new life...”

In his passage, Prudentius is at pains to show as devout Christians the senators, the most illustrious representatives of Roman identity, moral and power, and in this way stresses the continuity between the very origins of Rome and its nobility, and the Christian period of Roman history. This Christian assessment of Constantine’s victory in AD 312 is used in parallel with the theme of apostasy in *Symm.* 1 and, in particular, the pagan revival of AD 384, in order to extol Theodosius as the saviour of the Roman state from the pagan religions, and some form of tyranny. Hence, the Senate’s celebration of Christianity after the battle of the Milvian bridge provided Prudentius with a model for the episode, where the members of the aristocracy were converted willingly to Christianity (*Symm.* 1,544 ff.)<sup>104</sup>:

exultare patres uideas, pulcherrima mundi  
 lumina<sup>105</sup> conciliumque senum gestire Catonum      545  
 candidiore toga niueum pietatis amictum  
 sumere et exuias deponere pontificales.

atque ad apostolicos Euandria curia fontes      550  
 Anniadum suboles et pignera clara Proborum.

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<sup>104</sup> For the spontaneous conversion of the Roman senators, see *Perist.* 2,489-92 ‘uexere corpus subditis/ ceruicibus quidam patres,/ quos mira libertas uiri/ ambire Christum suaserat.’ and 2,513 ff. For the use of the names of Cato and the Gracchi in the passage, see *Aen.* 6,841-2.

<sup>105</sup> This is a highly poetic use of the expression in *Georg.* 1,5 where it described the heavenly bodies.

fertur enim ante alios generosus Anicius urbis  
inlustrasse caput...

On the first place among the old-established aristocratic families converted to Christianity, Prudentius mentioned Olybrius (554) and alluded to Probinus (551), the sons of Proba and Sextus Anicius Petronius Probus, who jointly held the consulship of AD 395. To these representatives of the Anicii Claudian dedicated his first poem, *Panegyricus dictus Probino et Olybrio consulibus*, and praised their faith. During the fourth century it was Imperial policy to give higher offices to the Christian nobility, and the Anician family was a good example of an aristocratic family which after its conversion to Christianity was given high office.<sup>106</sup> Although Claudian did not openly profess Christianity, he did not hesitate to eulogise the Christian members of the aristocracy. It is likely that Prudentius was influenced by Claudian's panegyric, since his reference to the two consuls as 'pignera clara Proborum' (*Symm.* 1, 551) echoes 'pignera cara [or *clara*] Probi' (*Prob.* 143).<sup>107</sup> Barnes and Westall (1991) think that *Symm.* 1,551 is a later interpolation based upon Claudian, but in favour of the authenticity of the line as an echo of Claudian, other possible linguistic similarities are found, such as 'Anniadum suboles' (1,551) and 'Anniadae' (*Prob.* 9). Furthermore, when Prudentius chose 'generosus' (552) to describe the *gens Anicia*, he may have remembered Claudian's

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<sup>106</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 32, the consulship in AD 395 was a 'gesture' to the remaining pagan aristocracy in Rome.

<sup>107</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 473 noted a few cases in the *Symm.* poems to suggest that Prudentius knew and imitated Claudian's poetry.

praise of Probus' extraordinary generosity in *Prob.* 38 ff.<sup>108</sup> In *Symm.* 1,552 Prudentius praised the Anicii above all others, 'ante alios', in the same way as in his panegyric Claudian singled out the family from the rest of the senate (*Prob.* 18 ff.). The insignia of the consul held by Olybrius in *Prob.* 231 ff. become alluded to also by Prudentius (*Symm.* 1,555-7)<sup>109</sup>:

adiectus fastis, palmata insignis abolla,<sup>110</sup>                      555  
martyris ante fores Bruti submittere fasces  
ambit et Ausoniam Christo inclinare securem.

If the echoes of Claudian's panegyric are found convincing and it is accepted that by 'generosus Anicius' (552) Prudentius referred to Probus, then as the successors of Olybrius, '...Olybriaci generisque et nominis heres' (1,554), the poet must have envisaged the later generations of Anicii who are known to have been senators as late as AD 483.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the reference to the consulship of the two sons of Probus, which is also the year of Theodosius' death, asserts AD 395 as the *terminus post quem* for the first draft of *Symm.* 1.<sup>112</sup>

Later Christian writers also pointed out as exemplary the Christian devotion of other members of the *gens Anicia*. During the process of conversion of entire leading senatorial families, under the influence of and at the instigation of educated Christians such as Jerome, at Rome aristocratic Christian ladies took vows of virginity and formed circles of

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<sup>108</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 33.

<sup>109</sup> The language imitates Virg. *Aen.* 6,818-19.

<sup>110</sup> For 'abolla', see Juv. *Sat.* 3,115 and 4,76.

<sup>111</sup> For Anicius Acilius Aginantius Faustus Iunior, the sole consul in AD 483, see *PLRE*, vol. II (AD 395-527), J. R. Martindale, Cambridge (1980). Pradoxically, the pagan senator, Symmachus, was himself related to the Anician family.

<sup>112</sup> Barnes and Westfall (1991) p. 50 ff. made an attempt to identify the individuals in *Symm.* 1,552-65 and argued for AD 384 as the *terminus ante quem*. According to them, Prudentius had in mind in 1,554-7 Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius, *cons.* AD 379; in 1,558-60, Anicius Paulinus, A. Aucherius Bassus and L. Valerius Septimius Bassus, *praefecti urbis* between AD 379-83; and in 1,561-5, Gracchus, *Praef.* in AD 376-7.

ascetics.<sup>113</sup> In AD 413 the adoption of an ascetic life by Demetrias, a noble lady of the illustrious Anician family became a *cause célèbre*.<sup>114</sup> This news was received with great approbation by Augustine and Jerome, both of whom congratulated the lady on her determination and asceticism.<sup>115</sup> Augustine addressed his letter to two devout Christian ladies of the Anician family in order to praise the faith of its female members and the greater credit Christianity had gained by the devotion of Demetrias. The Anician ladies were held up as an example of both Roman nobility and Christian devotion.<sup>116</sup> The adoption of Christianity by one of the most illustrious senatorial families whose men had held the office of consul throughout the century gives the most convincing evidence for the changes in Roman society.<sup>117</sup>

To end his Christian panegyric of Theodosius, in *Symm.* 1, Prudentius referred to the alleged visit of the Emperor to Rome after his victory at the Frigidus in AD 394, when the Senate was invited to affirm its choice of the Christian faith. Although according to the only other source that mentioned Theodosius' speech in the Senate, the outcome was

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<sup>113</sup> Jerome came to Rome in AD 382 and during his stay there among his followers became Paula of the Aemilian family and her daughters Blesilla and Eustochium. For Jerome's instructions on and praise of virginity, see *Epp.* 22 and 127 on the ascetic life of Marcella.

<sup>114</sup> See also J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome. His Life, Writings, and Controversies*, London (1975) pp. 312-13.

<sup>115</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 150 (413 AD) to Proba (wife of Sextus Anicius Petronius Probus) and her daughter-in-law, Juliana, the wife of Olybrius; Jer. *Ep.* 130 'Ad Demetriadem de seruanda uirginitate'. As well as on virginity, Jerome preached the virtues of widowhood, e.g. *Ep.* 54 'Ad Furiam de uiduitate seruanda', she had been the wet nurse of Probus.

<sup>116</sup> *Ep.* 150 '...quis uerbis explicet, quis digno praeconio prosequitur, quantum incomparabiliter gloriosius atque fructuosius habeat ex uestro sanguine feminas Christus quam uiros consules mundus? magis itaque puella nobilis genere, nobilior sanctitate, quod sit per diuinum consortium praecipuam in coelis consecutura sublimitatem, quam si esset per humanum connubium prolem propagatura sublimem. uirgines quae sibi optant Aniciorum claritatem, eligant sanctitatem.' Cf. *Perist.* 3,1 ff. 'germine nobilis Eulalia/ mortis et indole nobilior.'

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* their offspring are referred to as 'pignera sanctitatis uestrae'.

different to that in Prudentius' version, according to *Symm.* 1 the majority of the Senators voted on that occasion in favour of Christianity (*Symm.* 1,608 ff.)<sup>118</sup>:

Aspice quam pleno subsellia nostra senatu  
decernant infame Iouis puluinar et omne  
idolium longe purgata ex urbe fugandum                         610  
qua uocat egregii sententia principis, illuc  
libera cum pedibus tum corde frequentia transit.  
nec locus inuidiae est, nullum uis aspera terret.  
ante oculos sic uelle patet cunctique probatum  
non iussum sola capti ratione sequuntur.                         615

Although there is no firm evidence that after his victory in AD 394 Theodosius visited Rome again, it is believed that he had sent an oration to be read to the Senate.<sup>119</sup> In any case, Prudentius must have had very good reasons to write his exaggerated account of the mass conversion of senators and their willing enthusiastic response to the appeal of the Emperor. Under Ambrose's influence the later years of Theodosius' reign were marked by less religious tolerance and much harsher legislation.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, the poet must have felt the need to defend Theodosius' religious policy as being in line with Constantine's edict, 'to convert by persuasion and not by force', as well as to deny that it was aimed against the pagan aristocracy (*Symm.* 1,616 ff. 'dux bonus' (618)).

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<sup>118</sup> Zos. *Hist. Nova* 4,59,1-3 in Zosime, *Histoire Nouvelle*, Tome 2, 2e partie, (Livre 4), texte établi et traduit par F. Paschoud, *Collection Budé*, Paris (1979). Alan Cameron, "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilicho", *HSPh* 73 (1969) pp. 256-7 argued that in their accounts Prudentius and Zosimus described the events of AD 394 during Theodosius' second visit to Rome. See also, Harries (1980) p. 77 ff.

<sup>119</sup> Trout (1999) p. 112 including note 38. He also mentions *Symm.* 1,545-78.

<sup>120</sup> Williams and Friell (1994) p. 123-25 and *CTh* 16,10,12 (8 Nov. AD 392). Only after the death of Theodosius was there a reconciliation with the pagan aristocracy and, perhaps because it had no other choice, some of it converted to Christianity, including the son of Flavianus.

Yet another passage demonstrates that Prudentius made a deliberate effort to disguise Theodosius' intolerance of pagan worship and instead wanted to paint a benign and tolerant picture of the late Emperor. The passage comes at the end of Theodosius' speech in *Symm.* 1, where he decrees that the pagan statues and other works of art must be preserved (*Symm.* 1,502-5):

liceat statuas consistere puras  
artificum magnorum opera: haec pulcherrima nostrae  
ornamenta fuant patriae, nec decolor usus  
in uitium uersae monumenta coinquinet artis. 505

This passage has rightly been accepted as evidence of the new direction of the imperial policy towards paganism, in order to prevent Christian bigots from destroying pagan shrines and sculptures, as happened in the Eastern Provinces and in North Africa.<sup>121</sup> Such assaults on pagan monuments must have been fomented by imperial legislation, preserved for us in the *Codex Theodosianus* 16, 10 'De Paganis, Sacrificiis et Templis'. Whilst the decree *CTh* 16,10,8 (AD 382) allowed the temples to remain open and the idols in them to be valued for their artistic merit, during the reign of Theodosius and his dynasty, stricter measures were taken against the continued worship of pagan cults. Thus, *CTh* 16,10,10 (24 Feb. 391) prevented pagans from even entering their shrines, whilst *CTh* 16,10,12 (8 Nov. 392) condemned not only animal sacrifice but all other pagan rituals practised both in public or private.<sup>122</sup> Such laws instigated the indiscriminate

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<sup>121</sup> F. Solmsen, "The conclusion of Theodosius' Oration", *Philologus* 109 (1965) 310-13. Solmsen viewed 1,501-5 as an anti-climax to the "strong anti-pagan animus" of Book 1. He explained the later addition by the new turn of imperial policy on the pagan religion that no longer supported the attacks on the statues or pictures of the gods as if they were the deities themselves.

<sup>122</sup> *CTh* 16,10,10 'Nemo se hostiis polluat, nemo insontem uictimam caedat, nemo delubra adeat, templum perlustret et mortali opere formata simulacra suspiciat.' Cf. *CTh* 16,10,12 'Nullus omnino ex quolibet genere ordine hominum dignitatum uel in potestate positus uel honore perfunctus, siue potens sorte nascendi seu humilis genere condicione fortuna in nullo penitus loco, in nulla urbe sensu carentibus simulacris uel insontem uictimam caedat uel secretiore piaculo larem igne, mero gentium, penates odore



According to *CTh* 16,10,18, whilst pagan buildings ought not be destroyed, statues and altars being still objects of idolatry should be demolished. Indeed, Prudentius' allusion to the Emperors' animus against paganism reflects the continued pagan-Christian conflict in the Empire and the respective changes in the imperial legislation. The Epistles of St. Augustine provide evidence of Christian fanaticism in the destruction of idols and temples in North Africa that escalated in the year 399 as a result of the above-mentioned law on suppression of the idols, 'De idolis deponendis'.<sup>125</sup> However, in Letter 91,8 (PL 33) he complained that the municipality (at Calama) did not exercise its authority, i.e. did not comply with the imperial legislation, in preventing pagan crowds from stoning the church and other acts of violence.

Supposing that Prudentius wrote the *Symm.* poems in direct response to another attempt by the pagan party to restore the worship of Victoria at her altar in the senate house<sup>126</sup>, in the imaginary speech by the two Emperors, their invective against the goddess forms a strong beginning to the refutation of the pagan claims of Symmachus, but above all it serves the purpose of proclaiming Rome's military victories, e.g. at Pollentia, achieved under the new regime (*Symm.* 2,763-5):

heu nostram temptare fidem nec te uidet ac me  
deuotos, Auguste, Deo cui sordida templa  
clausimus et madidas sanie deiecimus aras. 765

It is worth pointing out that, if at the beginning of the poem the Emperors were to condemn the pagan idols to destruction, here in his own voice the poet declares the

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<sup>125</sup> Aug. *Epp.* 50 and 232, 3 (PL 33).

<sup>126</sup> For the altar of Victory, see Cameron (1970) pp. 237-40. Claud. *Stil.* 3,202 f. does not suggest in any way a restoration of the altar by Stilicho, but there Claudian referred to a temple of Victory, presumably on the Palatine. In *VI Cons.* 597 f. Claudian described the statue and not the removed altar. "Naturally, it was the altar smoking with incense that offended the Christians, not the statue it stood in front of." In support of his interpretation Cameron mentions the law of 399 for the preservation of pagan statues as works of art.

imperial attitude towards paganism that allowed demolition of only those monuments where worship still persisted. But Prudentius criticises pagan art from a purely Christian point of view, firstly, because it is a form of idolatry and, secondly, because all images, being men's creation and made out of perishable material, are only temporal and subject to decay (*Symm.* 2,751-5):

membra statuis effingere uile est  
 (uirtutem nil uile decet). nam uile quod aetas  
 eripit. aera cadunt aut fuluum defluit aurum  
 aut candor perit argenti, si defuit usus,  
 et fuscata situ corrumpit uena colorem. 755

However, as a poet writing within the classical literary tradition, in the conventional portrayal of the statue of Victory, Prudentius shows his appreciation of the sculptor, who just as the poet or the painter, has created a vivid image that stirred men's imagination and, consequently, gave rise to idolatry (*Symm.* 2,36 ff.).<sup>127</sup> But it is the same art that propagated superstition (2,45-8):

sic unum sectantur iter, sic cassa figuris<sup>128</sup> 45  
 somnia concipiunt et Homerus et acer Apelles  
 et Numa, cognatumque malum pigmenta, Camenae,  
 idola. conualuit fallendi trina potestas.

Explicitly, in the Hymn on the Martyrdom of St. Lawrence, the poet implied a distinction between idolatry and art, when in an allusion to Theodosius he envisages a Christian Rome where 'tunc pura ab omni sanguine/ tandem nitebunt marmora,/ stabunt et aera innoxia, quae nunc habentur idola' (*Perist.* 2,481-4). That Prudentius should be

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<sup>127</sup> Similarly, in the Hymn to Romanus (*Perist.* 10,266 ff.), in spite of his attack on the stimulation of pagan worship by the work of Greek sculptors, Prudentius offers vivid ekphraseis of the gods' images carved in marble or cast in bronze and, thus, reveals his admiration of the artists' skill, by stressing the effect that these representations had on observers.

<sup>128</sup> The scansion *sīc* seems unlikely and makes the variant 'sic inania rerum' (45) less preferable.

concerned with the artistic value of pagan images is not at all surprising, if one remembers his own rich and ‘jewelled’ style in the allegorical description of the Temple of Christian Sapientia in the *Psych.*, the shrine of the Martyr Hippolytus (*Perist.* 11,183-8) or his groups of four hexameters in the *Tituli* that depict scenes from the Scriptures and which are believed to have been inspired by Christian paintings.

Therefore, in the panegyric form of the *Symm.* poems Prudentius reflected imperial policy, not only to strengthen his own attack on pagan beliefs, but also to stress the distinction between art and idolatry. In a sermon Augustine approached this matter metaphorically and pleaded not for the destruction of tangible images, but for “the breaking of the idols within the hearts of the pagans”.<sup>129</sup> For his part, Prudentius used the symbolism of the goddess Victory, and imperial attitudes towards paganism, to make clear his concern for the survival of the pagan works of art as *innocentia idola*.

Lastly, Prudentius carefully structured his composition, so that the Christian mission for which Theodosius’ reign will be remembered is echoed at the end of *Symm.* 2.<sup>130</sup> Prudentius imagines the Emperor’s last words to his son as a request for the abolition of gladiatorial games (*Symm.* 2,1119-21)<sup>131</sup>:

solus ne praemia tantae  
uirtutis caperet, ‘partem tibi, nate, reseruo’                      1120  
dixit, et integrum decus intactumque reliquit.

<sup>129</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 62 (a), 17 ‘Prius enim agimus, ut idola in eorum corde frangimus’ (PL 38).

<sup>130</sup> *Symm.* 1,28-9 ‘ast hic [*Theodosius*] imperium protendit latius aeuo/ posteriore’. Cf. *Symm.* 1,541-2.

<sup>131</sup> For the topos of leaving something for the next generation of rulers to do, see *Prop.* 4,6,81-2 ‘siue aliquid pharetris Augustus parcat Eois,/ differat in pueros ista tropaea suos’, and *Ars* 1 (Hollis), comm. on 183-6, where Gaius, as the *ultor* of Augustus, is praised for undertaking the omissions of his father.

Thus, in AD 399 Honorius promulgated a law enforcing the closure of the gladiatorial schools in Rome.<sup>132</sup> In the light of Prudentius' request for the abolition of gladiatorial contests *Symm.* 2,1126, 'nullus in urbe cadat cuius sit poena uoluptas', is a reference to *damnatio ad ludum* which foresees the celebration of the Imperial *ludi* (2,1095 *lanistae*). This is one of the reasons why Ville<sup>133</sup> regards the law of 399 not as a sanction against them, but against the games (*ludi priuati*) staged by the senatorial class, and since presumably, the senators continued to retain gladiators on their household staffs (*seruitia*), ultimately in AD 402-3 the Emperor abolished these *ludi*.

For the purposes of his Christian crusade, Prudentius is here at pains to remind his audience of the continuity of Christian policy from father to son.<sup>134</sup> In fact the scene where Theodosius uttered his last words and handed over the throne to Honorius could be reiteration of their meeting at Milan that Claudian described in the *VI Cons.* 88 ff. In January 395 Theodosius arrived in Milan to celebrate his victory at the Frigidus and summoned Honorius from Constantinople. However, during the lavish public games, Theodosius became ill and Honorius had to assume the presidency for the remainder of the games, and on the following day Theodosius died, leaving Honorius as the legal successor in the West.<sup>135</sup> In the panegyric Claudian portrayed the games in Rome in 404

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<sup>132</sup> It was in the year 325 AD that Constantine first took legal action, in accordance with Christian morals, against these games. See *CTh* 15,12,1 'Cruenta spectacula in otio ciuili et domestica quiete non placent...ut sine sanguine suorum scelerum poenas agnoscant'.

<sup>133</sup> G. Ville, "Les jeux de gladiateurs dans l'Empire Chrétien", *Mélanges d'arch. et d'hist. de l'école franc. de Rome* (1960) 273-335, especially pp. 322-4.

<sup>134</sup> Mr Hollis pointed out to me that the close identity of father and son, rulers, is a panegyric theme that goes back to Hellenistic times, e.g. *Collect. Alex.* (Powel 1925), Eratosthenes, fr.35,13-16 praising Ptolemy III and his son, 'Ευαίων, Πτολεμαίε, πατήρ ὅτι παιδὶ συνηβῶν/ πάνθ' ὅσα καὶ Μούσαις καὶ βασιλεῦσι φίλα/ αὐτὸς ἐδωρήσω τὸ δ' ἐς ὕστερον, οὐράνιε Ζεῦ/ καὶ σκήπτρων ἐκ σῆς ἀντιάσειε χερός.

<sup>135</sup> In Prudentius the symbolic handing over of power recalls that in Claudian. In *VI Cons.* 53-76 at his *aduentus* to Rome, Honorius is reminded of Theodosius' visit to the City (13 June to 1 Sept. 389) to celebrate his triumph over Maximus, where Honorius had accompanied his father. Claudian states that the Prince was presented to the Roman senate, which may even suggest that on that occasion Honorius was raised to the rank of Cesar. (Cf. *VI Cons.* 169 f. According to the practice, Honorius had held this rank

at which, two years after the event, Honorius celebrated his victory over Alaric, where in the Circus, according to Claudian, not only horse-races took place, but Libyan lions were slaughtered (i.e. *uenationes*), and there was also a military display where no human blood was shed.<sup>136</sup> Likewise, Prudentius repeats this sentiment in *Symm.* 2,1128-9:

iam solis contenta feris infamis harena  
nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis’.

However, Prudentius’ panegyric is not designed to praise a Consul but as Christian approbation of Imperial legislation. As Theodosius had achieved everlasting glory by outlawing the shedding of the blood of animals in pagan sacrifices, Prudentius hopes that Honorius will go down in history as the one who abolished human sacrifices (*munus*) during gladiatorial contests, which had their origins in paganism (*Symm.* 2,1124-5):

ille urbem uetuit taurorum sanguine tingui,  
tu mortes miserorum hominum prohibeto litari.      1125

Probably, it was death that prevented Theodosius from doing so.<sup>137</sup>

The political and historical themes in Prudentius’ poems discussed so far, show that the poet took into account the conventional views of his day. However, there is insufficient evidence to maintain that these themes were always a direct response to the contemporary political and historical events; it might be nearer the truth to say that he wished to demonstrate that there was a link with the literary tradition of his period. His wider aim

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before he was made Augustus on 23 Jan. 393) For this interpretation of the passage, see *Claudian. Panegyricus de Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, ed. M. Dewar (with introduction, translation, and literary commentary), Oxford (1996), p. 101 f. On coins, the heirs to the throne were referred to as ‘*spes senatus*’

<sup>136</sup> *VI Cons.* 638-9 ‘*Ianus bella premens laeta sub imagine pugnae/ armorum innocuos paci largitur honores.*’

<sup>137</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 222 establishes the connection between the two passages and observes the astonishing similarity of style. In Claudian’s passage the theme of games free of blood reflects the Christian political ideology of the time. Also, Cameron comments on Prudentius’ use of these panegyric themes, “Taking a leaf out of Claudian’s book he put the appeal in the mouth of Theodosius, explaining Theodosius’ own failure to take the step with a diplomacy and ingenuity worthy of Claudian.”

was to defend Christianity as the official religion and emphasise the dependence on it of all political power. The styles best suited for this purpose, were those of rhetoric and panegyric.

## Christianity in the fourth century.

### Church Councils and Controversies as the background to Prudentius' Christian teachings.

Already at the time of Tertullian, Christianity had become widespread in Spain and by the beginning of the fourth century it had penetrated the upper classes.<sup>138</sup> Important evidence for the strong position of the Christian Church in Spain is derived from fragments that survive from the Canons of the Council of Elvira, organised by the Spanish bishops ca. 305 AD.<sup>139</sup> By the end of the fourth century, when Prudentius began writing Christian poetry, several Councils of the Church had taken place and had decided on orthodox Christian doctrines and condemned the chief heresies such as Arianism, Monophysitism and Manicheism. Although in his poetry there are no explicit references to these controversies, Prudentius' anti-heretical compositions, *Apoth.* and *Ham.*, may indirectly attack Priscillianism that had originated and spread first in Spain in AD 370s.<sup>140</sup> The founder of this heresy was a devout layman of high rank who preached a strictly ascetic form of Christianity and who even became the bishop of Avila. Although his teachings were condemned at two Synods, the heresy attracted adherents both in Gaul and Spain, where it even had some bishops among its supporters.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>138</sup> H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (1976) pp. 4-5 gives examples of how educated men of the Spanish upper classes, such as Juvencus, became Church officials.

<sup>139</sup> *PL* 84, para. 301-10 and J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius. Documents illustrating the history of the Church to AD 337* (1989<sup>2</sup>) pp. 290-3. Chadwick (1976) observed that this Council shows how successful had been the mission in Spain. The eighty-one surviving canons laid down the rules for the state of priesthood, marriage and chastity, and enforced ex-communication especially for apostasy and adultery. Canons 16, 49 and 50 dealt with the relations between Christians and Jews, who by the fourth century formed a large community in Spain.

<sup>140</sup> See below, p. 66 f. for the possible allusion to Priscillianism in Prudentius' attack on Manichaeism in the *Apoth.*

<sup>141</sup> For literature on the subject, see Chadwick (1976) *passim*, the *ODCC* on 'Priscillianism' and Stevenson (1989<sup>2</sup>) p. 159 ff. Priscillianism was condemned at Saragossa in AD 380 and, soon after, its followers were banished, as a result of which it spread to Southern France. The second trial at the Synod of Bordeaux was

Prudentius' collection of hymns for the martyrs, the *Peristephanon*, must reflect the spread in his lifetime of the cult of relics in Spain and the devotion of the population both to the local and the Roman martyrs.<sup>142</sup>

In *Apoth.* Prudentius developed the existing arguments in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity that evolved in the second and third centuries from the theology of the ante-Nicene Fathers and was propounded first at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325.<sup>143</sup> The doctrine of the single substance, *ousia* or *substantia*, of the Godhead and its three persons, *prosopa*, *personae* or *hypostases*, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as being equal in honour and power, is the subject matter of the first Preface to the *Apoth.*, known as *Hymnus de Trinitate*.<sup>144</sup> The Symbolum Nicaenum of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June AD 325 declared: 'Credimus in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, omnium uisibilium et inuisibilium factorem. Et in unum Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium Dei, natum ex Patre unigenitum, hoc est de substantia Patris, Deum ex Deo, lumen ex lumine, Deum uerum de Deo uero, natum, non factum, unius substantiae cum Patre, per quem omnia facta sunt, quae in caelo et in terra, qui [propter nos homines et] propter nostram salutem

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followed by the trial at Maximus' court in Trier at which Priscillian and his followers were convicted to death. Thereafter, in Spain the victims of these executions were venerated as martyrs and the heresy was further considered at the Council of Toledo in AD 400 (or 405), and it did not disappear until the end of the sixth century. For the Council of Toledo, see Chadwick (1976) p. 170 ff.

<sup>142</sup> For some historical evidence for the celebration of the martyr-cults in Spain in the fourth century, see Palmer (1989) Chapter 8, "The *Peristephanon* and its Sources", p. 227 ff. *Perist.* 1 and 8 are dedicated to Emeterius and Chalidonius of Calahorra (cf. Greg. Tour. *De gl. Mart.* 93); *Perist.* 3 commemorates the veneration of Eulalia at Merida (Greg. Tour, *op. cit.* 91); *Perist.* 4 is in honour of the eighteen martyrs of Saragossa; *Perist.* 5 is dedicated to the most popular of Spanish martyrs, Vincent; *Perist.* 6 celebrates the martyrdom of Bishop Fructuosus and his deacons at Tarragona.

<sup>143</sup> For documents about the Council of Nicaea that first laid down the Creed and professed the 'ομοούσιος, the one nature and three 'υποστάσεις of God, see Stevenson (1989<sup>2</sup>), p. 338 ff. These terms were defended at the Council of Alexandria (AD 362) by Athanasius.

<sup>144</sup> In *De Trin.* 11-12 Prudentius followed the tradition of the dual procession of the Holy Spirit, which seems to have started very early in the West, perhaps by the time of Tertullian, and to have been especially strong in Visigothic Spain.

descendit, incarnatus est et homo factus est et passus est, et resurrexit tertia die, et ascendit in caelos, uenturus iudicare uiuos et mortuos. Et in Spiritum Sanctum.’

In the First Refutation in the *Apoth.*, Prudentius seems to adopt the approach of those Eastern theologians who first defined the three persons of the Trinity and then explained the oneness of the Godhead.<sup>145</sup> There and in the second Refutation, the persons of God the Father and the Son are made separate, first by refuting the views of those who believed that the Father, himself, had come down to earth and suffered on the Cross<sup>146</sup> (*Apoth.* 1-177) and, thereafter, the teaching of Sabellius<sup>147</sup> who held that the Godhead could not be divided into the persons of the Father and the Son (*Apoth.* 178-237)<sup>148</sup>. Finally, Prudentius expounded the doctrine of the Trinity (*Apoth.* 238-89) where the statements in *Apoth.* 268 ff., and especially, *Apoth.* 273 ‘substantia’ and 278 ‘de lumine lumen’, follow the Nicene Creed.<sup>149</sup> The argument of the indivisibility of the Father and the Son in *Apoth.* 274 is directed against the teaching of Arius, in answer to whom the pronouncements of the Council of Nicaea were made.<sup>150</sup> In *Apoth.* 309 Prudentius expressed another belief held by the Nicene theologians that mankind was created in the

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<sup>145</sup> H. Chadwick, “Orthodoxy and heresy from the death of Constantine to the eve of the first council of Ephesus” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13, ‘The Late Empire AD 337-425’, p. 561 ff. For the doctrine of the Trinity, see Tert. *Adv. Prax.* 1 and *Pudic.* 21; Aug. *Trinit.*

<sup>146</sup> The *Patripassians* had similar views to those of the *Monarchians* and believed that the Father suffered instead of the Son.

<sup>147</sup> The *Monarchians* were concerned with one single God and they defended their ideas by two lines of thought. On the one hand, *Dynamic Monarchianism* or *Adoptionism*, with its main exponent Paul of Samosata, was based on the absolute Monad of Platonism and showed that the Word (*Logos*) and the Son were distinct entities, and denied the full divinity of Christ. *Modalistic Monarchianism*, whose chief proponent was Sabellius, defended the oneness of God, in himself, by maintaining that there were different expressions or modes of the one Godhead. In *De Fide* Ambrose considered Sabellianism to be a living heresy which was still popular in Spain.

<sup>148</sup> Prudentius argument is that, because of his transcendency the Father should be distinguished from the Son who became his Father’s revealer in the *OT* but who is still equal in status.

<sup>149</sup> This argument that occurs in *Apoth.* 239-41 was acquired by Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, from its propounder Athanasius (AD 296-373) during his exile in that city in AD 365-6.

<sup>150</sup> *Arianism* held that the Father was absolutely transcendent and He was the only true God. Similarly to Gnosticism and Marcionism, this heresy saw God as opposed to His creation and its main concern was to isolate him from the material world.

image of Christ, himself the true likeness of God. The actual source for the concept of Jesus' birth through the union of Mary and the Holy Spirit (*Apoth.* 568-9) is *Lk.* 1:26-38. The other refutations in the *Apoth.* deal with Christological and soteriological matters, one of which is the doctrine of the Incarnation that proclaims the divine and human natures of Christ. In the sixth Refutation against the Docetic doctrine, the Virgin Mary is called 'incompactae/ matris' (*Apoth.* 933) which may refer to her status as the Theotokos, the title being used to proclaim the Incarnation.<sup>151</sup> Also there, Prudentius argued in an orthodox way that only by assuming human flesh in the act of Incarnation, was Christ able to redeem it and prepare it for salvation in the Resurrection (*Apoth.* 1019-61).<sup>152</sup> *Apoth.* 1060-1 also states the traditional belief that Christ had to become man in order to reveal his divine majesty.<sup>153</sup>

Finally, in *Apoth.* 792 ff., and especially *Apoth.* 795-6<sup>154</sup>, Prudentius reiterated the tenet in the Nicene Creed that Christ was the true Son of God, "begotten, not made", and used the term *coaeternus* which the Nicene theologians had used to refute the Arian claims that Christ was God's creation and, therefore, was not eternal like the Father.

#### The sources for Prudentius' Christian didactic and polemic.

Because of the scope and the topic of the thesis, this section is not intended to provide a complete discussion of those Christian writers who may have influenced Prudentius in

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<sup>151</sup> For the controversy in relation to the term Theotokos, see Stevenson (1989<sup>2</sup>) p. 287 ff. on the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.

<sup>152</sup> In *Apoth.* 932-51 Prudentius argued that, through the Incarnation, Christ conquers death that is nurtured on sin (*Apoth.* 942-5). For the anti-Docetic argument that 'what Christ assumes is what is saved', see Ignat. *Ep.* 107.

<sup>153</sup> Athan. *De Incarn.* 8, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus *passim*.

<sup>154</sup> *Apoth.* 793 '...uerus Deus ille' and *Apoth.* 795-6 'ille coaeternus Patris est et semper in ipso,/nec factus sed natus habet quodcumque paternum est'.

the Christian ideas of his hexameter poems. Rather, in a very general way, similarities will be established between the tradition of early Christian writings and the doctrinal matters in *Apoth.* and *Ham.* Therefore, I have restricted myself to two early Christian theologians, one of the East and the other of the West, respectively Irenaeus and Tertullian. The first laid the foundations of heresiology and his thoughts can be found in Prudentius' arguments against the heresies, and the second seems to have had a more direct influence on Prudentius' treatment of the question of the Soul and especially on his arguments against Marcionism.

Although Prudentius' arguments in defence of the Christian faith are straightforward and well known, the rise of Priscillianism in fourth century Spain and the constant threat of Arianism were a sufficient reason to inspire him to take up the question of wrong and right beliefs. During his time Manicheism still had followers to which the surviving official legislation against these heretics at the beginning of the fifth century bears witness.<sup>155</sup> In the *Apoth.* 952 ff. the poet referred to the Docetic teachings of Mani, whose mythology based on the twelve celestial powers showed some similarity to Priscillian's ideas about the signs of the zodiac.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, *Apoth.* 617 ff. that describes the Star of Bethlehem ought to be directed against the power attributed to astrology both by non-Christians and heretics. Since Prudentius depicted the confusion of the Chaldean astrologers at the disruption of the celestial signs by the Star of Bethlehem, it is important to note that this passage is an exception to the tendency in the undivided

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<sup>155</sup> Between AD 381 and 394 Theodosius introduced strict laws against the heretics which affect their inheritance and legal rights. Thus, according to *CTh* 16,5,7 (AD 381), Manicheans were deprived of the right to bequeath or inherit and any such property was to be confiscated by the Fisc.

<sup>156</sup> Chadwick (1976) p. 191 ff. Priscillian allocated the twelve parts of the body to the signs of the zodiac, as Mani taught that the twelve signs are gods who helped the eternal Father in the creation of mankind.

Church in the West simply “to reject astrology as fraudulent rather than to say that the valid power of the stars was overtrumped by the greater power of Christ”.<sup>157</sup>

1. The influence of earlier Christian thought on the ideas in the *Apoth.* and the *Ham.*

At the time of Irenaeus, in the second half of the second century, the heresies of the Gnostics and Marcion were popular, and orthodox Christian doctrines evolved in opposition to them. The treatise of Irenaeus *Adversus Haereses* (*AH*) was written in ca. 180 AD<sup>158</sup> to refute the Valentinians, whom he identified as the immediate followers of the teachings of the Gnostics. The main concern of these heretics was to explain the relation of the transcendent and omnipotent God to His creation. Influenced by Platonic philosophy, the Gnostics believed that matter was the principle of impurity and evil, and saw God as opposed to man and the material world; only through knowledge or *gnosis* would the divine spiritual element return to the realm of the Demiurge, and Jesus was sent by God to act as an intermediary and reveal the knowledge. By the end of the fourth century there was a significant corpus of Christian treatises against the different heresies that denied the continuity between the *OT* and the *NT*. Naturally incompatible with Christianity was Judaism, which the former considered to be the first ‘heresy’, since to the Jews their idea of the omnipresence and omnipotence of the transcendent God<sup>159</sup> was

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<sup>157</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 200-1 for the references to Manicheism and astrology. See also p. 205 ff. for the views of Jerome and Augustine on Priscillianism. The comparison between *Apoth.* 617 ff. and Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 5,59 ff. (PG 37 I,1,5) might be used in support of Chadwick’s observation, and to establish the influence on Prudentius of Greek theology.

<sup>158</sup> Only fragments of the Greek text of *Adversus Haereses* survive, otherwise it is preserved in a fourth-century Latin translation, PG 7 (1857).

<sup>159</sup> For God’s invisibility, see *Deut.* 4:15; for God’s omnipotence, see *Amos* 9:7; for God’s omnipresence, see *Ps.* 18 and 138 (Vulg.).

in conflict with the Christian concept of God Incarnate<sup>160</sup>. Under the influence of dualistic heretic thought, *Docetism* expressed the belief that Christ only *appeared* to have had a physical and real human form, to have been born of the Virgin Mary, and to have died on the Cross.<sup>161</sup>

Irenaeus used the authority of the Scriptures to refute the Gnostic sects who did not recognise all four Gospels.<sup>162</sup> In *Apoth.* Prudentius derived his arguments against the heretic schools of thought both from the *OT* and the *NT*, and some of his uses of the passages from the Scriptures can be compared to those in *Adv. Haer.* In the first Refutation ‘*Contra heresim quae Patrem passum adfirmat*’, the poet gave examples of events in the *OT*, where according to the Christian exegetic tradition, the Father had made himself manifest through the Son (*Apoth.* 28-70). Thus, the encounters between God and Abraham in *Gen.* 18:1 ff., and Moses in *Ex.* 3:1 ff. were used by Prudentius to argue the invisibility of the Father and the presence of Christ in the *OT*.<sup>163</sup> In his fourth Refutation against the beliefs of the *Ebionites*<sup>164</sup>, ‘*Contra Homuncionitas*’, a sect of Jewish Christians who denied the divine birth of Christ, he declared that Christ was born of a virgin by calling on the authority of *Is.* 7:14 and *Lk.* 1:41 ff. (*Apoth.* 586-95).<sup>165</sup> Amongst

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<sup>160</sup> *Col.* 2:16. The Jews did not accept the *NT* and observed only the law of the *OT* and the Sabbath. The Christians’ desire to draw a distinction between their faith and Judaism lay at the root of their hostility towards the Jews. The Christian theologians used the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70 and in its place the rise of Hadrian’s Aelia Capitolina in AD 135, as a sign of God’s exclusion of the Jews from the Christian Church. Thus Julian was blamed for attempting to rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem as part of his anti-Christian policy.

<sup>161</sup> *1 Jn* 1:1. Cerinthus is known as the founder of this heresy.

<sup>162</sup> For Irenaeus’ defence of the *OT* and the four Gospels respectively, see *Adv. Haer.* 4,10 and 3,11,8.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. *Iren. Adv. Haer.* 4,7,4.

<sup>164</sup> For the Ebionites who recognised only Matthew’s Gospel, see *Adv. Haer.* 1,24,2; in 5,1,3 in response to them Irenaeus argued that Jesus was both man and God, and was made flesh by the will of the Father. They were also known as Nazarenes, see *Tert. Praescr.* 33.

<sup>165</sup> *Iren. Adv. Haer.* 3,21 attacked the misinterpretations of *Is.* 7:14 by some sects, among them the Ebionites and the Jews, in proof of Christ’s divine birth. There is a reference to *Lk.* 1:42 in *Adv. Haer.* 3,21,5 and in 3,16, Christ’s birth was used as a refutation of the Jews’ denial of his divine nature.

the miracles narrated to demonstrate the divine power of Christ, *Apoth.* 672-703 refers to the episode in *Jn.* 9:1 ff. Like Irenaeus in 5,15,2-3, for his account of the giving of sight to the man born blind, Prudentius interpreted the act of shaping the healing clay and the washing in the waters of Siloam as symbolic of the first creation in *Gen.* 2:7 and the restoration after the Fall by the act of baptism. In the fifth Refutation on the doctrine of the divinity of the Soul, 'De natura animae', Prudentius argued that the Soul was lesser than God, since it was God's creation and as such had a beginning (*Apoth.* 782-832).<sup>166</sup> God created man in His likeness by imparting His divine breath from His mouth into the body that He fashioned by His hand (*Apoth.* 833-69). Irenaeus interpreted the creation of man as the act of the Incarnate God and the Spirit<sup>167</sup> and saw Christ revealed as the true image of the Almighty, and as a new Adam.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, in the miracle of the blind man, Adam restored from the Fall to God's true likeness is used as the prototype for Christ (*Apoth.* 689-96).<sup>169</sup>

As in *Adv. Haer.* 3,22,3, in the sixth Refutation against Docetism,<sup>170</sup> 'Adversus Phantasmaticos qui Christum negant verum corpus habuisse', Prudentius referred to seventy-two Apostles of Christ, in accord with the Vulgate version of *Lk.* 10:1 (*Apoth.* 1004-5).<sup>171</sup> Here, one of his arguments is that, since it would be impossible to believe in Christ if he were unreal, there can be nothing false in God's divinity (*Apoth.* 959-80) which is similar to Irenaeus' statement against the Docetic belief.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. *Iren. Adv. Haer.* 2, 34, 2.

<sup>167</sup> *Adv. Haer.* 5,6,1 and 15,2.

<sup>168</sup> *Adv. Haer.* 3,22,3.

<sup>169</sup> For Christ's participation of the creation, see also *Apoth.* 312-20.

<sup>170</sup> *Apoth.* 952-1061. For Prudentius there was no division between the Docetic beliefs and Manicheism (*Apoth.* 956 and 974) the views of which were influenced by Gnosticism.

<sup>171</sup> *Iren. Adv. Haer.* 3,22,3 has also seventy-two (in the Latin version of *Adv. Haer.*) and in 2,21,1 the number seventy (as in the Greek *NT*) occurs in his argument against the Gnostic theories of the Aeons.

<sup>172</sup> *Adv. Haer.* 4,33,5.

There is convincing evidence that Prudentius knew the works of Tertullian (160-225 AD), and the influence of the latter can be detected not only in the theological ideas used by the poet, but also in his vocabulary. In fact, some of the words used by Prudentius are to be found elsewhere only in Tertullian's writings. The *Apoth.* reveals closest parallels with the discussion on the nature of the Soul, as a part of the argument of God's goodness, in the treatise in five Books *Adversus Marcionem* (*A.M.*) by Tertullian. The latter explained that his preference for *afflatus*, which is the Latin equivalent for *pnoe*, over *spiritus* or *pneuma*, was significant. The meaning of these words showed that breath (*afflatus*) was the image, or reflection, of the spirit and in this way, man was the image of God, who was the spirit. Consequently, breath as the image of God could not be equated with the real thing.<sup>173</sup> Prudentius began the refutation of the doctrine of the divinity of the soul by insisting that, as God's creation, it was only a semblance of the likeness of God (*Apoth.* 782ff.).<sup>174</sup> Thus God made man in his own image (*Apoth.* 799 'sui similem'), but this image must not be considered as the real thing (*Apoth.* 799-800), for there is a difference between truth and the imitation of truth.<sup>175</sup> Clearly, the opening argument of Prudentius' poem followed closely the way in which it was developed by Tertullian.

Next, both authors continue by asserting the likeness of the soul to God. In *A.M.* the divine qualities of the soul are its immortality, free will, rationality, foresight and

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<sup>173</sup> *A.M.* 2,9,3: 'Nam et ideo homo imago dei, id est spiritus; deus enim spiritus. Imago ergo spiritus afflatus. Porro imago ueritati non usquequaque adaequabitur. Aliud est enim secundum ueritatem esse, aliud ipsam ueritatem esse.'

<sup>174</sup> *Apoth.* 797 'haec similis uelut umbra Dei est...'

<sup>175</sup> *Apoth.* 801 'atque aliud uerum est, aliud simulatio ueri'. Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,3, and the construction 'aliud..aliud'.

intellect.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, the God-like soul does not have the power of God, that is his immunity from sin. Consequently, “not everything that is of God can be held to be God”.<sup>177</sup> In a more poetic way, Prudentius asserts, on the one hand, that the soul is like God, in that it is wise, capable of goodness, intellect and power (*Apoth.* 803-6).<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, that it is unlike God, since it has limits and can be grasped, and is capable of committing sin (*Apoth.* 807-19). Eventually, Prudentius’ concern becomes the objection, which Tertullian refuted in *A.M.* 2,9, that “what belongs to God, cannot be held to be God”.<sup>179</sup> The closest parallel to the thought and phraseology of Tertullian in relation to this topic is to be found in *Apoth.* 830-1, ‘illa quidem flatus Domini est, sed spiritus et uis/ non est plena Dei...’<sup>180</sup>

To illustrate the truth that that which is an image of God is not of itself God, both Tertullian and Prudentius used a common example from the world of man. In *A.M.* 2,9,6-7 Tertullian stated that, by blowing into a flute, a man does not make it a man, and likewise, a jar made by a potter cannot, itself, be the potter. Similarly, in *Apoth.* 837-848 Prudentius described the varied nature of the breath exhaled by man and, thus, the different music that can be produced by blowing into a flute, in order to emphasise the act of creation of the soul, which is the breath of God.<sup>181</sup> Finally, Tertullian concluded his argument by asserting that through the freedom of choice, ‘liberum arbitrium’, granted to

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<sup>176</sup> *A.M.* 2,9,4 ‘...habens illas utique lineas dei, qua immortalis anima, qua libera et sui arbitrii, qua praescia plerumque, qua rationalis, capax intellectus et sapientiae.’

<sup>177</sup> *A.M.* 2,9,5-6 ‘...ita et anima, imago spiritus, solam uim eius exprimere non ualuit, id est non delinquendi felicitatem...Et alias autem non omne quod dei erit deus habebitur.’

<sup>178</sup> *Apoth.* 803 ‘iustique capax’. Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,4 ‘capax intellectus’.

<sup>179</sup> *Apoth.* 824-5 ‘sit res illa Dei, non abnuo; pars tamen illa/ haudquaquam dicenda Dei est...’

<sup>180</sup> Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,2 and 4-5.

<sup>181</sup> *Apoth.* 843 ‘adde et distinctum quem musica tibia flatum/ concipit.’ Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,6 ‘Nec tu enim si in tibiam flaueris, hominem tibiam feceris.’

the soul by God, it disobeys its Creator<sup>182</sup>, whilst Prudentius demonstrated the soul's capacity for sinning through its unwholesome alliance with the flesh (*Apoth.* 879-914).

Since Prudentius was writing after the Council of Nicaea and the subsequent Councils of Alexandria and Constantinople, he naturally embraced the accepted faith and was aware of more contemporary Christian writers in the West.<sup>183</sup> Nearer the time of Prudentius, Hilary and Ambrose found it necessary to refute certain heresies and to expound the doctrines of the Council of Nicaea, and in particular the union of God the Father and God the Son. In *De Trinitate* 6,9-12 Hilary referred to the heresies of Mani and Sabellius, and in *De Fide* 1,1,5-6 Ambrose set out to refute the heresies, such as Judaism, the heresy of Sabellius, the Ebionites and Arius. Although I have not been able to establish linguistic parallels, in Ambrose's treatise the arguments for and examples in support of Christ's appearances in the Books of the *OT* are similar to those in the *Apoth.* Thus, both Ambrose (1,4,33) and Prudentius (*Apoth.* 128-54) claimed that God the Son made himself manifest in *Dn.* 3:1 ff. Likewise, they interpreted the visitation by the three Angels to Abraham in *Gen.* 18:1 ff. as evidence for the three persons of the one God (*Apoth.* 28-30 and *Fid.* 1,13,78). To defend the union of the Father and the Son both Ambrose (1,8,55) and Prudentius (*Apoth.* 238 ff.) developed the argument that the Fatherhood requires the existence of the Son, and therefore that God and Christ were coexistent and eternal. In Book 2 on the belief in the Resurrection, Ambrose expressed the orthodox views, which Prudentius also used in *Apoth.* 898 ff. and *Ham.* 863 ff., that not only was the soul

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<sup>182</sup> Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,8.

<sup>183</sup> Augustine's dogmatic-polemical treatises were written a little later than Prudentius' time, such as *De Haeresibus* (a description, rather than a refutation of 88 heresies written in AD 428-9); *De Moribus Manichaeorum*, especially book 2; *De Libero Arbitrio libri 3*; *De Vera Religione 1*, especially ch. 10-23; *Ad Orosium Contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* (ca. 415 AD); the anti-Donatist writings composed between AD 400-411, and finally the anti-Pelagian writings.

imprisoned by the body (2,20-21), but it also, with the latter, shared in responsibility for the actions of mankind and therefore was subject to God's judgement (*Fid.* 2,88). In *Ham.* 523-52 the sin is said to start in the heart and the God-given soul has the capacity to exercise control over the body.

As to the question of the body versus the soul, Prudentius expounded the doctrine of the salvation or punishment of souls according to their deserts whilst still in the body. In the final sections of *Ham.*, after the death of the body, the return of the soul to its Creator is portrayed as its liberation from the chains of the body. In his treatment Prudentius accepted the Platonic idea of the body as the prison of the soul, which had become part of the Christian doctrine (*Ham.* 845-55 and 918).<sup>184</sup> This should be contrasted with the final prayer for the resurrection of the unblemished body (*Apoth.* 1062-84).

In *Ham.* 27-55 the poet stated the tenet of the Nicene Creed that the Father and the Son are separate but still one in essence. Through the comparison of the unity of the Godhead to the Sun, he alluded to the Trinity; it is referred to twice more, but otherwise is not so prominent in the poem given its concern with the refutation of bitheism (*Ham.* 70-8).<sup>185</sup>

## 2. The influence of Tertullian on the ideas in the *Ham.*

According to Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, of all the Gnostic sects that believed matter is evil, the teaching of the Marcionites was the most dangerous since it had the greatest

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<sup>184</sup> Cf. *Cath.* 10,22; *Perist.* 5,357-60 etc. For the influence of the Platonic idea on Christianity, see P. Courcelle, "Tradition platonicienne et tradition chrétiennes du corps-prison", *REL* 43 (1965) 406-43. He concluded that up to the time of Prudentius and Ambrose all Christian writers, except for Arnobius, accepted the general idea of the body as the prison of the soul. See p. 427 for Prudentius' use of the metaphor in *Perist.* 13,53 ff. and *Ham.* 845 ff. and 910 ff.

<sup>185</sup> Sabellius used the analogy of the Son to describe the three manifestations of the Godhead. See the evocation of the Trinity in the poet's prayer that closes *Ham.* 931 ff. It is significant that Prudentius expressed the Western doctrine of the *Filioque*, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

authority.<sup>186</sup> Marcion distinguished between the baleful God of the Jews in the *OT*, and the loving and merciful God of the *NT* whom Jesus calls his Father.<sup>187</sup> As a result of his dualism Marcion rejected the *OT* and established his own Canon of Christian Scripture, restricted to St. Luke's Gospel and ten of St. Paul's Epistles.<sup>188</sup>

In *Ham.* Prudentius set out to refute Marcion's dualistic views, but rather misrepresents them as being a division between the God of the *OT*, the creator of evil, and the God of the *NT*, the giver of good (*Ham.* 14-16 and 111-123).<sup>189</sup> He strengthened the Gnostic element because, as the title of the poem shows, the main argument is about the origin of evil.<sup>190</sup> However, the poem opens with a Preface where, in a rather original way, *Gen.* 4 is chosen as an example of primal sin, and its author Cain becomes the prototype for Marcion.<sup>191</sup> Prudentius used allegory to equate Cain and Abel with the body and the soul, but only in so far as it is suggested by the different offerings they made to God in *Gen.* 4 which gave rise to the false suppositions of the dualistic heresies.<sup>192</sup> He also followed the tradition of biblical typology, whereby the murder of Abel is interpreted as a

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<sup>186</sup> *Adv. Haer.* 1,27,1-4. For the influence of Docetism on Marcionism, see 4,33,5 and 5,1,2.

<sup>187</sup> Unlike the Gnostics, Marcion did not go as far as identifying the God of the *OT* with the principle of evil.

<sup>188</sup> Only references to the Canon of Marcion survive and most of these are in Tert. *A.M.* See also Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 3,11,7. For Marcion's Bible and *Antitheses*, see G. Lüdemann *Heretics. The Other Side of Early Christianity* (trans.), London (1996) pp. 162-6.

<sup>189</sup> Palla (1981) p. 16 ff., Prudentius attacked the dualistic doctrines of the fourth century in general and took Marcionism as the starting point. By then Marcionism had merged into the Gnostic teachings of the fourth century and later into Manicheism and Priscillianism.

<sup>190</sup> The Gnostics asked themselves what was the origin of evil, 'unde malum et qua re?' (Tert. *Praescr.* 7,5), and remembering *Is.* 45:6-7, 'Ego Dominus... faciens pacem et creans malum', they arrived at the answer that matter was the sole source of evil in the world. Tert. *A.M.* 1,2,2 maintains that, like many philosophers and heretics in his day, Marcion showed an unhealthy interest in the problem of the origin of evil.

<sup>191</sup> See Ambr. *Incar. domen. sacram.* 1,4 ff., for the Christian exegesis of *Gen.* 4:3 ff. that the living things, *animalia*, are of God while he rejects the things of the earth, *terrena*. There, Cain is said to be a prototype for all heretics, including Marcion (*op. cit.* 2,8).

<sup>192</sup> In *Praef. Ham.* 51 ff. Prudentius presented Marcion's views, but he, himself, did not identify the body as such with evil.

prototype for Christ's Passion.<sup>193</sup> Thus, on the one hand, the question of matter as evil is introduced, and, on the other, a continuity is established between the *OT* and the *NT* that had been rejected by Marcion.

It is very likely that Prudentius modelled the *Ham.* on the *A.M.* where in a carefully structured argument Tertullian refuted the reasoning process of Marcion. In *A.M.* 1,1,4 ff. offensive language is used to introduce the heretic as the most barbaric, hostile and treacherous representative of his home town, Pontus, as well as to compare him to a dog, after the conventional Christian representation of the enemies of the Orthodox faith.<sup>194</sup> Then, Tertullian portrayed metaphorically the dualistic heresy of Marcion whom he likened to the person suffering from double vision.<sup>195</sup> The tone of invective at the beginning of *A.M.* is recalled in the opening attack in *Ham.*, where the view of a divided Godhead is attributed to Marcion's deranged state of mind or to his blurred vision (*Ham.* 4-5).

In *Ham.* 17-26 Prudentius introduced his first argument against Marcion's dualism, that there could not exist two Gods, if supreme power was to be ascribed to God, 'porro nihil summum nisi plenis uiribus unum' (*Ham.* 22). In *A.M.* 1,3,4 ff. Tertullian developed his argument that God could not be subdivided in the light of the universally accepted view that two supreme powers cannot exist side by side. The nature, he claimed, of the 'summum magnum' imposes the necessity of its being unique, or, otherwise, it will cease

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<sup>193</sup> For *Gen.* 4 in the Christian exegetic tradition, see Palla (1981) p. 116-19. Thus, Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 4,25,2 used this biblical typology and in Tert. *Adv. Iud.* 5,1-3, Ambr. *Cain et Ab.* 1,2,5 and Aug. *C. Faust.* 12,9, the discord between Cain and Abel was used allegorically for the conflict between Jews and Christians.

<sup>194</sup> In *A.M.* 1,1,5; 2,5,1 Marcion is compared to different animals, e.g. beaver, mouse, but especially to a dog, which the Christian writers considered to be an unclean animal. Cf. Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 5,8,2).

<sup>195</sup> *A.M.* 1,2,1-3 where Tertullian also mentioned that Cerdo influenced Marcion in his doctrine. Cf. Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 1,24.

to be 'summum magnum'.<sup>196</sup> Next, *Ham.* 27-5 stresses the oneness of the Father and the Son which leads the poet to maintain the superiority of the number one over two. The second argument continues the play with numbers by an illustration from nature. An analogy is established between God and the Sun (*Ham.* 67-78), whereby the number one can live in harmony with the number three, an allusion to the unity of the three persons in the Godhead, and is opposed to duality (*Ham.* 68).<sup>197</sup> Although, by the time that *Ham.* was composed this example had become a commonplace, it is significant that both Tertullian (*A.M.* 2,2,2) and Prudentius used it in their attack against Marcion. Finally, in *Ham.* 95-105 the discussion of numbers forms the third argument (*Ham.* 95-6):

si duo sunt igitur cur non sint multa Deorum            95  
milia? cur numero Deitas contenta gemello est?

Again this argument echoes *A.M.* 1,5, where Tertullian expressed the same thought:

'...Primo enim exigam cur non plura, si duo?... quae potuit duo admittere, eadem potuit et plura; post duo enim, multitudo, unione excessa.'

Although this motif has been favoured in the anti-heretic polemic of Christian writers, the parallel is strengthened by an expression common to both authors. Thus, Tertullian used the image of 'a swarm' of divinities pouring out, as in 'examen diuinitatis effudit' (*A.M.* 1,5,1) which is exactly what Prudentius did (*Ham.* 97-100):

an non in populos dispersa *examina Dium*  
*fundere* erat melius mundumque inplere capacem  
semideis passim nullo discrimine monstis  
quis fera barbaries perituros mactat honores?            100

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<sup>196</sup> *A.M.* 1,3,5 'Porro summum magnum unicum sit necesse est. Ergo et deus unicus erit.' Cf. *A.H.* 2,1. This is a commonplace used also by Athanasius and Ambrose in their Arian polemic.

<sup>197</sup> *Ham.* 78 'et tribus *una* subest mixtim *substantia* rebus' refers to the faith in the Nicene Creed.

Next, Prudentius objected to Marcion's statement that the God of the *OT* was the cause of the evil in the world and the sins of mankind (*Ham.* 106-19), by drawing on testimony from the *OT* itself. In *Ham.* 159-205 he referred to Lucifer, the Fallen Angel, of *Is.* 14:12-15.<sup>198</sup> He was created by God to be the most beautiful of his angels and shone brightly in the sky, but once consumed with pride, he became evil and, thereafter, led mankind into sin. The argument has been developed in *A.M.* 2,10,1 ff. with the difference that for his portrayal of the Devil as the erstwhile Lucifer, Tertullian quoted *Ezek.* 28:11-16. However, Prudentius' reference to the outstanding brightness of the star, '...augustum radiabat sidus et ingens/...splendor...ardebat' (*Ham.* 161-2) may be compared with Tertullian's language, 'eminentissimo angelorum' and 'inter gemmantes siderum ardentium radios' (*A.M.* 2,10,3).

Having discussed the corruption of mankind following the Fall of Lucifer, Prudentius then goes on to illustrate the goodness of God manifested in all his creation (*Ham.* 337-53).<sup>199</sup> The heretics objected to this belief by asking "if God is good and omnipotent, why does he allow evil?" and both Prudentius and Tertullian attempted to answer this accusation.<sup>200</sup> At the beginning of the discussion, the poet referred to the heretics' attack on the faith through their usual comparison to dogs (*Ham.* 637-9):

Sentio quam contra moueat pellacia litem,  
 quo dente obnitens spinosa calumnia pugnet  
 nosque laccessito uocet ad luctamina uero.

In this context it is most likely that Tertullian was Prudentius' model, since the former portrayed metaphorically his opponents as dogs that growl against the true God and gnaw

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<sup>198</sup> *Is.* 14:12 'Quomodo cecidisti de caelo,/ Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris?/ corruisti in terram,/ qui uulnerabas gentes...'

<sup>199</sup> Cf. *A.M.* 2,3 ff.

<sup>200</sup> *Ham.* 637 ff. and *A.M.* 2,5,1 ff.

at the bones of pointless discussions, 'haec sunt argumentationum ossa quae obroditis' (A.M. 2,5,1). As did Tertullian in A.M. 2,5,5-7, Prudentius replied in a series of rhetorical questions, a distinctive feature of the polemical style of Lucretius and also of Christian writers, that man was granted freedom of choice and of the power to act, 'uis libertatis', which absolves God of the blame for sin (*Ham.* 673 ff.):

Quale erat electus magni rex orbis ut esset  
non rex ipse sui curto foedatus honore?                      685  
nam quis honos domini est cuius mens libera non est,  
una sed inpositae seruit sententia legi?

In these verses he elaborated on the dominion of man over the world and, especially, over his own mind, which is reminiscent of the passages in Tertullian.<sup>201</sup> Both authors asserted that this freedom of will gave man the opportunity of choosing between good and evil, so that he would receive his just deserts. Such rewards can be deserved, only if the decision is made willingly and not out of necessity (*Ham.* 690-5)<sup>202</sup>:

non fit sponte bonus cui non est prompta potestas      690  
uelle aliud flexosque animi conuertere sensus.  
atqui nec bonus est nec conlaudabilis ille  
qui non sponte bonus, quoniam probitate coacta  
gloria nulla uenit sordetque ingloria uirtus.                      695

This particular line of argument in A.M. and *Ham.*, for the same purpose, points towards Prudentius' use of Tertullian's work, but because of the persistence of this motif in ecclesiastical writings prior to Prudentius, it is difficult to be certain on this point.

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<sup>201</sup> Cf. A.M. 2,6,3: 'Sed et alias quale erat ut totius mundi possidens homo non imprimis animi sui possessione regnaret, aliorum dominus, sui famulus?'

<sup>202</sup> Cf. A.M. 2,6,6: 'bono sponte..malo sponte' and 6,7 'necessitate..non uoluntate'.

Finally, in his anti-Marcionite polemic, Prudentius included a reference to the nature of the soul that is also found in *A.M.*<sup>203</sup> Some heretics believed the soul to be God and, therefore, Tertullian wanted to forestall their likely objection, that since the soul, which is the breath of God, commits sins, God is also capable of sinning.<sup>204</sup> For a different argument, that God created all things good, Prudentius argued that the Creator has given the soul a pure, wise nature and, therefore, the responsibility for overcoming evil lies with it, rather than with the body, which is inferior to the soul (*Ham.* 543-52):<sup>205</sup>

ignitum quoniam Deus indidit olli     544

ingenium purum sapiens subtile serenum,

mobile sollicitum uelox agitabile acutum     546

It is difficult to say exactly why Prudentius chose to attack the dualistic heresy in the person of Marcion. Whether there was a need because of the rise of Priscillianism or the persistence of Manichaeism, he must have had a personal reason for seeking the answer to the origin of evil. He used the traditional arguments to prove that evil came not from God, but in his mercy he gave mankind free will to distinguish right from wrong. However, Prudentius was no more successful in his attempt to solve the problem of evil than Tertullian had been in *A.M.*

The influence on the *Symm.* poems of the apologetic and anti-pagan polemic themes in early Christian writings.

1. The existing tradition of ancient philosophy and Christian apologetics.

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<sup>203</sup> See above on the similarities between Tertullian's argument and *Apoth.* 'De Anima'.

<sup>204</sup> *A.M.* 2,9,1.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. *A.M.* 2,9,4. In this chapter Tertullian used *factor* instead of the usual *creator*. *Factor* is often used by Prudentius in *Ham.* 547, 641, *Apoth.* 798 etc.

In *Symm.* 1-2 Prudentius was greatly influenced by the tradition of Christian apologetics and used some of its topics to prove the fictional nature of the myths and the futility of the pagan forms of worship. Since the time of Xenophanes in Greece there existed a tradition of criticism of pagan myths on the grounds of ‘impiety’ and ‘irrationality’. The philosopher Euhemerus maintained that the gods were men in power who were deified *post mortem* for their contribution to the welfare of mankind, which suggests that this doctrine “can be seen as a form of allegorism and bridging the gap between traditional mythology and philosophical theology”.<sup>206</sup> But whilst ancient philosophy accepted the pagan mythology as allegories, Christianity completely rejected it, allowing itself to accept the mythical discourse only as a linguistic convention, and the Christian Apologists, such as Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius and Augustine adopted some of the Greek philosophers’ views in their refutation of pagan polytheism.<sup>207</sup> The disapproval in Christian literature of classical poetry was linked to the rejection of its mythological content and the philosophy of pagan cosmology.<sup>208</sup> Since education in Late Antiquity was founded on the texts of the classical writers, the process of Christianisation involved

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<sup>206</sup> M. Gale, *Myth and Religion in Lucretius*, Oxford (1994) p. 10 f.; Xen. *Fragm.* 10-16 and Plat. *Rep.* 2, 376e-392c who criticised the harmful effect of some myths. Epicureanism rejected the educational value of poetry that invented and promoted the myths, see *op. cit.* p. 45 ff. For Euhemerism, see p. 75-80 and especially p.77 where Gale maintained that although Lucretius was writing against a background of renewed interest in Euhemerus’ ideas, the *D.R.N.* should be considered as being hostile to Euhemerus’ theories which contradicted Epicurean theology.

<sup>207</sup> Aug. *Doctr. Chr.* 2,144 (Green) ‘Philosophi autem qui uocantur si qua forte uera et fidei nostrae accommodata dixerunt, maxime Platonici, non solum formidanda non sunt sed ab eis etiam tamquam ab iniustis possessoribus in usum nostrum uindicanda.’ He used as a parallel *Exod.* 3:21-1 and 12:35-6.

<sup>208</sup> Thraede (1962) “Deutung des vorchristlichen Epik in der theologischen Literatur”, p. 1006 ff., tried to distinguish several categories in the Christian treatment of the pagan epic: antithesis and acceptance; ‘Übertragung’; interpolation; contamination. Latin Christian literature engaged in the critique of the pagan epics because of a combination of factors: the lack of a genuine mythological epic, the moral-didactic concept of poetry, the influence of Virgil and the grammatical-philosophical commentaries on pagan epics.

the assessment of such inevitable subject-matter and regarded it as a part of the sinful past. Aug. *Conf.* 1,13,21 is characteristic of the conflict between the pagan epic and mythology, and Christianity.<sup>209</sup> In broader terms the topos of ‘rejection of pagan literature’ was closely linked with the topos of Christianisation, “Bekehrungs-topos”, and, therefore, the reading of pagan epics became part of the topoi of ‘the sinful past’, “sundige Vergangenheit” or ‘the sins of youth’.<sup>210</sup> The polemics of the Apologists were directed against the philosophers’ allegorising of the myths which is most evident in the invective against the interpretations of Saturn and the incest of Jupiter and Juno<sup>211</sup>. Another topos in the anti-pagan polemics rejected belief in the intercession of the gods by pointing to the instances of their ineffectiveness and immorality demonstrated in the pagan epics.<sup>212</sup> However, in their criticism of the pagan epic the Christian writers continued with what Lucretius had done already through the Epicurean tenets in his poem.<sup>213</sup> Whilst, on the one hand, they rejected the acceptance of the pagan epics, on the other hand, they used them to support and illustrate their apologetic arguments.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> ‘Et haec non flebam, et flebam Didonem extinctam ferroque extrema secutam, sequens ipse extrema condita tua relicto te et terra iens in terram. Et si prohiberer ea legere, dolerem, quia non legerem quod dolerem. Talis dementia honestiores et uberiores litterae putantur quam illae quibus legere et scribere didici.’ (cf. *Aen.* 6,457).

<sup>210</sup> Thraede (1962) p. 1007.

<sup>211</sup> Aug. *Civ. Dei* 7,4 on the scandalous infamies of the ‘select’ gods; 7,27 and 18,15. Tert. *Apol.* 25,8 ‘misera illa coniunx Iouis et soror’.

<sup>212</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 14,2 ff. ‘sed conuersus ad litteras uestras...quanta inuenio ludibria.’ The accounts of the poets such as Homer, Pindar and Euripides denigrate rather than extol the worship of the gods; 14,5 ‘haec neque uera prodi neque falsa confingi apud religiosissimos oportebat.’ Cf. Tert. *Ad Nat.* 1,10; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 1,2-4 on *Aen.* 1,67 f.

<sup>213</sup> For the criticism of myth in antiquity, see Gale (1994) pp. 7-18 and Thraede, p. 1008. For Lactantius’ use of the *D.R.N.*, see Chapter II, p. 118 ff.

<sup>214</sup> Aug. *Civ. Dei* 15,9 (*Aen.* 12,896-902); 3,10 (*Aen.* 8,326 f.) criticised the tendencies in Roman history of constant wars. Lact. *Mort.* 12,1 on *Aen.* 4,168-9; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 9,4 on *Aen.* 4,449 saw Aeneas as being the prototype of Christ.

In *Symm.* 1 Prudentius made use of the tradition of the Christian apologetics found in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, Min. Felix' *Octavius*, and the works of Cyprian, Arnobius and Lactantius who adopted Euhemerus' arguments against the pagan gods and myths.<sup>215</sup> Similarly, Prudentius employed the theory of Euhemerus in representing the gods as deified men and the philosophers' arguments against the immoral and irrational nature of the myths.<sup>216</sup> Thus, Prudentius' anti-pagan polemic exposed not only the futility of the pagan forms of worship, but also of poetry and art as the means of its propagation.<sup>217</sup> Since he composed a poetic version of such anti-pagan polemic, he found an example in Lucretius' poem that appropriated the pagan myths to provide an allegorical illustration of his scientific theories. Similarly, Prudentius alluded to the poetic accounts of the myths written by his predecessors and, therefore, displayed a highly rhetorical and vivid treatment of the apologetic themes. Consequently, *Symm.* 1 shares a great deal of the aesthetics of classical epic poetry and uses its *modus operandi*. However, *Symm.* 2

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<sup>215</sup> For Euhemerus' theories, see Enn., *Euhem.* (*Sacr. Hist.*) Vahlen<sup>2</sup> pp. 223-9; Cic. *N.D.* 1,119; 2,62; Tert. *Apol.* 10,3-4; Min. Fel. *Oct.* 21,1 ff.; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 4,29; Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1,11,32-5 and 62-5; 1,14; Cypr. *Idol.* 1; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 6,7; 7,18 and 27; 8,5 etc. See also Chapter III, p. 156 ff.

<sup>216</sup> It is paradoxical that Christianity, itself, had to refute the charges that it worshipped more than One God and that a crucified man. Cf. Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1 where he defends Christ's divine nature by pointing to his miracles.

<sup>217</sup> The poets were blamed for making notorious the stories about the scandals of the gods. Cf. Cic. *N.D.* 1,42; 2,70; Ambr. *Ep.* 18,8 and Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 3,6-7.

presents more vehemently the accusations against the pagan religion and its methods, and attacks directly its propagators, such as poets, artists, priests and orators, e.g. Symmachus, which reinforces the thesis that it was written during a revival of the pagan opposition. In this second poem Prudentius adopts an apologetic tone and develops the Christian beliefs, in opposition to the pagan concepts of the *mos maiorum*, victory and *pietas*. For most of his arguments there the poet relied on the Christian apologetic tradition.

Since the time of Origen the apologists were using the theme of the spread of the Empire and the subjugation of the nations under Roman rule to demonstrate the providence of the Christian God and the role of Christianity as the true religion.<sup>218</sup> Also the Christian authors rejected the accusations of the pagans that by forbidding the worship of their gods, the Christians brought on the Empire calamities such as famines and barbarian invasions.<sup>219</sup> Further, the Fathers answered ironically one of the pagan claims, that the gods were the cause of all Rome's successes, by asking why the gods allowed the Roman army to be defeated at Lake Trasimene and in other battles<sup>220</sup>, or whether the gods desert their native cities because of weakness or perfidy.<sup>221</sup> Prudentius used all these themes, firstly, to develop the Christian concept of victory and, secondly, to refute Symmachus' claim that the famine that befell the Empire was a result of the Christians' offence against

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<sup>218</sup> Ambr. *Enarr. Ps.* 45,21 '...didicerunt omnes homines sub uno terrarum imperio uiuentes unius dei omnipotentis imperium fideli eloquio confiteri'.

<sup>219</sup> Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1,13 and Aug. *Civ. Dei* 3,1. In *Adv. Nat.* 1,1 ff. Arnobius argued that calamities should be explained by the forces of nature, rather than attributed to the gods' anger, which would only demean the gods, but instead it is the work of their priests. Further, in 1,21 he explained that the Christians were not the ones to be blamed, since both pagans and Christians suffered from the natural disasters. There is evidence that AD 376-95 witnessed several difficult years of scarcity as a result of the unstable economical and military conditions.

<sup>220</sup> Lavarenne *Prudence, Psychomachie. Contra Symmaque*, Tome 3 Collection Budé, Paris (1963<sup>2</sup>) p. 101. Cf. Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 4,4; 7,50.

<sup>221</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 25,3; Min. Fel. *Oct.* 25,6-7; Cypr. *Idol.* 4 and Aug. *Civ. Dei* 1,4.

the cult of Vesta. Therefore, he, himself, must have felt the urgency of reacting in the first decade of the fifth century against the renewed pagan opposition which had been stimulated further by the weakness of the political and economic situation of the Empire, as did Augustine and Orosius in the next decade.<sup>222</sup>

2. The influence on *Symm. 2* of Symmachus' *Relatio 3* and Ambrose's *Epistle 18*.

Here is a tabulated outline of Symmachus' claims:

1. *Symm. 2,12-66*: Refutation of the claim that all victories of the Roman people were due to the Goddess of Victory. Cf. *Rel. 3,3* and *Ep. 18,7*.

2. *Symm. 2,69-74*: Symmachus claimed that the customs of the ancestors should be preserved and that Rome had prospered under her guardian, Genius. Cf. *Rel. 3,4* and *8* and *Ep. 18,23 ff.*

*Symm. 2,270-453*: Refutation.

3. *Symm. 2,75-9*: Symmachus claimed that idolatry stemmed from the successes the gods had brought to the Roman people. Cf. *Rel. 3,8*.

*Symm. 2,488-577*: Refutation.

4. *Symm. 2,80-4*: Symmachus portrayed Rome as an aged lady, who pleaded for the preservation of her deities. Cf. *Symm. 1,415-26*; *Rel. 3,9-10* and *Ep. 18,7*.

*Symm. 2,634-768*: The personification of Christian Roma and her speech.

5. *Symm. 2,85-90*: Symmachus best-known statement is presented, 'Uno itinere non potest perueniri ad tam grande secretum'. Cf. *Rel. 3,10* and *Ep. 18,8 ff.*

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<sup>222</sup> In AD 417-18 the Spanish presbyter, Paulus Orosius, in response to whose treatise, *Commonitorium de Errone Priscillianistarum et Origenistarum*, Augustine had written a refutation of the two heresies (*Liber ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*), in turn answered Augustine's request by writing his

*Symm.* 2,775-909: Refutation.

6. *Symm.* 2,910-1063: Refutation of Symmachus' claim that the alleged famine was caused by the offence given to the Vestal Virgins. Cf. *Rel.* 3,15-17 and *Ep.* 18,17-21.

7. *Symm.* 2,1064-1113: Refutation of the claim that, due to their chastity, the Vestal Virgins deserved public remuneration. Cf. *Rel.* 3,11 and *Ep.* 18,11-12.

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apologetic treatise, *Historiarum Adversus Paganos libri septem*, where he defended Christianity from the accusations of the pagans for the recent disasters.

### Literary culture in the fourth century.

From the time of Constantine the new religious zeal of the Emperors and their legislation favoured the spread of Christianity and ultimately the production of Christian literature. Although Christian works in prose existed from the time of Tertullian<sup>223</sup> at the end of the second century, Christian literature flourished most powerfully only after the official adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in AD 312. During the fourth and fifth centuries yet more Christian writing was produced for the purposes of biblical exegesis, defining orthodox Christian doctrine and refuting its enemies - the pagans and, to a much greater extent, the heretics – as well as for moral instruction and for spiritual edification.<sup>224</sup> In this period, within the tradition of classical literature, Christian Latin poetry took its first steps and was written not only by Christian clerics, but, also, as in the case of Prudentius, by educated laymen.<sup>225</sup> Together with the traditional forms of writing, the *Cento* poetry that borrowed Virgilian phraseology was particularly appropriate for the expression of Christian beliefs.<sup>226</sup> Also, from this time, some anonymous poems with anti-pagan polemic survive, such as the *Ad Quendam Senatorem* and *Carmen Contra Paganos (CCP)*.<sup>227</sup> However, during the transition between a polytheistic society and a monotheistic monarchy, Christian literature should

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<sup>223</sup> Formerly the hexameter poem, *Carmen Adversus Marcionem Libri 5*, was attributed to Tertullian, see Puech (1888) p. 164. However, recent scholarship has given much later dates; Pollman (1991) Introduction, p. 3, dated it to the first half of the fifth century, between AD 420 and AD 450, and Nides (1993) p. 23 argued that its author was contemporary with Ambrose and Proba, on the basis of the common phrase 'septemplex spiritus' (*Adv. Marc.* 4,128).

<sup>224</sup> For a comprehensive study of the literary production in Late Antiquity, see Averil Cameron, "Education and Literary Culture" in *CAH*, vol. 13 (1998) pp. 665-708 and especially p. 691 ff.

<sup>225</sup> Among the other fourth-century Christian Latin poets, Juvencus was a presbyter and Paulinus a priest in an ascetic community.

<sup>226</sup> The two best-known examples of fourth-century *Centones* are Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis* that was written for the wedding of the Emperor Valentinian, and Proba's Christian *Cento*.

<sup>227</sup> *Cypriani Ad Quendam Senatorem* (ex Christiana religione ad idolorum seruitutem conuersum) was edited by R. Peiper in *CSEL* vol. 23 (1881), and *Carmen Contra Paganos*, by Riese in *Anthologia Latina*

not be separated from wider literary culture, which was in effect still rooted deeply in the pagan traditions. The system of education, of which classical rhetoric was the main element, remained essentially the same as in the pre-Christian Empire and the imposing Christian Fathers Lactantius, Augustine and Jerome had been educated in the traditional manner with which they had to come to terms.<sup>228</sup> Prudentius recalled his own schooldays with memories of the teacher's beating of the pupils, and then the rhetorical training he received (*Praef.* 7-9)<sup>229</sup>:

aetas prima crepantibus  
fleuit sub ferulis, mox docuit toga  
infectum uitiis falsa loqui non sine crimine.

Therefore, Prudentius' poetry should be considered, not only in the light of his Christian predecessor, Juvenius, and near contemporary, Paulinus of Nola, but in relation to the poetry of the earlier and contemporaneous classical poets. Among the Latin poets of the Late Antiquity, the works of Ausonius and Claudian stand out for the quality and varied nature of their compositions. That these poets and Prudentius shared the same education and moved in the same culture is evident from the fact that all three men owed their advancement in late Roman society to their training in traditional rhetoric.<sup>230</sup> As mentioned earlier, Prudentius followed the career of a state official that culminated in his

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1.1 no. 4. See also Poinssotte (1982) and Shanzer, "The Anonymous Carmen contra paganos and Identity of the Centonist Proba", *REAug* 32 (1986) 232-48.

<sup>228</sup> See Averil Cameron, "Christianity and traditional education" (1998) p. 667 ff. Also G. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Chapel Hill (1999), Chapter 7 "Judeo-Christian Rhetoric", pp. 136-82 where, p. 167, he pointed out that "of the eight greatest Latin Fathers of the Church, five (Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius and Augustine) were professional teachers of rhetoric before they became Christians, while the other three (Ambrose, Hilary and Jerome) had been thoroughly trained in the rhetorical schools".

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *Juv. Sat.* 1,15 'et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus...'. St. Augustine also remembered with bitterness this standard practice in the primary schools, 'inde scholam datus sum ut discerem litteras, in quibus quid utilitatis esset ignorabam miser. et tamen, si segnus in discendo essem, uapulabam.' (*Conf.* 1,9,14). See the commentary *ad loc.* in *Augustine Confessions, Books I-IV*, ed. G. Clark, Cambridge (1995).

<sup>230</sup> Averil Cameron (1998) p. 673 ff. "Literary Education as a path to advancement".

promotion to the court of Theodosius (*Praef.* 16-21). Formerly a teacher in rhetoric in the famed Schools in Bordeaux, Ausonius (ca. 310-396 AD) became the tutor of Gratian in AD 365, and after the latter's succession as the Emperor, was appointed as consul in AD 379. Claudian also showed interest in the political situation in the Western Empire and although he only held the offices of a tribune and notary, eventually rose to the position of the court poet of Honorius and his general Stilicho.<sup>231</sup> A further similarity between the case of Ausonius and that of Claudian, which has provoked many speculations, is the fact that although both poets composed Christian poetry for the Imperial court, their religious beliefs are never stated unequivocally. Thus, Ausonius wrote on Christian subject-matter, not only at the request of the Emperor, as in the case of the *Versus Paschales* (371-75), an Easter prayer on the Trinity in hexameters.<sup>232</sup> Indeed, he composed a short *Ephem.* 2 and a much longer hexameter poem *Ephem.* 3 (also known as the *Oratio*), which are the poet's personal prayers to God.<sup>233</sup> In these poems Ausonius showed some knowledge of the Scriptures, used Christian technical terms and, most importantly, presented the main Christian doctrines, such as the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>234</sup> Furthermore, in *Ephem.* 3 he defended Christ's pre-existence, which at that time was part of the Arian controversy<sup>235</sup>,

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<sup>231</sup> Alan Cameron (1970) p. 404 f. argued that Claudian was never interested in higher administrative offices.

<sup>232</sup> *Vers. Pasch.* 25-7 and the commentary in Green (1991) p. 269 ff. where it is argued that this is the work of a devoted and informed Christian. The poem may have been written to celebrate the baptism in the imperial family, which explains the emphasis on baptism in it. He also composed the panegyric, *Gratiarum Actio*, a thank-offering to Gratian for his appointment as a consul, in which he praised the Christian faith.

<sup>233</sup> See the commentary on these poems in Green (1991) p. 248 ff.

<sup>234</sup> In *Ephem.* 2 Ausonius repudiates the traditional appurtenances of pagan religion and instead takes up prayer as the 'true sacrifice' to God who is to be worshipped as three persons with one nature, a reference to the mystery of the Trinity. Cf. *Ephem.* 2,15-18 and Green (1991) p. 249.

<sup>235</sup> *Ephem.* 3,9-11 'ipse dei uerbum, uerbum deus, anticipator/ mundi quem facturus erat: generatus in illo tempore, quo tempus nondum fuit.'; *anticipator* is Ausonius' *hapax*. See Green (1991) *ad loc.*, the same defence is found in Hil. *Trin.* 2,17; Ambr. *De Fide* 1,9,58-9 and Prud. *Cath.* 3,4-5.

as well as drawing on the Nicene Creed.<sup>236</sup> In his poem for Easter, Ausonius dwelt on the Holy Spirit and the baptism as salvation after the Fall, and again proclaimed the mystery of the Trinity.<sup>237</sup> On the basis of the statements of faith in these poems, the use of Christian vocabulary and understanding of doctrinal matters, it can be assumed that Ausonius came from a Christian family, even though his writing gives little evidence of him as a professing Christian.<sup>238</sup> Yet, Green has given much greater importance to the content of *Ephem.* 3 which he interprets as “undeniable evidence of Ausonius’ deep and varied religious knowledge and of his aspiration to live a Christian life”.<sup>239</sup> But at least Ausonius experimented with conventional themes, styles and techniques, and his poems deal mainly with contemporary events and people from his life, or are purely scholarly compositions that treat topics, such as myths, philosophy, rhetoric, history and science.<sup>240</sup> This was not the case of Claudian, the propagandist, whose poems abound in pagan deities hand in hand with the panegyrics of the Christian Emperors and Sticho. For this reason the only notice that Claudian received in the writings of Christian authors was as a

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<sup>236</sup> *Ephem.* 3,17 ‘non genito genitore deus’ (cf. Prud. *Apoth.* 269) and *Ephem.* 3,82-3 ‘filius, ex uero uerus, de lumine lumen,/ aeterno cum patre manens, in saecula regnans.’ Other echoes of Prudentius are *Ephem.* 3,23 ‘esse iter aeternae docuit remeabile uitae’, cf. Prud. *Apoth.* 1049; *Ephem.* 3,29 and *Ham.* 682; *Ephem.* 3,78 *insidiator* and *Ham.* 129; *Ephem.* 3,46-8 ‘...si te dominique deique/ unigenae cognosco patrem mixtumque duobus/ qui super aequoreas uolitabat spiritus undas’ and *Cath.* 6,8 ‘deus ex utroque missus’ and *Apoth.* 667-8.

<sup>237</sup> In this poem also the vocabulary and the Christian subject-matter echo those in Prudentius. Cf. *Vers. Pasch.* 16 ‘pater alme’ and Prud. *Ham.* 650; *Vers. Pasch.* 20 on *Gen.* 1:2 and *Apoth.* 667.

<sup>238</sup> Ausonius mentioned Christian women among his relatives, e.g. *Parent.* 6,8-10; 12,8; 27. Green (1991) p. 358 and p. 662 pointed out that occasionally Ausonius used Christian language in non-Christian contexts, e.g. *Prof.* 12,1 and *Ep.* 24,86. Some insights into the poet’s attitude to Christianity can be gained from his correspondence with his former pupil and Christian convert, Paulinus, e.g. *Epp.* 23-4 (ed. Green). See also *Ep.* 9b (ed. Green) addressed to Probus, the consul of AD 371, who seems to have become Christian by the time of his death (*CIL* vi 1756).

<sup>239</sup> Green (1991) p. 250 considers Ausonius to be the first poet to compose a non-liturgical Christian prayer, which influenced Prudentius for the composition of *Ham.* 931-66, and other Christian poets, among them Paulinus of Nola whose Christian conversion and ascetic way of life Ausonius had criticised.

<sup>240</sup> As well as his greatest achievement, the epic poem *Mosella*, he composed the collections *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* and *Parentalia, Cento Nuptialis*, some eclogues, epitaphs and epigrams on various historic and literary themes.

pagan.<sup>241</sup> So, in his account of Theodosius' miraculous victory at Frigidus, St. Augustine quoted Claudian's lines in *III Cons.*, introducing it in the following way, 'Unde et poeta Claudianus, quamuis a Christi nomine alienus, in eius tamen laudibus dixit...'.<sup>242</sup> Likewise, when Orosius referred to the same event, he gave a version of the same passage in Claudian, introducing him in the following way, '...poeta quidem eximius, sed paganus peruicacissimus, huiusmodi uersibus et Deo et homini testimonium tulit, quibus ait: 'O nimium dilecte Deo! tibi militat aether,/ et coniurati ueniunt ad classica uenti.'<sup>243</sup> In fact, Claudian's poetry reflects the change in the religious persuasions of the Senate which included both Christian and pagan members. Thus, when Theodosius showed his determination to adopt more radical Christian policy by appointing as the consuls for the year 395 AD Probinus and Olybrius, two members of the Anicii, the most illustrious senatorial family that had been Christian for a generation, Claudian was commissioned to compose the Panegyric for this occasion.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, Claudian's consideration of the Christian faith of the senatorial families is illustrated by the poet's eulogy of the devout worship of Serena, the adopted daughter of Theodosius and Stilicho's wife.<sup>245</sup> Not only was Claudian the panegyrist of the Christian Emperor Honorius, his general and adoptive father, Stilicho<sup>246</sup>, and other eminent members of the aristocracy, but among his poems

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<sup>241</sup> Cameron (1970) p. 190 f. has questioned this attitude to Claudian and maintained that the poet was the spokesman of the Christian party of Stilicho and Serena.

<sup>242</sup> Aug. *Civ. Dei* 5,26 (fin.). Augustine changed line 96 to '...cui fudit ab astris?' Cf. Claud. *III Cons.* 96-8 'O nimium dilecte deo, cui fundit ab antris/ Aeolus armatas hiemes, cui militat aether/ et coniurati ueniunt ad classica uenti.'

<sup>243</sup> Oros. *Hist.* 7,35 (written after AD 416). Clearly, Orosius misquoted Claud. *III Cons.* 96-8, which seemingly he did deliberately, in order to omit any mention of Aeolus.

<sup>244</sup> Cameron (1970) pp. 189-90. It was *Prob.* that opened the way for him to the Imperial Court.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. *Laus Serenae* 223 ff. 'numinibus uotisque uacas et supplice crine/ uerris humum: teritur neglectae gratia formae/ cum proprio reditura uiro'. For Serena's Christian bigotry, see Cameron (1970) p. 190 and Zos. *Hist.* 5,38.

<sup>246</sup> For the relationship between Stilicho and the members of the Imperial family, see Alan Cameron, *HPhS* 73 (1969) 257 ff. For Claudian's propagandist claims about Stilicho's outstanding military ability and loyalty, see Cameron (1970) p. 55 f. and Claud. *III Cons.* 142 ff.; *Epithalamium de Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*

there are two where the content is entirely Christian.<sup>247</sup> In *Carm.* 32 (95) *De Salvatore* (Loeb), in twenty-one hexameters, Claudian prayed to Christ to bless the Emperor and used the themes of Christ's divine nature, miraculous birth and Passion.<sup>248</sup> In *Carm.* 50 (77) *In Iacobum magistrum equitum*, a fourteen-line poem written in elegiac couplets, Claudian ridiculed the inappropriate Christian devotion of a certain military commander, James, in the face of the threat to the safety of the Roman Empire presented by the Goths. For this purpose the poet evoked the names of the Saints and likened the slaughter of the barbarian invaders to the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (7-8). Although the poem may sound like a mockery of the Christian faith, it ought to be understood as a personal invective against the neglected military responsibilities of James rather than to convey a general anti-Christian sentiment. Claudian, himself, hinted that the poem was a response to James' criticism of the poet's technique.<sup>249</sup>

The social background common to Prudentius, on the one hand, and Ausonius, on the other, has encouraged scholars not only to look for affinities of thought and expression in the works of these poets, but also to compare the changes in their spirituality.<sup>250</sup>

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220; *Gild.* 305 ff. Cf. also *CIL* 6, 1730 (398 AD) and 1731 (406 AD). For Stilicho as the guardian of Honorius and Arcadius, see *Claud. VI Cons.* 152-3 and 157-8; *Gild.* 301-3. For his marriage into the Imperial family, see *VI Cons.* 154-6; *Gild.* 308-10; *Laus Ser.* 179 ff.

<sup>247</sup> Cameron (1970) pp. 330-1 it has been suggested that Claudian knew the works of the Christian Apologists Lactantius and Minucius Felix.

<sup>248</sup> Green (1991) p. 270 maintains that Ausonius' *Vers. Pasch.* anticipated Claudian's *De Salvatore*, which in an address to Honorius deals with Christ's Incarnation.

<sup>249</sup> *In Iacob.* 2 and 14 'ne laceres uersus, dux Iacobe, meos' and Cameron (1970) pp. 224-6.

<sup>250</sup> See above notes 236-8 and 240. For Prudentius and Ausonius, see Charlet (1980) p. 121 ff. where he attempted to prove that Prudentius had imitated Ausonius' themes and language, especially those in the *Ephem.*, *Cent. Nupt.* and *Mosel.* However, Charlet's conclusion (p. 140 f.) that Prudentius imitated Ausonius because the latter was the inheritor of the classical tradition, is not convincing, especially since most of the reminiscences of Ausonius can be traced back to the earlier Latin poets. For Prudentius and Paulinus, see S. Costanza, "Rapporti letterari tra Paolino e Prudenzio", *Atti del Convegno XXXI Cinquantenario della morte di S. Paolino di Nola (431-1981)*, Roma (1983) 25-65. Also Fontaine (1980) pp. 267-308 and especially pp. 241-65, argued that Paulinus of Nola, Ausonius and Prudentius are all representatives of the new aesthetics of 'mélange' of genres and their poetry is linked on the basis of shared values, such as *secessus in uilla* and intellectual *otium*, and the assimilation of the latter into the Christian style of life and ascetic retreat from the world.

However, there is little evidence for believing that Prudentius knew either the poetry of Ausonius, whose *Ephemeris* might have inspired the former poet for his *Cathemerinon*, or that of Paulinus of Nola, whose journey from Italy to Spain has been used to suggest an interaction, if not directly between him and Prudentius, then at least between the Roman provinces on both sides of the Pyrenees.<sup>251</sup> The affinity between the three poets can not be extended far because, unlike Prudentius, both Ausonius and Paulinus are known also in light of their social and intellectual relationships with others, and reveal their vast network of friends. Unfortunately, this important side of Prudentius' personality remains a mystery and makes it more difficult to imagine the personal circumstances in which he wrote and the implied audience for his poems. Still, of these two poets contemporary with Prudentius, Paulinus must be seen as the closer parallel, due to the profound Christian faith demonstrated in his poetic output.<sup>252</sup>

The remaining part of the chapter will serve as a brief introduction to the origins of Latin Christian poetry with its main representatives Juvencus, Proba and Paulinus, in order to throw light on the new literary culture that prompted Prudentius' compositions.<sup>253</sup> Since in the subsequent chapters of the thesis the emphasis will be placed on the poet's relationship with the classical tradition of Latin literature, here it is also necessary to

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<sup>251</sup> Fontaine (1980) used as evidence Prud. *Perist.* 4,1-50 and Ausonius' Epistles to Paulinus, *Ep.* 22,51 (Green).

<sup>252</sup> R. Green, *The Poetry of Paulinus of Nola. A Study of his Latinity*, *Latomus* 120, Bruxelles (1971), Chapter 3 "Imitation of other writers", pp. 53-4 there are few examples of parallels between the poetry of Paulinus and Prudentius, e.g. *Carm.* 31,103 '...rumpenti Tartara Christo' and *Apoth.* 637-8 'rumpit/Tartara', of which the following two are considered as striking: *Carm.* 18,297 'dextera uindex' and *Symm.* 1,484, and *Carm.* 19,29 'in populo titubante fides' and *Apoth.* 582. But as Green pointed out, these few examples are not sufficient to decide that the two poets knew each other's work, and since they both drew on the classical poets and the Scriptures, it is impossible to determine who of the two might have imitated the other.

<sup>253</sup> Rusch (1977) is a useful work of reference for Latin Christian literature after the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) and up to Isidore of Seville (AD 636), and especially chapter 8, p. 93 ff. which gives a summary of the lives and poetry of Juvencus, Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola. See M. Roberts (1985) for the poetic techniques of the fourth and fifth century biblical Latin poets.

consider what other Latin Christian writers, such as Jerome and St. Augustine, felt about the use of ancient authors for the purpose of Christianity.<sup>254</sup>

### The Latin Christian Patristic writers and their reception of the pagan tradition.

What was it that prompted the initial composition of the Christian poetry? One of the usual complaints of the educated Christian converts was the simplicity of the language in the Scriptures, and the defence of the *rusticitas* of the Bible became a commonplace in the writings of the Christian authors. The discussion of the simplicity of the biblical style raised the question also about the value of rhetoric, which the Latin Fathers treated with great diplomacy.<sup>255</sup> Indeed, there seems to have been a contradiction between Lactantius' efforts to present the Christian doctrines in a style that would appeal to an educated audience<sup>256</sup>, and his criticisms of the art of rhetoric (*Div. Inst.* 5,1,15-17):

nam haec in primis causa est cur apud sapientes et doctos et principes huius saeculi scriptura sancta fide careat, quod prophetae communi ac simplici sermone ut ad populum sunt locuti. contemnuntur itaque ab iis qui nihil audire uel legere nisi expoliturum ac disertum uolunt nec quicquam haerere animis eorum potest nisi quod aures blandiore sono mulcet, illa uero quae sordida uidentur, anilia inepta uulgaria existimantur. adeo nihil uerum putant nisi quod auditu suaue est, nihil credibile nisi quod potest incutere uoluptatem: nemo rem ueritate ponderat, sed ornatu.

However, his claims about the incompatibility of *eloquentia* and *ueritas* were used to attack pagan philosophy, and not the art of rhetoric that was accepted by the Latin

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<sup>254</sup> In a separate study it might prove beneficial to compare Prudentius' Christian didactic poems with those of Gregory of Nazianzus. In this thesis the literary tradition in Latin is the only concern.

<sup>255</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 47 f.; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 8; Cypr. *Donat.* 2; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1,58-9; Aug. *Cathech. Rud.* 8,12-9,13. See also Kennedy (1999) p. 168 ff.

<sup>256</sup> Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1,1,10 and 5,1,14 'circumlinatur modo poculum caelesti melle sapientiae, ut possint ab imprudentibus amara remedia sine offensione potari, dum inliciens prima dulcedo acerbitatem saporis asperi sub praetexto suauitatis occultat.', cf. *D.R.N.* 1,936 ff.

Christian writers. In *De Doctrina Christiana* St. Augustine defended the usefulness of pagan learning for the study of the Scriptures and the suitability of rhetorical style in Christian writing (2,145)<sup>257</sup>:

sic doctrinae omnes gentilium non solum simulata et superstitiosa figmenta grauesque sarcinas superuacanei laboris habent, quae unusquisque nostrum duce Christo de societate gentilium exiens debet abominari atque deuitare, sed etiam liberales disciplinas usui ueritatis aptiores et quaedam morum praecepta utilissima continent, deque ipso uno deo colendo nonnulla uera inueniuntur apud eos.

Jerome also seems to have been torn between his love for the art of rhetoric and the style of Cicero, and his loyalty to the divinely inspired diction of Scripture (*Ep.* 53,9 in PL 22)<sup>258</sup>:

nolo offendaris in Scripturis sanctis simplicitate, et quasi uilitate uerborum, quae uel uitio interpretum, uel de industria sic polata sunt, ut rusticam concionem [*al.* contentionem] facilius instruerent.

Yet, the *OT*, itself, gave stimulus for the employment of polished styles, which resulted in Jerome's translation into Latin of the Hebrew bible. Furthermore, the examples of Hebraic poetry in the historical books of the *OT* and the Books of *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Jeremiah*, *Job* and the *Song of Songs*, which differ greatly from the techniques used in Latin and Greek poetry, probably inspired Christian versification.<sup>259</sup> In the very *Ep.* 53 where he proclaimed the rusticity of the biblical language, Jerome admired the poetic

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<sup>257</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, edited and translated by R. P. H. Green, Oxford (1995). Also *Doctr. Chr.* 2,34; 4,6; 4,22-44 that eloquence and wisdom go hand in hand and 4,46 where Paul becomes a paragon of Christian eloquence.

<sup>258</sup> See Jer. *Ep.* 22,29-30 '...quid facit cum psalterio Horatius? cum euangeliiis Maro? cum apostolo Cicero?...Ciceronianus es, non Christianus'.

<sup>259</sup> A. Puech (1888) p. 8, affirms that the Hebrew poetry of the *OT* influenced Greek and Latin Christian poets, and that the Psalms were to the Jews what Christian poetry was to the Christians.

rhythms in the Book of *Job* and he even attempted to compare the verses in the Book of *Psalms* with those composed in the metres of Greek and Latin poetry.<sup>260</sup>

### The emergence of Christian poetry in the fourth century.<sup>261</sup>

The reasons for the beginnings of poetic composition with Christian content in the fourth century must be sought for in the very works of the early Christian poets. Before outlining the statements of these poets, a general introduction is given to their lives and works.<sup>262</sup>

In the third century the first attempts were made to compose Christian didactic poetry that did not conform to the norms of classical poetry but was intended as a protest against the pagan past. The first Christian poetry in Latin is attributed to Commodian, a poet believed generally to have lived in North Africa in the third century.<sup>263</sup> He composed two hexameter poems, *Instructionum Libri duo* and *Carmen Apologeticum*, the purpose of which was to replace pagan mythology with the teachings of the Scriptures and to instil a belief in Christianity. Commodian's style is a combination of classical hexameters, everyday language and polemic-didactic tone, and seems to have been directed to ordinary people with the intention of converting them.<sup>264</sup> The *Instructiones* have a neat composition, opening with a Preface and closing with an Epilogue. The first Book contains apologetic arguments against pagans and Jews, whilst the second Book is

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<sup>260</sup> Jer. *Epp.* 30,3 ff. and 53,8 where he praised especially *Ps.* 118 and compared David to Simonides, Pindar, Alcaeus, Horace, Catullus and Serenus.

<sup>261</sup> See the introduction to early Christian epic poetry by K. Thraede (1962) pp. 983-1042, especially p. 1014 ff. "Stilgeschichte des christlichen-lateinischen Epik" and M. Roberts (1985).

<sup>262</sup> W. Evenpoel, "The place of Poetry in Latin Christianity" in *Early Christian Poetry*, ed. J. Den Boeft and A. Hilhorst, Leiden (1993) pp. 35-60, especially p. 44 ff.

<sup>263</sup> For Commodian's poetry, cf. *CSEL* 15, ed. B. Dombart (1887).

<sup>264</sup> Puech (1888) pp. 162-3 pointed out the severe moralistic tone and abusive attack of these poems.

admonitory to the catechumens.<sup>265</sup> Commodian's style of writing was influenced, on the one hand, by rhetorical prose, the traditional forms of expression in the writings of the Apologetists and by some popular speech rhythms (abecedaries, rhymes), and, on the other hand, by the Scriptures and classical poetry.<sup>266</sup> However, there is uncertainty about the date when Commodian lived and composed his works, and his poems have been dismissed as lacking in the refinement displayed by the other early Christian poets.<sup>267</sup>

There is uncertainty also about the dates of the poet Cyprian, who is thought to have been a contemporary of Commodian and to have composed the *Heptateuchus*, metrical versions of the *Pentateuch* and the first two historical Books in the OT, *Joshua* and *Judges*.<sup>268</sup>

It is agreed that Juvencus was the first Latin author to write a Christian poem in classical form. Except for the short autobiographical reference at the end of his poem<sup>269</sup>, the only other information about Juvencus' life is known from several passages in the works of Jerome, who mentioned that Juvencus had been a Spanish aristocrat and a presbyter who, in the reign of Constantine, wrote his paraphrases and some other lost works.<sup>270</sup> The

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<sup>265</sup> In the Epilogue the poet reveals his name, see *Instr.* 2,35 as the poet's *sphragis*.

<sup>266</sup> Thraede (1962) pp. 1015-16 lists some of the topoi that determine the sources of Commodian's style.

<sup>267</sup> For such view, see Roberts (1985) p. 74, note 50. Puech (1888) p. 10 ascribed the poet to the third century. However, a much earlier source must give better evidence; in *De Viris Illustribus* 15 of Gennadius (fl. 480-500) Commodian, whose poetry he viewed as mediocre, is listed as a fifth century poet and after the time of Prudentius. For further discussion on the dating, see K. Thraede, "Beiträge zur Datierung Commodians", *AbAC* 2 (1959) 90-114.

<sup>268</sup> Cyprian, ed. R. Peiper, *CSEL* 23 (1881). Puech (1888) p. 164 gave the third century as the time of composition of Cyprian's poems. However, Nides (1993) p. 25, note 12, claims that "virtually nothing is known of this author of the longest OT epic in Late Antiquity but it is thought that he came from Gaul and composed his *Heptateuch* in the first quarter of the fifth century."

<sup>269</sup> *Juv. Euang.* 4,806 ff. where he praised Constantine as the bringer of peace and thus to have earned eternal life in Christ. Rusch (1977) p. 94 wrongly attributes these details to the Preface, rather than to the Epilogue of the poem. For Juvencus' biography, see Roberts (1985) pp. 74-5.

<sup>270</sup> *Jer. Chron.* 278 Olymp. (=329-30 AD), 'Iuencus presbyter, natione Hispanus, *Euangelia* heroicis uersibus explicat.'; *Jer. Vir. Ill.* 84 (*PL* 23/ 2-3), 'Iuencus, nobilissimi generis, Hispanus, presbyter, *quattuor Euangelia hexametris uersibus* paene ad verbum transferens, quattuor libros composuit, et nonnulla eodem metro ad Sacramentum ordinem pertinentia. Floruit sub Constantino principe.' and *Jer. Ep.* (ad Magnum) 70,5 'nec pertimuit euangelii maiestatem sub metri leges mittere.'

*Euangeliorum Libri Quattuor*, known also as *Historia Euangelica*, was written in hexameters as a close paraphrase of the Gospels, based primarily on Matthew's Gospel, for which Juvencus used the translation in the *Vetus Latina*. In this poem composed not long after the Christianisation of the Empire Juvencus used the style and language of Virgil, so that it would appeal to an educated non-Christian audience that would be familiar with the elegant poetry of Virgil but who found the language of the Bible lacking in refinement.<sup>271</sup> The poem opens with an eight-line introduction to the four Evangelists and their symbols which is followed by the main Preface, where the poet gives an insight into the new Christian aesthetic (15-20)<sup>272</sup>:

Quod si tam longam meruerunt carmina famam,      15  
 quae ueterum gestis hominum mendacia nectunt,  
 nobis certa fides aeternae in saecula laudis  
 immortale decus tribuet meritumque rependet.  
 nam mihi carmen erit Christi uitalia gesta,  
diuinum populis falsi sine crimine donum.      20

In the Preface Juvencus stated that his paraphrase is a true account of Christ's life, as opposed to the poetic invention and deception of classical poetry, and thus distinguished Christian poetry in that it gives precedence to moral value, *utilitas*, over entertainment, *dilectatio*.<sup>273</sup> Compared with the classical poets, the Christian poet established a new relationship with the subject-matter and intended his divinely inspired composition both as a moral instruction of his audience and as salvation of his soul (*Praef.* 21-6):

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<sup>271</sup> See Roberts (1985) p. 153 ff. for Juvencus' poetic style of paraphrasing the Gospels using the devices of *circumlocutio*, metaphors and poetic expressions from classical poetry.

<sup>272</sup> Roberts (1985) p. 220 '...unfortunately it is very difficult to isolate what is specifically Christian in their aesthetic...it is ...in their handling of the narrative that the biblical poets are most in conflict with the norms of the epic.'; p. 223 'But during the course of the two centuries of biblical epic...Christian writers begin to develop their own poetic idiom formed after the criteria of pagan epic, but of specifically Christian content...the poetic vocabulary is enhanced by the use of symbolic language, allegory and catachresis.'

<sup>273</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 219-24.

Nec metus, ut mundi rapiant incendia secum  
 hoc opus; hoc etenim forsā me subtrahet igni  
 tunc, cum flammiuma descendet nube coruscans  
 iudex, altithroni genitoris gloria, Christus.  
 ergo age! sanctificus adsit mihi carminis auctor      25  
 Spiritus, et puro mentem riget amne canentis  
 dulcis Iordanis, ut Christo digna loquamur.

In these lines Juvencus adapted successfully classical language and motifs, whereby he alluded to the poetry of Lucretius and Virgil; unlike the *D.R.N.* his biblical poem will not perish with the end of the world, and the place of Virgil's Muse is now taken by Christ.<sup>274</sup> Thus, the poet of the *NT* aimed not only to stress the Christian message in the text, but also to improve the original by the appropriation of the language of the classical poets and, above all, of Virgil. Juvencus' primary motive for versification of the Scriptures was their stylistic improvement, and only two centuries later in his *De Spiritalis Historiae Gestis Avitus* was able fully to subordinate the language and style of the classical poets to the Christian content.<sup>275</sup> Avitus' biblical epic shows signs, not only of the author's erudition and reception of the Classics, but also of the new aesthetic, characteristic of the

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<sup>274</sup> Cf. Juv. *Praef.* 21-2 and Ov. *Am.* 1,15,23-4 'carmina sublimis tunc peritura Lucreti,/ exitio terras cum dabit una dies.'; cf. *Praef.* 27 and Virg. *Aen.* 6,662 'Phoebo digna locuti'. The reference to Jordan (21) may be a substitution for Parnasus.

<sup>275</sup> The *SHG* (ca. 507 AD) consists of six books, only the first five of which have biblical content, whilst book 6 is a moral exhortation on virginity dedicated to Avitus' sister Fuscina. Books 1-3 narrate closely all the episodes in *Gen.* 1-3:24 where the theme of the Fall of Mankind is developed. Books 4 and 5 narrate only selected episodes from the accounts of the Flood (*Gen.* 6-9:17) and the Exodus (*Ex.* 1-15:1) respectively, that foretell the concept of Redemption. Because of its thematic unity, Herzog, *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike*, München (1975) defined the *SHG* as 'heilsgeschichtliche Bibeldichtung'. See the recent study by Alexander Arweiler, *Die Imitation antiker und spätantiker Literatur in der Dichtung 'De spiritualis historiae gestis' des Alcimus Avitus: mit einem Kommentar zu Avit. Carm. 4,429-540 und 5,526-703*. Berlin (1999).

Christian literature of the Middle Ages, with the main purpose of satisfying the needs of a readership for the rapid establishment of a fully Christianised society.<sup>276</sup>

The fact that Jerome included Juvenius in his canon of Christian literature is of great importance for the Christian writers' acceptance of poetry as a medium for instruction.<sup>277</sup>

However, Jerome showed a different attitude to the genre of Cento-compositions as a form of Christian didactic poetry, and he dismissed it as being 'puerilia...et circulatorum ludo similia'.<sup>278</sup> Other Christian Fathers also disapproved of the pagan tradition of Virgilocentones and likened the technique used by the pagan Cento-writers to the heretics' use of the Bible.<sup>279</sup>

A *Cento* is a poem or 'patchwork' consisting entirely of phrases borrowed from well-known authors, but aimed at achieving a different effect, often as a parody of the original.

Altogether there are sixteen Latin Centos, twelve of which are pagan Vergilian *Centos* from Late Antiquity, such as Hosidius Geta's *Medea* and Cebes' *Pinax*.<sup>280</sup> As a genre, the Christian *Cento* was characteristic of Late Antiquity and it used Virgilian hexameter

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<sup>276</sup> Arweiler (1999) p. 5 points out the difference between the compositions of Avitus and those of his contemporary Sidonius whose highly polished and allusive verses were aimed strictly at the educated reader.

<sup>277</sup> In 392 Jerome wrote *De Viris Illustribus*, a compendium of eminent Greek and Latin Christian writers, which lists the works of one hundred and thirty-five men of the Church and their biographical details, beginning with Apostle Peter and ending with Jerome, himself. Except for the rhetors and grammarians Arnobius (*Vir. Ill.* 79), Firmianus (80) M. Victorinus (101) and Aquilius Severus (111), the rest had held ecclesiastical posts within the catholic Church or in un-orthodox movements opposed to it. Juvenius seems to have been the only Christian poet, before AD 392, known to or appreciated by Jerome but still he needed to stress the literal nature of Juvenius' versification. See note 46 and Roberts (1985) pp. 75-6.

<sup>278</sup> Jer. *Ep.* 53,7 'Quasi non legerimus Homero centonas et Virgilio centonas: ac non sic etiam Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum, qui scripserit... (*Ecl.* 4,6-7).'

<sup>279</sup> Tert. *Praes. Haer.* 39 'Et utique fecundior diuina litteratura ad facultatem cuiusque materiae.' As with Virgilian verses, the Scriptures are quoted for completely new and defamatory ends. Nides (1993) p. 311 defines the reception of Christian poetry as altogether ambivalent and maintains that the Latin Fathers did not expect the congregation to have read the Christian poets. He points out that Christian poets are quoted rarely by Christian writers in their Commentaries, e.g. Jer. *In Matth.* 1,2,11.

<sup>280</sup> For the genre, cf. *OCD* on *Cento* and the Preface to Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis*, whose amusing and frivolous nature is an example of a Cento parody of Virgil, 'Centonem uocant, qui primi hac concinnatione luserunt. solae memoriae negotium sparsa colligere et integrare lacerata, quod ridere magis quam laudare possis.'

lines for the purpose of Christian didactic. The best-known Christian *Cento* was that attributed to Fulgentia Baetitia Proba, but other Christian *Centos* of this period survive, such as *De Verbi Incarnatione* and *De Ecclesia*.<sup>281</sup> There are two uncertainties about Proba's *Cento*, the date of composition and the identity of its author, and the difficulty arises from the fact that there are hardly any biographical information or historical references in the *Cento*, itself.<sup>282</sup> Since there were several ladies with this name who were members of the eminent Anicii family, the reference alone to 'uatis Proba' (*Praef.* 12) is not sufficient to establish the identity of the poetess.<sup>283</sup> More recently, Sivan has again questioned the identity of the Centonist and on the basis of evidence in the text of later editorial additions, she deduces that the poem, although written by Faltonia Baetitia Proba, was revised in the 390's by her daughter Anicia Faltonia Proba who added an imperial dedication and made other interpolations.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Published in *CSEL* 16/1 (1888).

<sup>282</sup> D. Niles (1993) p. 22 ff. dates it to ca. 360's AD and Shanzer (1986) p. 244 argues that it was composed by Anicia Faltonia Proba between 385 and ca. 388 AD.

<sup>283</sup> For the women of this name, see Shanzer (1986) p. 234. For the ancient sources mentioning the Centonist Proba, cf. Isid. *Sev. Vir. Ill.* 22 'Proba, uxor Adelphi centonem ex Vergilio de fabrica mundi et euangeliis plenissime expressit.'. In Jer. *Ep.* 53,7 the reference to 'haec garrula anus' could have been used for Proba and thus is an evidence for the circulation of the *Cento* in the 390's. If 'garrula anus' can be seen as a reference to Proba, why should not also 'delirus senex' (*ibid.*) be seen as a reference to Prudentius' poetry?

<sup>284</sup> H. Sivan, "Ancient Women, the *Cento* of Proba, and Aristocratic Conversion in the Fourth Century", *Vig. Chr.* 47 (1993) 140-57, especially pp. 150-3. See also, W. Kirsh, *Die lateinische Versepiik des 4 J.*, Berlin, 1989, p. 117 f.

In the Preface to her poem Proba repudiated her earlier compositions written in the Virgilian tradition that were full of false prophetic inspirations and Olympian gods, and instead set out to present the truth of Christian doctrines (*Praef.* 1; 8-12 and 22-3):

Iam dudum temerasse duces pia foedera pacis, 1

confiteor, scripsi: satis est meminisse malorum:  
nunc, deus omnipotens, sacrum, precor, accipe carmen  
aeternique tui septemplicis ora resolue 10  
spiritus atque mei resera penetralia cordis  
arcana ut possim uatis Proba cuncta referre.

praesens, deus, erige mentem 22

Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi.

In the case of this *Cento* and the Latin biblical epics from the fourth and fifth century Nodes has argued successfully that, as much as they were interested in emulation of the classical literature, the poets showed their awareness of the Judaeo-Christian exegetical tradition and had primarily didactic purposes.<sup>285</sup> Thus, in her poem Proba reveals all the mysteries, ‘arcana...cuncta’ (*Praef.* 12) hidden in the Genesis account of the Creation and the Fall, and their significance for the Christian doctrines of the resurrection of the body and the salvation of the soul.<sup>286</sup>

Christian poetry flourished towards the end of the fourth century thanks to the works of Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius. Paulinus (ca. 351-431 AD) was educated at the school

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<sup>285</sup> Nodes (1993) p. 9 “The intent is therefore to examine how the poets functioned as exegetes of the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures, rather than as appropriators of those Scriptures to the classical literary tradition.” In this he follows Herzog’s endeavours to see the biblical epic genre in light of the Christian tradition of ‘Erbaulichkeit’.

<sup>286</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 14-15. For the interpretation of Genesis for Christian purposes, see *The Golden Bough, the Oaken Cross. The Virgilian Cento of Fulgentia Baetitia Proba*, ed. and trans. by E. A. Clark, D. F. Hatch, *Texts and Translations 5*, Ann Arbor (1981) pp. 137 ff.

of rhetoric at Bordeaux with Ausonius as his tutor and personal friend, but, soon afterwards he was converted to Christianity and devoted all his life and literary talent to 'alia uis, maior deus' (*Carm.* 10,29) that is the Christian faith.<sup>287</sup> In fact, Augustine himself praised Paulinus as the best Christian poet and encouraged his poetic activity.<sup>288</sup> His oeuvres consist of a vast corpus of Epistles and thirty *Carmina* written between AD 393-408, for which he employed different poetic forms and metres. His poetry comprises prayers (*Carm.* 12-14), biblical paraphrases (*Carm.* 7-9), the panegyric paraphrase 'Laus Sancti Iohannis' (*Carm.* 6), hymns, letters in metre (*Carm.* 10-11; 24) and poems in the form of *protreptikon* (*Carm.* 22), *propemptikon* (*Carm.* 17), *epithalamium* (*Carm.* 25) and *consolatio* (*Carm.* 31). Soon after his arrival in Campania in AD 395 Paulinus began to compose the so-called *Natalicia*, a cycle of fourteen poems dedicated to the annual celebration of the cult on 14th January of St. Felix of Nola.<sup>289</sup> In fact, except for the Christianised hymns and biblical epics, he used a far wider range of pagan literary forms than Prudentius, who composed in the more traditional classical genres of didactic, lyric, elegiac and epic poetry. Thus, the poetry of Paulinus best represented those qualities of the literature of Late Antiquity that were characteristic of Ausonius' scholarly use of various poetic genres. As to the possible link between the poetry of Prudentius and Paulinus, the most recent study of the latter poet has shown that there is not sufficient evidence for such dependence.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> For Paulinus' early years, education and friendship with Ausonius, see Trout (1999) pp. 28-30. For his conversion in AD 394, see *op. cit.* p. 1 ff.

<sup>288</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 26,5 and *Ep.* 31,7 and Trout (1999) p. 101. Contrast with Jer. *Ep.* 53 where he warned Paulinus against some forms of Christian poetry.

<sup>289</sup> Trout (1999) p. 164. The fourteenth *Natalicia* (*Carm.* 29) is a collection of fragments.

<sup>290</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 102, note 33 "But although the geography of the lives and the careers of Paulinus and Prudentius overlaps considerably (northeastern Spain and Italy) and the poetic borrowing seems demonstrable in some cases, the uncertain chronology of Prudentius' biography and poetry makes the lines of dependence difficult to verify."

Although in general Jerome was not hostile to Christian poetry, as was demonstrated in connection with Juvenecus' biblical paraphrase, yet he disapproved of *Carm.* 6 as a biblical paraphrase of the life of St. John the Baptist, where Paulinus had taken liberties in presenting the infancy and youth of the Prophet (6,205-18). Most of all, the exegesis of John's baptism of repentance as a harbinger for Christ's grace was what provoked Jerome's stronger objection (6,255-75 and especially 258-67).<sup>291</sup> However, Paulinus' thought is paralleled in Prudentius' *Cath.* 7,71-7 and a further similarity between the portrayal of John's life in the two poems is the touching detail in *Cath.* 7,57-8 of John as a baby that suckles from his mother's breast.

Whilst of the two poets, Prudentius is the more polemical writer who was preoccupied with the defence of the Christian doctrines and refutation of all heresies, Paulinus seems to have participated directly in contemporary debates and controversies about the definition of the Christian doctrines in the West.<sup>292</sup> Whereas it is plausible also to assume that Prudentius, who served in the court of the Christian Emperors, was aware of the official legislation in response to controversies in the Western Church, Paulinus, although he renounced his wealth and left his senatorial career, remained at Nola in the very centre of social and political life. Moreover, nothing is heard of Prudentius after AD 405-6, the alleged time of the publication of his poems, but Paulinus was active after AD 410 and

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<sup>291</sup> Jer. *Ep.* 85 (AD 399) instructed Paulinus in exegesis. See Trout (1999) pp. 99-100 and note 118 where he gives the reference in *Cath.* 7 (but there is a printing error, since only the lines and not the number of the poem are given). The meeting between Elizabeth and Mary when John, yet unborn, prophesied the birth of the Saviour is found in *Carm.* 6, 144 ff. and 168 ff. and in Prud. *Apoth.* 589-93.

<sup>292</sup> Paul. *Ep.* 21,4 and 50. See also Trout (1999) p. 268 f. For Paulinus' association with Priscillianism, see p. 7.

through his circle of personal friends became involved in the two main controversies, the Origenist and the Pelasgian.<sup>293</sup>

Paulinus' Christian aesthetic is also worth mentioning and it is best expressed in *Carm.* 10 and 15. Despite the use he made of the classical literary tradition and the art of rhetoric, and not unlike other Christian writers, the poet was torn between his past education and divinely inspired Christian poetics.<sup>294</sup> He claimed that it was precisely the pagan literary techniques that disguised truth, and that his poetic achievement was solely the gift of God, 'munus...dei' (27) (*Carm.* 10,35-42)<sup>295</sup>:

.....suis ut pareamus legibus 35  
                  lucemque cernamus suam,  
quam uis sophorum callida arsque rhetorum et  
                  figmenta uatum nubilant,  
qui corda falsis atque uanis imbuunt  
                  tantumque linguas instruunt, 40  
nihil ferentes, ut salutem conferant  
                  aut ueritate nos tegant.

God was his new inspiration and subject-matter (*Carm.* 15,30-3)<sup>296</sup>:

non ego Castalidas, uatum phantasmata, Musas 30  
nec surdum Aonia Phoebum de rupe ciebo;

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<sup>293</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 218 ff. where Trout argues that no longer can Paulinus be accused of "theological naïveté"; p. 200 ff. - his network of friends consisted of members of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy and provincial clergymen.

<sup>294</sup> *Carm.* 10,22-3 'Negant Camenis nec patent Apollini/ dicata Christo pectora'.

<sup>295</sup> Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 20,28-30 'non adficta canam, licet arte poematis utar./ historica narrabo fide sine fraude poetae;/ absit enim famulo Christi mentita profari.'

<sup>296</sup> This rejection of conventional pagan invocation recalls Luc. *Phars.* 1,63-6 'sed mihi iam numen; nec, si te pectore uates/ accipio, Cirrhaea uelim secreta mouentem/ sollicitare deum Bacchumque auertere Nysa:/ tu satis ad uires Romana in carmina dandas.'

carminis inceptor Christus mihi, munere Christi  
audeo peccator sanctum et caelestia fari.

Finally, Paulinus conceived his poetry to be an offering to God (*Carm.* 10,29-32):

nunc alia mentem uis agit, maior deus,  
aliosque mores postulat, 30  
sibi repositus ab homine munus suum,  
uiuamus ut uitae patri.

Like Jerome, the poet found his justification for writing Christian verse in the *OT* and particularly in David's *Psalms* (*Carm.* 6,13-26):

pars etiam meriti meritum celebrare piorum;  
nec noua nunc aut nostra canam; dixere prophetae  
cuncta prius sanctique uiri sermone soluto 15  
promissum exortum, uitam mortemque sacrarunt,  
si mors illa fuit, meruit quae sanguine caelum.  
nos tantum modulis euoluere dicta canoris  
uouimus et uersu mentes laxare legentum.  
sic (nam magna licet paruis, antiqua nouellis, 20  
perfecta indoctis conferre, aeterna caducis)  
inspirante deo quicquid dixere priores  
aptauit citharis nomen uenerabile Dauid,  
consona caelesti pangens modulamina plectro.  
nos quoque fas meminisse dei et quamquam obruta multis 25  
pectora criminibus caelestem admittere sensum.

Nonetheless, the Christian poets shared the traditional respect for the aesthetic qualities and mnemonic value of the poetic genre, and the proven qualities of the hexameters as a didactic method. Thus they claimed continuity with two established literary traditions, the Hebraic and the classical, but especially with the latter, since their poetic compositions would have appealed primarily to an educated audience.

A later exponent of this classical aesthetic technique was Sedulius who, some seventy years after Prudentius' death, in the *Epistola Ad Macedonium* that accompanied his *Carmen Paschale Libri 5*, gave it as the reason for his poetic treatment of the NT that had been the subject of his prose treatise, *Paschale Opus Libri 5*.<sup>297</sup> In contrast with the earlier Christian poetry of Juvencus, in the fifth century Sedulius' *Carm. Pasch.* would have been directed at an already largely Christian readership who would have been required to have some knowledge of the biblical texts.<sup>298</sup> The fact is that all the above-mentioned Christian poets composed primarily with a didactic aim in mind, as seen in Juvencus (*Praef.* 15-24), Proba, Paulinus<sup>299</sup>, Sedulius and Avitus. Inseparable from its didactic aim was the apologetic purpose of Christian poetry, and hence the metaphorical use of military language to describe its poetic function as God-inspired armour of defence against the forces of evil.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Cf. *Ep. ad Maced.* p. 4, line 15 to p. 6, line 1 in *CSEL* 10 (1885) 'cur autem metrica uoluerim haec ratione componere, non differam breuiter expedire. raro, pater optime, sicut uestra quoque peritia lectionis adsiduitate cognoscit, diuinae munera potestatis stilo quisquam huius modulationis aptauit, et multi sunt quos studiorum saecularium disciplina per poeticas magis delicias et carminum uoluptates oblectat. hi quicquid rhetoricae facundiae perlegunt, neglegentius adsequuntur, quoniam illud haud diligunt: quod autem uersuum uiderint blandimento mellitum, tanta cordis auiditate suscipiunt, ut in alta memoria saepius haec iterando constituent et reponant. horum itaque mores non repudiandos aestimo sed pro insita consuetudine uel natura tractandos, ut quisque suo magis ingenio uoluntarius adquiratur Deo.' For the metaphor 'uersuum blandimento mellitum', see *Ps.* 18:11; *D.R.N.* 1,936-50 (=4,11-25) and *Lact. Div. Inst.* 5,1,14.

<sup>298</sup> Roberts (1985) p. 85, note 94.

<sup>299</sup> *Carm.* 22,29-34 'dumque leges catus et scribes miracula summi/ uera dei, proprior disces et carior ipsi/ esse deo, quem dum credens miraris, amare/ incipies et amando deum redamabere Christo./ hactenus illa tuae uanos tuba uocis in usus/ persona, diuinos modo celsius intonet actus'.

<sup>300</sup> *Eph.* 6:14-17, Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 16,121-8; 17,139 'ibis armatus galea salutis', *Sedul. Ep. ad Maced.* 4,15, 'clipeco dominicae protectionis armatus...inimicae iaculationis tela'. Cf. *Prud. Symm* 1,650-5 where the poet saw his enterprise as a shield 'tectum...pectus' against Symmachus' anti-Christian arguments which he portrayed in terms of 'uolans iaculum' and 'sagittas'.

The nature of Prudentius' project according to the Praefatio and the Epilogue.

Both Ausonius and Prudentius opened their oeuvres with partly autobiographical Prefaces, but there is a difference in the tone and literary qualities in these two Prefaces. In his forty-line poem *Praef.* 1, 'Ausonius Lectori Salutem', the poet's aim was to tell the facts of his biography to the reader, whose attention and sympathy he wanted to win and whom he addressed as his patron (39-40)<sup>301</sup>:

Hic ergo Ausonius: sed tu ne temne, quod ultro  
patronum nostris te paro carminibus.           40

In the very first line the poet gives his own and his father's name and proceeds to mention his place of birth and ancestry (5-12), to describe his career as a provincial teacher of grammar and rhetoric (13-22), his well-deserved promotion to be the tutor to the son of the Emperor (23-34) and, finally, to stress his political career (35-8).<sup>302</sup> Clearly, Ausonius' was pleased with his achievements and therefore wrote about himself with a "calculated humility" and with the intention to impress his readership (1-4):

Ausonius genitor nobis, ego nomine eodem:  
qui sim, qua secta, stirpe, lare et patria,  
adscripti, ut nesses, bone uir, quicumque fuisses  
et notum memori me coleres animo.

Very different to this opening is Prudentius' *Praef.* where the poet gave very scant biographical information; he omits his name, place of birth, ancestry and expresses

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<sup>301</sup> For Ausonius' Preface, see Green (1991) p. 233 ff. In spite of Green's claim that Prudentius' *Praef.* imitated that of Ausonius, in fact in Prudentius' poem there is much less autobiographical detail and no appeal for the reader's benevolence.

<sup>302</sup> Among his *Praefatiunculae* included are a letter of the Emperor Theodosius, in which he expressed his admiration for the literary talent of Ausonius, and the latter's reply, at the end of which he seeks forgiveness in case his verse failed to please the Emperor. The diminutive in the title of the Prefaces also points to a false modesty, cf. *De Herediolo*.

rhetorical doubt about his own age (2 'ni fallor').<sup>303</sup> Unlike Ausonius, the Christian poet repudiates his secular past and refers with regret to the days of his youth, to his education in the traditional manner and the stages of his career. Prudentius dwells on his mortality and announces that he has found the true meaning of life and accepted a new task, which is to praise God with his poetic compositions (28-31)<sup>304</sup>, and at the end of the *Praef.* briefly introduces the content of his works (37-42). Thus, this poem seems to have been written rather in the Christian autobiographical tradition, as embodied in Augustine's *Confessions*, and is Prudentius' self-examination of his soul and reflection on and denial of his former life.<sup>305</sup> However, Prudentius' motive and sentiments do not stem from the sudden conversion and renunciation which Augustine and Paulinus of Nola had experienced. Therefore, it is appropriate to attribute the allusive language, imagery and motifs in the *Praef.* to the influence on Prudentius of the pagan classical literature, and most of all Horace, particularly *Odes* 4,1.<sup>306</sup>

One of the reasons why Prudentius has been seen as an author in the classical mould is the skilful use he made of the techniques and motifs of the earlier Latin poets. He explored a wide range of classical forms, using lyric and elegiac metres in his poems *Cath.* and *Perist.*, and although Horace was his principal model, Prudentius, himself,

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<sup>303</sup> Cf. note 320 below. For the poet's biography in the Preface, see above p. 15 f. and Palmer (1989) pp. 6-31.

<sup>304</sup> For the theme of 'death in the midst of life' in Christian writings, see Palmer p. 15 where she mentions Greg. Naz. *De Se Ipso*.

<sup>305</sup> Palmer, p. 13 ff.

<sup>306</sup> This aspect is absent from Ausonius' Preface. In Prudentian scholarship opinions have differed largely as to what extent the Preface is the poet's statement about his new Christian vocation and values, and to what extent it was an expression of the norms of ancient rhetoric. See Lana (1962) p. 93 ff. where he disagreed with the idea that Horace's *Odes* 1,19 and 1,20, 27-9 had influenced the motifs in *Praef.* 1-3 and 10-13 respectively, on the grounds that Horace wrote these *Odes* in his 30's and 40's, and he used the motif of old age simply as an excuse for not singing of Augustus' victories. However, Lana (p.65 ff.) tried to establish a connection between the *Praef.* and the Stoic ideas in Seneca's treatise *De Breuitate Vitae*.

contributed to the development of the use of metres.<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, he was encouraged by the literary fashions in Late Antiquity, which are illustrated by the unusual metres used in Ausonius' poetry.<sup>308</sup> There was a contemporary practice, albeit in the Greek tradition, to use iambic Prefaces to poems written in the more traditional hexameters.<sup>309</sup> Some of his lyric metres may be compared with those used in the fragments from the hymns of Hilary of Poitiers. For instance, *Cath.* 9 and *Perist.* 1 were composed in the trochaic septenarius which was the metre of Hilary's *Adae...*; *Cath.* 7 and *Perist.* 10 - in the iambic senarius which may be compared with Hilary's *Fefellit...*; the *Praefatio* written in the metres of Hor. *Od.* 4.1, is to be compared with Hilary's *Ante...* However, partly because of the use of such sophisticated metres, it is less likely that Hilary's hymns were used for liturgical purposes, as were the far shorter and simpler hymns composed by Ambrose.<sup>310</sup> Therefore, like Hilary, Prudentius seems to have been more interested in the creation of poetry in sophisticated metres, rather than in the liturgical needs of his audience. Perhaps, this is another reason for thinking that his poetry was written for the well-educated upper classes, recently converted to Christianity.

For those who have considered his use of classical forms to be subordinate to his aim of increasing the understanding of Christian dogma, Prudentius' skilful use in the techniques of pagan poetry did not give rise to any adverse comments, because he was regarded

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<sup>307</sup> For the 'res metrica', see the Spanish edition (1950) pp. 44-6.

<sup>308</sup> Green (1991), Introduction, p. xxii f. "Ausonius is not only a competent...metrician but also an imaginative one". For his unusual metres, see Green ad loc.: *Parent.* 27 written perhaps in tetrameter proceleusmatic catalectic; *Prof.* 6 - in anapaestic monometer, *Prof.* 10 - hemiepes. Both he and Paulinus used polymetry to delineate the structure of a poem and changed metres within a poem.

<sup>309</sup> Alan Cameron (*CQ* 20 (1970) 119-29) shows that iambic prefaces to hexameter poems had become a standard practice in Greek literature of the fourth to sixth century. In late antique Latin poetry Claudian wrote the Prefaces to his hexameter poems in elegiac metres.

<sup>310</sup> For Hilary's hymns, see Palmer (1989) pp. 59-61. For Ambrose', see p. 62 ff. For Augustine' *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, see p. 71. For the meters in *Perist.*, see p. 74 ff.

simply as a cultural phenomenon. However, others<sup>311</sup> objected strongly to or cautioned against such subordination of classical form to Christian content, regarded his objectives as primarily literary and judged his use of the classical forms and metrical innovations as ‘extensions of ancient practice’.<sup>312</sup> Both Witke and Thraede found their evidence of Prudentian poetics in the *Preface* and the *Epilogue* of his corpus. Thus, having identified in the *Preface* conventional poetic themes and, above all, Horatian imagery, Witke concludes that Prudentius wrote like any other Roman poet, and what identified him as Christian was his beliefs and the culture within which he wrote.<sup>313</sup>

The best example of the poet’s fondness for classical metres is in the *Preface*, written in stanzas of glyconics, lesser and greater asclepiads, a mixture that is not found in other Latin poets whose works are still extant.<sup>314</sup> Its form and, to some extent, its content and imagery was inspired by Horace’s *Odes* 4.1 and 1.19 that were composed in glyconic and lesser asclepiads.<sup>315</sup> Whilst in Prudentius’ *Praef.* there is an imitation of the imagery in *Od.* 1,19<sup>316</sup> and *Od.* 4,13<sup>317</sup>, clearly there Prudentius is also in a dialogue with the Horace of *Od.* 4,1.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Thraede (1965) p. 21 ff. He applies the method of *Kontrastimitation* to argue that Prudentius’ poetry should be seen as literary work of art.

<sup>312</sup> Witke (1971) pp. 103-4, Lavarenne has gone too far in seeing Prudentius as the founder of a new literary tradition, i.e. the genre of Christian poetry, in “a deliberate attempt on his part to give Christianity a strong foothold in poetry”, and Rodriguez-Herrera has explained, too easily, the poet’s *modus operandi* as a combination of form and content. For criticism of these theories, see Thraede (1965) pp. 8-9, n. 6.

<sup>313</sup> Witke p. 110. “Lucretius’s handling of the Magna Mater procession is what makes him an epic poet, not his intellectual viewpoint and didactic function.”

<sup>314</sup> Gnilka, “Zur Praefatio des Prudentius”, *Prudenziana* I (2000) pp. 138-51; p. 138<sup>states</sup> that the combination of these metres in a stanza is without a prototype. However, the *Praef.* is missing from the two earliest MSS, the *Parisinus Latinus* 8084 (*Puteanus*) and the *Ambrosianus* D36, see Cunningham’s edition, x ff. Therefore Gnilka, *op.cit.* p. 139 note 5 considered the possibility of crude interpolation.

<sup>315</sup> Except for *Od.* 1,15,36, Horace prefers a spondaic first foot of the glyconic, as here does Prudentius.

<sup>316</sup> See Witke p. 107 ff., for a discussion of the themes and the language in the *Preface* that are distinctly Horatian. For instance, Prudentius recalls his ‘concessa Venus’ of his youth by the phrase ‘lasciua proteruitas’ (10) that combines the theme and language of Horace’s *Od.* 1,19,3 ‘lasciua Licentia’ and 7 ‘grata proteruitas’; ‘male pertinax’ (14) and *Od.* 1,9,24.

<sup>317</sup> J. Pucci, “Prudentius’ readings of Horace in the *Cathemerinon*”, *Latomus* 50 (1991) 677-90, especially pp. 679-85, where he compares ‘nix capitis’ (27) and *Od.* 4,13,12 ‘capitis niues’ of the aged Lyce, and

Horace and Prudentius composed these two poems when they were of about the same age, in their fifties, but in his poetry the former expressed nostalgia, whilst the latter's feeling was one of regret. Horace expressed his age with reference to the calendar of magisterial offices, he has witnessed ten times the *lustrum* celebrated at the end of the Censor's five year term of office, 'circa lustra decem' (6). Similarly, Prudentius opened the *Preface* by giving his age, except that he added seven years to the ten five-year periods (1-3)<sup>319</sup>:

Per quinquennia iam decem,  
ni fallor<sup>320</sup>, fuimus; septimus insuper  
annum cardo rotat, dum fruimur sole uolubili.

Prudentius seems to have identified himself with Horace, or perhaps, as Witke has suggested, to have seen himself as following in that poet's footsteps. In his old age Prudentius reviewed in detail the stages of his past life that he renounced in order to express in verse his Christian belief.<sup>321</sup> The image of himself as a stern judge, 'terruimus reos', may have been used as a deliberate contrast with that of the merciful advocate P.

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concludes that the image is strengthened by the Christian context of the *Preface*, since for Prudentius as a Christian, old age brings with it the promise of life eternal. Gnilka (2000) p. 144-8 brought attention to the grammatical problem in *Praef.* 27, that there is not a suitable subject for *uoluerit* and *reddiderit*, and suggests that 26-7 were interpolated. He argues that there is something comical about the image 'nix capitis' that Prudentius used to set a parallel between his age and the seasons of the year. He suggested also that the problem arose from the fact that in this line Prudentius conflated two Horatian images of ageing, the above-mentioned metaphor of winter (*Od.* 4,13,11), which Quintilian criticised as being harsh and far-fetched (*Inst.* 8,6,17), as well as the image of spring in *Od.* 2,11,14-15 'rosa/canos odorati capillos'.

<sup>318</sup> To my knowledge no one has ever related the two poems on the basis of the *recusatio* of one's past, and the change of lifestyle and vocation.

<sup>319</sup> Witke, p. 144 observed that "he [Prudentius] also links himself to Horace specifically in the Proemium by saying that he writes in his fifty-seventh year, which Horace just failed to attain."

<sup>320</sup> Gnilka (2000) pp. 140-3 examines the significance of the expression which should not be taken as a sign of the poet's ignorance of his own age, but was used deliberately as a stylistic element. Although 'annorum computatio' had been a complicated exercise for which examples are to be found in court proceedings (*Apul. Apol.* 89) and epigraphic formulae, such as 'plus minus' and 'circiter', in *Praef.* 1-3 the phrase and the context served to present the idea of the wasted slice of the poet's life.

<sup>321</sup> D. W. T. C. Vessey, "Prudentius, Shakespeare, and the seven ages of a man: a note", *CPh* 68 (1973) 208-11 has traced an interesting resemblance between Prudentius' organisation of his biography and the ancient astrological system of the seven ages. Cf. *Symm.* 2,318 ff.

Fabius Maximus in the Ode. Horace stresses the protection which a barrister gives to a defendant unjustly accused, whereas Prudentius, as judge, terrifies those who may be guilty.

In some ways, Prudentius' *recusatio* recalls the poetic *persona* of Horace in *Odes* 4, who with advancing age claims to have resigned, though rather reluctantly, the games of Venus and thus his lyric poetry.<sup>322</sup> However, by the end of the Ode, he had become again the victim of Love and its uncertainties, '...iam uolucrum sequor/ te.../...dure, uolubilis.'<sup>323</sup> By contrast, Prudentius reflected on the immutable laws of nature that, unlike human life, move in a predetermined sequence, and proclaimed that his former life was now at an end, 'atqui fine sub ultimo/ peccatrix anima stultitiam exuat' (34-5). It would seem that Prudentius alluded to this Ode, in order to draw a distinction between the conscious choice at the appropriate time in his life to devote himself to an activity wholly in harmony with his new-found beliefs, on the one hand, and the inability of Horace, in old age, to cope with the legacy of his former life, on the other. Evidence for this thesis can be found in the last stanza (*Praef.* 43-5):

haec dum scribo uel eloquor,  
uinclis o utinam corporis emicem  
liber, quo tulerit lingua sono mobilis ultimo! 45

picking up *Od.* 4,1,30 and 35-6:

iam nec spes animi credula mutui 30  
cur facunda parum decoro 35  
inter uerba cadit lingua silentio?

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<sup>322</sup> Cf. also *Od.* 3,26.

<sup>323</sup> This epithet was used also in Prudentius' poem, 'sole uolubili' (*Praef.* 3).



sanctitatis indigi  
nec ad leuamen pauperum potentes. 10  
adprobat tamen Deus  
pedestre carmen et benignus audit.

In lines 13 ff. the *humilitas* topos is developed in the metaphor of the earthen vessel, ‘uas fictile’, which is an allusion to Paul’s *Rom.* 9:21 and 2 *Tim.* 2:20 ‘in magna autem domo non solum sunt uasa aurea et argentea sed et lignea et fictilia.’ By transferring the qualities of the vessel to his own service to God and by the use of the diminutive *uasculum*, the poet stresses his modesty and personal unworthiness (*Epil.* 25-30):

me paterno in atrio 25  
ut obsoletum uasculum caducis  
Christus aptat usibus  
sinitque parte in anguli manere.  
munus ecce fictile  
inimus intra regiam salutis. 30

However, even if here the themes of inadequacy in material goods, poetry as a recompense and gift to God and the poet’s salvation in return can be traced back in classical literature, more important is their connection with those in other Christian poetry, discussed earlier in the Chapter, for example, Paulinus’ poetic offering (*Carm.* 6,25-6) and his poverty in all but words of praise that God will not refuse (*Carm.* 18,25 ff.).<sup>327</sup>

In conclusion, in this Chapter a brief introduction to western literary culture in the fourth century throws light on the motives that had urged Prudentius to compose poems for the

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<sup>327</sup> *Carm.* 18,46-50 ‘...ego munere linguae,/ nullus opum, famulor de me mea debita soluens/ meque ipsum pro me, uilis licet hostia, pendo./ nec metuam sperni, quoniam non uilia Christo/ pauperis obsequii libamina...’

purpose of teaching Christianity. Even when his works are compared to those of non-Christian content, there are similarities in the respect for, and use of, classical language and techniques. The Christian poets accepted the pagan tradition in order to convert it for their spiritual purpose.<sup>328</sup> Similarly, Prudentius is to be seen in these terms, that he did not differentiate himself from the classical poetic tradition but, on the contrary, made full use of it. It would be wrong, therefore, to accept a view that in Prudentius' poetry there was no continuity between the pagan and Christian forms of expression.<sup>329</sup> Furthermore, this Christian poet was writing in and engaged with the classical tradition, and was both imitating and emulating his pagan predecessors. There appears to be a difference between the biblical epic poets and Prudentius, in that the former wanted to distinguish between the classical and the Christian epic traditions, even if only in the subject-matter. As demonstrated earlier, their polemic attitude towards the pagan tradition was the only way they could come to terms with it, and in this way these poets made use of their education and the ancient authors. Prudentius also took up the challenge and his poetry demonstrates his versatility in adopting different styles and his original reworking of traditional themes to new effect. There is no proof that Prudentius made use of any Greek texts<sup>330</sup>, including the *LXX*, and it is believed that for the biblical references he had access to pre-Vulgate translations of the Bible, most likely the *Itala* version. His poetic

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<sup>328</sup> Charlet, "Aesthetic Trends in Late Latin Poetry (325-410)", *Philologus* 132 (1988) 74-85, p. 85, "The fourth century Latin poets strove for balance between neo-classicism and neo-alexandrianism within the triumphal expression of contemporary ideology."

<sup>329</sup> Herzog (1966) *passim* and Herzog, *Bibelepik*, München (1975) pp. lxx-lxxi. Charlet (1988), p. 82 gave Prudentius' treatment of the Golden Age myth in *Cath.* 11 as an example of such continuity.

<sup>330</sup> Ausonius and Paulinus had some knowledge of Greek of which the former made limited use (cf. *Prof.* 8,12-16). In *Conf.* 1,13,20-14,23 Augustine claimed to have had difficulty with learning Greek. For the text of the Bible used by Prudentius, see Charlet (1983). Based on his examination of the biblical references in the *Cath.*, Charlet (p. 95) concluded that Prudentius did not use sufficient direct quotation to allow the identification of the source, and conversely used a great number of longer scriptural paraphrase. For the influence of Latin Fathers, see p. 104 ff.

inspiration was a combination of his emulation of the classical authors, knowledge of the Scriptures, Christian doctrines and exegetical tradition, and the new artistic traditions.<sup>331</sup>

The fact that the poet was not mentioned by any contemporary writer may be due, partly, to his primary lay career and secondary poetic activities, and, partly, to the unknown audience for his highly classical verses. However, in the second half of the fifth century, some fifty years after the poet's death, Prudentius' collection of poems was among the books in the library of Sidonius Apollinaris, a leading literary figure and the Bishop of Clermont, and other sixth century writers also praised the quality of Prudentius' poetry.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Christian art inspired Prudentius to compose the *Tituli* of forty-nine four-line hexameters which depict scenes from the *OT* and *NT*. The pictorial elements are found in the passages that depict biblical episodes in the *Cath.*, *Psych.*, *Apoth.* and *Ham.* The *OT* scenes in *Ham.* 697 ff. are reminiscent of those in Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 27, 511 ff. where are described the mosaics or frescoes bearing scenes from the Scriptures that embellished the walls of the church dedicated to St. Felix of Nola.

<sup>332</sup> For the sources that mention the works of Prudentius, see Lavarenne (1933) Introduction, p. xvii. These are Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 2,9 (AD 472; the poems of this 'scientiae uir' were in his library, together with the works of Horace); Genn. (480-500) *Vir. Ill.* 'Palatinus miles' who wrote three *libelli* (*Apoth.*, *Ham.* and *Psych.*); Isid. Sev. (570-636) *Carm.* 9 (PL 83) 'eximio dulcis Prudentius ore/ carminibus uariis nobilis ille satis'.

## Chapter II

### *Lucretian thought and imagery in Prudentius' poems.*

During a new archaising period in Latin literature that began in the second century and is most evident in Apuleius, at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, both Arnobius and Lactantius referred to Lucretius as a purveyor of Epicureanism.<sup>1</sup> In *Divinarum Institutionum libri* Lactantius referred by name to Lucretius, whom after Virgil, he favoured most and whom he cited sixty-two times.<sup>2</sup> In *Adversus Nationes* Arnobius used a largely Lucretian vocabulary, yet never quoted verbatim from the *De Rerum Natura*.<sup>3</sup> Although these apologists approved of the philosopher's polemic against the pagan religion, they could not but disagree with the fundamental doctrines of Epicureanism. Thus, at the beginning of his treatise, in support of his claim that the laws of nature had not been disrupted by the advent of Christianity, Arnobius alluded to Lucretius' subject matter.<sup>4</sup> Although he employed the language and themes of the *D.R.N.*, Arnobius attacked all philosophies as inimical to Christianity.<sup>5</sup> His eulogy of Christ as the benefactor of mankind recalls Lucretius' praise of Epicurus as a god in the well-known passage in *D.R.N.* 5,1-54. As a result, the image of Epicurus is transposed to

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<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion on the subject, see Hagendahl (1956), vol. 1, "The Apologists and Lucretius", p. 1 ff. and C. Fabian, *Dogma und Dichtung: Untersuchungen zu Prudentius' Apotheosis*, Diss., Frankfurt am Main (1988) p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> R. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius*, Oxford (1978) p. 15f. Lactantius quoted Virgil ninety-one times and Ovid thirty-one times.

<sup>3</sup> His is a rather secular form of a Christian apologetic treatise with no direct quotations from the Scriptures of which Arnobius does not show any profound knowledge. *Adv. Nat.* 3,10 he mentioned Lucretius and alluded to *D.R.N.* 4,1168.

<sup>4</sup> Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1,2 'postquam esse nomen in terris Christianae religionis occepit, quidnam inusitatum, quid incognitum, quid contra leges principaliter institutas aut sensit aut passa est rerum ipsa quae dicitur appellaturque natura? numquid in contrarias qualitates prima illa elementa mutata sunt, ex quibus res omnes consensum est esse concretas? numquid machina huius et molis... parte est in aliqua relaxata...?' Cf. *D.R.N.* 5,96 '... moles et machina mundi'; Prud. *Ham.* 248-9 'mundana laborat/ machina'.

<sup>5</sup> Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1,31 where he referred to the atheists, sceptics and those who believed in the atomic theory.

that of Christ, who reveals the nature of the universe and God, and becomes the giver of true knowledge and the only Saviour of mankind (*Adv. Nat.* 1,38)<sup>6</sup>:

sed concedamus interdum manum uestris opinationibus dantes, unum Christum fuisse de nobis, mentis animae corporis fragilitatis et condicionis unius: nonne dignus a nobis est tantorum ob munerum gratiam deus dici deusque sentiri?

Whilst the underlined phrase with reference to Christ is, no doubt, a conscious echo of Lucretius' invocation of Epicurus as 'deus ille fuit, deus' (*D.R.N.* 5,8), the whole question bears a striking similarity to *D.R.N.* 5,50-1 '...nonne decebit/ hunc hominem numero diuum dignarier esse'.<sup>7</sup>

In *Div. Inst.* 3, the Book that attacks ancient philosophy and, in particular, Epicureanism, Lactantius, not without irony, quoted *D.R.N.* 5,6-8 and 5,50-1, in order to contrast 'diuina sapientia' with the teachings of Epicurus, 'qui princeps uitae rationem inuenit eam quae/ nunc appellatur sapientia', as quoted in *D.R.N.* 5,9-10 (*Div. Inst.* 3,14,1-4):

rectius itaque Lucretius, cum eum laudat qui sapientiam primus inuenit, sed hoc inepte, quod ab homine inuentam putauit...quodsi repertorem sapientiae ut deum laudauit – ita enim dicit:

nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.  
nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,  
dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi –

tamen non erat sic laudandus deus, quod sapientiam inuenerit, sed quod hominem fecerit qui posset capere sapientiam: minuit enim laudem qui partem laudat ex toto. sed ille ut hominem laudauit, qui tamen ob id ipsum deberet pro deo haberi, quod sapere inuenerit: nam sic ait:

nonne decebit  
hunc hominem numero diuum dignarier esse?

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<sup>6</sup> For a comparison between the two eulogies, see Hagendahl (1956), vol. 1, p. 18 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Notice the parallel between 'dignarier esse' and 'dignus...est'.

Lactantius was not always accurate in quoting from the *D.R.N.*, as in the case of other Latin poetry, a fact which is to be explained by the less reliable transmission of Lucretius' text.<sup>8</sup> Despite Lactantius' attempt to correct the work of Lucretius the philosopher, he admired Lucretius the poet for having set himself the great task of delivering mankind from unfounded superstitions (*Div. Inst.* 1,16,3):

magnum hoc opus et homine dignum:

religionum animos nodis exsoluere pergo

ut ait Lucretius, qui quidem hoc efficere non poterat, qui nihil ueri adferebat.

nostrum est hoc officium, qui et uerum Deum adserimus et falsos refutamus.

Because of his admiration of Lucretius, Lactantius felt under an obligation to assist this poet, whose didactic aims were only partially achieved.<sup>9</sup> But when in Book 3 of *Div. Inst.* the teachings of the pagan philosophers are attacked as being false<sup>10</sup>, Lucretius is guilty of presenting the Epicurean *mendacia* and of the attribution of the discovery of wisdom to mankind. At the end of his diatribe against Epicurus, Lactantius directed his attack against the person of Lucretius, himself, 'poeta inanissimus', and his eulogy of Epicurus in *D.R.N.* 3,1043 f.<sup>11</sup>

Lactantius's polemical attitude to Lucretius is expressed particularly well at the end of the *Div. Inst.*, which he decided to close by, yet again, quoting from the *D.R.N.* With an expression of ironic adulation of Lucretius and a conviction in the superiority of his faith,

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<sup>8</sup> Ogilvie (1978) p. 16 f. For example, *Div. Inst.* 2,11,1 has *terrae* for *terram* in *D.R.N.* 5,808 and *ipse* for *saepe* in *D.R.N.* 2,1101-2. According to Ogilvie the fact that Lactantius often misquoted Lucretius and Ovid, but never Virgil, is indicative of "the state of the late classical text", so that compared with the Lucretian text, the Virgilian was transmitted more accurately.

<sup>9</sup> In *Div. Inst.* 2 the Christian Apologist accepted Lucretius' criticisms of the forms of pagan worship, e.g. 2,3,10 (*D.R.N.* 6,52 f.) and 2,3,11 (*D.R.N.* 5,1198-202). In *Div. Inst.* 3,27,10 Lucretius' imagery of *religio* in *D.R.N.* 1,64 f. is used.

<sup>10</sup> For the attack on the Epicurean theories, see also *Div. Inst.* 2,8,49; 2,11,1-14 and 3,14,1-2.

<sup>11</sup> *Div. Inst.* 3,17,28. Cf. *Div. Inst.* 7,12,1-26 where, to refute the Epicurean tenets, Lactantius quoted from *D.R.N.* 3 on the soul.

the Christian author makes Lucretius' praise of Epicureanism sound like a panegyric of Christianity (*Div. Inst.* 7,27,5-6):

...pater enim noster ac Dominus, qui condidit firmauitque caelum, qui solem cum ceteris sideribus induxit, qui libratam magnitudine sua terram<sup>12</sup> uallauit<sup>13</sup> montibus, mari circumdedit amnibusque distinxit et quidquid est in hoc opere mundi conflauit ac perfecit e nihilo, perspectis erroribus hominum ducem misit qui nobis iustitiae uiam panderet. hunc sequamur omnes, hunc audiamus, huic deuotissime pareamus, quoniam solus, ut ait Lucretius (*D.R.N.* 6,24-8),

ueridicis hominum purgauit pectora dictis  
et finem statuit cuppedinis atque timoris  
exposuitque bonum summum, quo tendimus omnes,  
quid foret, atque uiam monstrauit, limite paruo  
qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu.

The discussion at the beginning of this chapter shows that the reception of Lucretius' work in Christian literature was well established before Prudentius composed his Christian poetry. The attitude of Christians as expressed by Lactantius, whereby Lucretius' search for wisdom in nature and not in the supernatural was deemed wrong, must have shaped Prudentius' own attitude. Lactantius was aware of pagan criticisms of Christianity that in worshipping Jesus, who was a man, the Christians apostasised from the philosophical view of the One God.<sup>14</sup> In transposing to Jesus Lucretius' eulogy of Epicurus as a Greek sage, Lactantius may be answering the assertion of Porphyry, the third century Greek intellectual, that Jesus should be seen as a sage or a hero, such as

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<sup>12</sup> *Ov. Met.* 1,12-13 'tellus/ ponderibus librata suis'. In *Div. Inst.* 2,1,15 Lactantius quoted *Met.* 1,84-6, and other Christian writers often referred to the account of creation in *Met.* 1.

<sup>13</sup> For 'uallare', see *D.R.N.* 5,26-7 'Lernaeaque pestis/ hydra uenenatis posset uallata colubris?'

<sup>14</sup> R. L. Wilken, 'Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek religion and Christian faith', p. 117 ff. in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (FS R. M. Grant), edd. W. R. Schoedel, R. L. Wilken, Paris (1979).

Pythagoras or Hercules, who taught men to worship the One Supreme God.<sup>15</sup> In this way Lactantius also seems to defend his belief that although Christ could be presented poetically as a Greek hero and sage, yet he is the One God.

Unlike Lactantius, Prudentius does not show such an overtly polemical attitude to the poetry of Lucretius, but as the latter's successor, the Christian poet employs the metrical form, vocabulary and stylistic techniques of the *D.R.N.* to convey a new message. He achieves this by treating echoes from that poem more freely and somewhat ironically, rather than quoting verbatim as he does in the case of Virgil whom to a great extent he assimilates. In this Chapter I shall illustrate Lucretius' influence on Prudentius' didactic poems, with special emphasis on the *Apoth.* and the *Ham.*, so as to analyse this poet's techniques used for his imitation and emulation of the Latin literary tradition.

#### The Lucretian influence on the *Apoth.*

The most recent research on the reception of the *D.R.N.* by Prudentius is found in Fabian's study, which describes the structure and theological reasoning of the *Apoth.*, and deals also with the characteristics that the poem shares with the didactic poetic tradition as represented by Lucretius.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Fabian's main argument in favour of the affinity between the *D.R.N.* and the *Apoth.* is based on the observed similarities between the healing missions of Lucretius and Prudentius by means of didactic poetry, in spite of

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* about Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, quotations of which are to be found in Aug. *Civ. Dei* 19,23, Lact. *Div. Inst.* 4,3 and Eus. *Demonst. Evang.* 3,6,39-3,7,1.

<sup>16</sup> Fabian (1988) p. 219-68, "Die Apotheosis und die Tradition des Lehrgedichts (Lucrez)". See p. 228-31 for the research, mainly in terms of linguistic and metrical parallels, into Lucretius' reception by Prudentius. Fabian considers most comprehensive the research of E. Rapisarda, *Introduzione alla lettura di Prudenzio*, vol. 1, 'Influssi Lucreziani', Catania (1951). I have not been able to consult this book, since it is not available from libraries in the U.K., but I have had access to his preliminary study 'Influssi Lucreziani in Prudenzio', *Vig. Chr.* 4 (1950) 46-60.

their divergent teachings.<sup>17</sup> However, Fabian, in maintaining that the panegyric treatment of the Christian subject in the *Apoth.* was an imitation of Lucretius' encomium of Epicurean philosophy as a religious doctrine, develops Rapisarda's argument about Prudentius' sympathy with Epicurean beliefs.<sup>18</sup> Like Hagendahl, who in the case of Arnobius and Lactantius rejected such an hypothesis as absurd, I, too, would argue that there is no question of Prudentius' use of the themes in the *D.R.N.* being explained as a vacillation between the Epicurean *ratio* and the Christian faith. Rather, like Lactantius, Prudentius shows his appreciation of Lucretius the poet and uses his discretion about what material from the *D.R.N.* he can borrow and in what way. The main difference is that whilst the apologist was interested primarily in refuting philosophy and made a selective use of the ideas in the *D.R.N.*, the Christian poet's preoccupation is with the classical literary tradition and he does not regard Lucretius as an enemy. Therefore, Prudentius' work should be described, not only as a deliberate imitation of Lucretius, but also as a critical assessment of this poet's techniques in regard to his own teaching of Christianity. I do not interpret the Lucretian echoes in the *Apoth.* as Prudentius'

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<sup>17</sup> Fabian, *op. cit.*, p. 235, states that without doubt, the two poets are linked by a common aim, the presentation of their particular doctrine in the light of their own awareness of its healing nature, while p. 261 f. argued for similarities between the six Books of *D.R.N.* and the six refutations in *Apoth.*, and contrasted Prudentius' desire to remove the fear of death at the end of *Apoth.* and Lucretius' account of the plague in Book 6. For the interpretation of *D.R.N.* 1,936-50 in terms of a Christian mission, see Fabian, p. 234. See also E. J. Kenney, "Lucretius", *Greece and Rome, New Surveys in the Classics 11*, Oxford (1977) p. 38 ff. 'The Message and the Mission'.

<sup>18</sup> E. Rapisarda (1950) p. 49 maintained that Epicurean ideas, such as the anthropomorphic representation of the universe and the echoes of the atomic theory (*Ham.* 236-52, *Symm.* 2, 627), strengthened by the Lucretian mode of expression, appear controversial in the context of Christian arguments.

understanding of the religious symbolism of the Epicurean tenets, but as this poet's interest in Lucretius' means of argument, from an opponent's point of view, which is the very reason why, at times, quasi-polemical overtones might be detected in Prudentius' hexameters. The Christian poet was able to successfully employ Lucretius' powers of expression in order to state his own teaching in verse<sup>19</sup>, and in this chapter I shall argue that Prudentius did not reject classical poetry on the basis of its content, but used both its themes and poetic techniques in order to merge the ancient with the Christian literary traditions.<sup>20</sup>

Because of similarities with the manner of argument, teaching what is believed to be right by refuting the opponents' views, and with the language of the *D.R.N.*, the *Apoth.* is a rich source for examining Prudentius' use of Lucretian techniques. In this poem, which consists of six refutations of unorthodox views about the divinity of Christ, Prudentius reasserted the Nicene Creed on the Oneness of God and the Trinity. In the first Refutation the poet argued against the so-called monarchic doctrine, the teaching that did not recognise the separate manifestations of God the Father and God the Son (*Apoth.* 1-117). Whilst the poet's argumentation is deeply rooted in the Bible<sup>21</sup>, the polemic technique is in the very style of Lucretius; Prudentius' attack is conducted, as in a dialogue, with his opponents, who claimed that God the Father, himself, suffered on the Cross,

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<sup>19</sup> Fabian (1988) p. 233 is wrong to claim that both Lucretius and Prudentius do not see any value in the verse form per se and to separate, from the other merits of their poems, the importance they place on their message.

<sup>20</sup> His main technique is allegory, by which he accepted both pagan and *OT* themes, which too were controversial for the Christians.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Apoth.* 9-10 and 117-27, and *Jn.* 1:18 'Deum nemo uidit umquam' and 14:9 respectively. In *Apoth.* 18-70 and 128-54, the episodes from *Gen.* 18:1 ff. and 32:31; *Ex.* 33:1-17 and 3:1 ff., and *Dan.* 3:1-97, illustrate the Christian view of Christ's manifestations in the *OT*.

'passibilis...deus' (6). Following Lucretius, they are not named<sup>22</sup> but other apostrophes are used as expression of Prudentius' indignation, 'blaspheme' (16) and 'sacrilegi doctores' (101), and their mistaken views are questioned (*Apoth.* 101-6):

dicite, sacrilegi doctores, qui patre summo  
 desertum iacuisse thronum contenditis illo  
 tempore, quo fragiles deus est inlapsus in artus,  
 ergo pater passus? quid non malus audeat error?  
 ipse puellari conceptus sanguine creuit? 105  
 ipse uerecundae distendit uirginis aluum?<sup>23</sup>

Just as Lucretius rejected the views of the earlier philosophers, who seemed to have lapsed from the true explanation of nature embodied in the teachings of Epicurus, '...a uera lapsi ratione uidentur' (*D.R.N.* 1,637), the idea that God could be subject to any kind of mortal experience was viewed by Prudentius as sacrilegious and in contradiction with the truth found in the Scriptures and, in particular, in the Gospel of St. John.<sup>24</sup> The use of rhetorical style and irony to question the teachings of his opponents, gives the poet a chance not only to attack, but also correct the views which do not accord with his own orthodoxy; he becomes the exponent of the Christian doctrine of God's manifestation

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<sup>22</sup> The opponents are rarely addressed by name, e.g. 'profanator Christi...Sabelli' (178), Manicheus (956); cf. Marcion (*Ham.* 56, 124). Cf. Heraclitus (*D.R.N.* 1,638), Empedocles (1,716), Anaxagoras (1,830), Democritus (3,371).

<sup>23</sup> Although in the context of the Son of God, Prudentius speaks with reverence about the Virgin birth, here it is marked by a satiric and indignant tone. Prudentius seems to be reinforcing the Lucretian attack with echoes of Juvenal, see *Juv.* 6,598-9 'si distendere uellet/...uterum pueris salientibus'. Cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 6,105-6 'et grauida (mirum) distenditur aluo/ Elisabeth'.

<sup>24</sup> *Apoth.* 15 'euangelici pietas...libelli', 75 '...apostolus edocet auctor'.

through Christ and the 'uera fides' of the Scriptures<sup>25</sup>, which may be a parallel for Lucretius' understanding of his role as a revealer of 'uera ratio' (*Apoth.* 107-19)<sup>26</sup>:

et iam falsiloqua est diuini pagina libri,  
quae Verbum in carnis loquitur fluxisse figuram?  
at non qui Verbi Pater est caro factus habetur.  
fige gradum, Scriptura, tuum, nil mobile et anceps                    110  
adfirmasse decet. Pater est quem cernere nulli  
est licitum, Pater est qui numquam uisus in orbe est  
nec mundana inter radiauit lumina coram.  
Verbum conspicuum misit missumque recepit  
cum uoluit: Verbo praestrinxit uiscera purae                    115  
uirginis et Verbo struxit puerilia membra.  
ipse quidem in terris uirtute et numine praesens  
semper adest quocumque loqui nec pars uacat ulla  
maiestate patris, nusquam est genitor Deus absens.

Having ridiculed the heretics' idea as blasphemous, by means of the rhetorical question, next Prudentius negates it ('at non' 109) and corrects it ('adfirmasse decet' 111). In the manner of Lucretius, he repeats the specialised words, in order to introduce a new idea or stress important or complicated doctrines, such as the invisibility of God the Father, the Incarnation of Christ and the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. For the purpose of emphasis, verbs are often placed at the beginning of lines (110-12), and a great number of demonstrative and other pronouns are used, as well as different forms of a word (114), or related words (117-19).

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<sup>25</sup> 'Verus' is used to define the orthodox doctrine in *Praef. Apoth.* 1 'uera secta' (cf. *Symm.* 2,93), *Apoth.* 638 'uera fides' (cf. *Perist.* 9,20). See especially *Ham.* 180-1 'hoc ratio sed nostra negat, cui non licet unam/ infirmare fidem, sacro quae tradita libro est.'

<sup>26</sup> Although I have reproduced the text as in Cunningham's *CCL* edition, in general I prefer the punctuation and use of capital letters as in Thomson's *Loeb* version.

Overall, the first Refutation in *Apoth.* shows how Prudentius followed Lucretius' style of invective and irony as expressed in the structure (introduction or refutation) and the illustration of his arguments.<sup>27</sup> The Christian poet states his own authority, 'credite...mihi credite' (*Apoth.* 77), uses the imperative to address the Bible personified (*Apoth.* 110), employs construction such as 'si...infitiaris,/ fare age quem uideat' (*Apoth.* 128-9)<sup>28</sup>, expressions of conviction or doubt, 'haud dubium est' (*Apoth.* 138), scorns the opponent's view as being an 'error' (*Apoth.* 104, 203, 915; cf. *Ham.* 867). Further reminiscences of Lucretius' argumentative and rhetorical style are found throughout Prudentius' hexameters: plenty of rhetorical questions such as 'quid loquar'<sup>29</sup> (*Ham.* 230; *Symm.* 1,271) and 'quid...memorem?'<sup>30</sup> (*Apoth.* 672), phrases containing *etiam* (*Symm.* 1,363 'nunc etiam', cf. *D.R.N.* 1,579), the use of *principio* (*Ham.* 338, *Symm.* 2,133, cf. *D.R.N.* 1,271), *scilicet* (*Ham.* 214, 517, 620, cf. *D.R.N.* 1,377), *tu* (*Apoth.* 290, 526, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,66), *quapropter* (*Apoth.* 946, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,238), *uidere* (*Apoth.* 218, 615 'uidimus'; *Apoth.* 731 'uideam'; 'nonne uides' *Apoth.* 479, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,196)<sup>31</sup>, *dubitare* (*Apoth.* 732 'possum dubitare'; *Apoth.* 674, 782, *Symm.* 2,414 'dubitans'; *Symm.* 1,587 *dubitamus*; *Apoth.* 290 'si dubitas', *Ham.* 892 'expertus dubitas'; *Symm.* 2,121. 441 'non dubitat'; *Symm.* 2,439 'quid dubitat'; *Symm.* 2,101 'quis dubitet'; *Ham.* 452

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<sup>27</sup> For formulae used in the didactic poems of Lucretius, see E. J. Kenney "Nequitiae poeta", *Ovidiana. Recherches sur Ovide. Publiées à l'occasion du bimillénaire de la naissance du poète par N. I. Herescu*, Paris (1958) pp. 201-9.

<sup>28</sup> *Ham.* 106 ff. 'si.../.../dic age quis'. Cf. *D.R.N.* 1,921 'nunc age...audi'; 2,730 'nunc age.../percipe'. See also *Symm.* 2,244 'quare age...', cf. Virg. *Georg.* 2,35 'quare agite'.

<sup>29</sup> Virg. *Ecl.* 6,74; Ov. *Ars.* 3,169.

<sup>30</sup> Virg. *Georg.* 2,158 ff. 'an...memorem'.

<sup>31</sup> *Georg.* 1,56; 3,103.

‘num...dubium est’), *credere* as an expression of personal belief (*Apoth.* 973) and means of teaching (*Apoth.* 850 ‘cur non...potuisse...credas’, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,888; 3,443; *Ham.* 6-7 ‘ut.../...credas’; ‘crede’ *Apoth.* 585, 715, 786-7, 1055; *Symm.* 2,243, 621, 997, cf. *D.R.N.* 3,437; ‘credite’ *Apoth.* 77, 878, 1080), *accipe* (*Ham.* 723, cf. *D.R.N.* 4,722), *putare* used to express the opponent’s view (*Symm.* 2,131 ‘putetis’ and 2,881 ‘putatis’, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,80; *Ham.* 155 ‘putatur’, cf. *D.R.N.* 5,756; *Apoth.* 188 ‘non putat’; *Symm.* 1,40 ‘nec putet’; *Symm.* 2,477 ‘quisque putat...sciat’, cf. *D.R.N.* 2,80 ff.), *quaerere* (*Apoth.* 263; *Ham.* 84; *Symm.* 2,334, cf. *D.R.N.* 1,332; *Symm.* 2,88 ‘quaerimus’; *Symm.* 1,369 ‘si...quaeris’), *discere* (*Apoth.* 509 ‘disce’; 834 ‘discas’), *aspicere* (‘aspice’ *Ham.* 61, 778; *Symm.* 1,608), *dicere* (*Symm.* 2,443 ‘dico’, cf. *D.R.N.* 4,239 ‘nunc...dico’; *Symm.* 2,583 ‘dicam’, cf. *D.R.N.* 4,880)<sup>32</sup>.

Lucretius’ influence on the manner of argument in this first section of the *Apoth.* (1-177) is strengthened from the outset by Prudentius’ imitation of Lucretian diction, from single words such as the archaic infinitive, e.g. *comprendier* (*Apoth.* 7), and forms ending in –*amen* (*Apoth.* 4, 20, 27, 73 etc.)<sup>33</sup>, to whole lines such as ‘qui mare qui terras qui lucida sidera fecit’ (*Apoth.* 153).<sup>34</sup>

For his attack on the teaching of Sabellius in the second Refutation (*Apoth.* 178-320), once more the poet’s technique shows Lucretian influence. Whilst other Christian writers, before Prudentius, had refuted the heretical views as being insane, Lucretius, himself, scorned the theories of the opponent philosophers as nonsensical. Thus, when Prudentius addressed Sabellius as ‘insane negator’ (*Apoth.* 179), he might have followed the

<sup>32</sup> *Georg.* 2,226 ‘nunc...dicam’; 4,149-50 ‘nunc age.../...expediam’. See also *Symm.* 2,4 and *Georg.* 2,2.

<sup>33</sup> See the Appendix to the thesis for Lucretius’ influence on Prudentius’ hexametres and language.

<sup>34</sup> *D.R.N.* 1,278 ‘quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli’; 5,68 ‘fundarit terram caelum mare sidera solem’ etc.

technique in *D.R.N.* 1,635 ff. where the Greek philosophers were referred to as ‘stolidi’ (1,641).<sup>35</sup> The comparison between the styles used by the classical and the Christian poet in their respective refutations is further strengthened by their views on the nature of philosophy. Whereas Lucretius defended one philosophy against other, for the sake of his defence of the orthodox doctrine against the heretical teachings, Prudentius too was prepared to accept that, after all, there was some truth in philosophy (*Apoth.* 200-11):

consule barbati deliramenta Platonis,	200
consule et hircosus <sup>36</sup> Cynicus quos somniat et quos	
textit Aristoteles torta uertigine neruos.	
hos omnes quamuis anceps labyrinthus et error	
circumflexus agat...	204
cum uentum tamen ad normam rationis et artis,	207
turbidulos sensus et litigiosa fragosis	
argumenta modis concludunt numen in unum,	
cuius ad arbitrium sphaera mobilis atque rotunda	210
uoluatur seruentque suos uaga sidera cursus.	

Like Lucretius in *D.R.N.* 1,635 ff., in this passage Prudentius attacks ancient philosophy to prove what is according to him the only true belief. He not only voices the Christians’ suspicion towards the language and rhetoric of the philosophers, but when he speaks of the hallucinations of Plato (200), the incomprehensible arguments of Aristotle and Diogenes (202-3), and the altogether obscure language of philosophy<sup>37</sup>, his polemical thoughts and tone are reminiscent of Lucretius’ accusations against the teachings of other philosophers, ‘perdelirum’ (*D.R.N.* 1,692), ‘delirum’ (1,698), ‘dementia’ (1,704) and

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *D.R.N.* 1,639 ‘inter inanis’ and *Apoth.* 576 ‘inane caput’ of the Ebionites.

<sup>36</sup> Here the use of the word helps the satirical tone. Cf. Plaut. *Mer.* 575; *Per.* 3,77; *Mart.* 9,47,5.

<sup>37</sup> In *Ham.* 201-2 eloquence is associated with evil, ‘simplex lingua prius uaria micat arte loquendi/ et discissa dolis resonat sermone trisulco’.

‘obscuram linguam’ (1,639). But despite Prudentius’ agreement with Lucretius’ contempt for earlier Greek philosophy and desire to teach the *ratio* behind the laws of nature instead, for the Christian poet the atomic theory is yet another foolish explanation of the origin of nature. Consequently, here the ideas and powers of expression in the *D.R.N.* are employed as part of the Christian arguments, whereby the atomic theory, and ancient philosophy in general, provide useful means of attack against the Sabellian heresy (*Apoth.* 264-7)<sup>38</sup>:

cum sit difficilis uia noscere principiorum  
 semina, qui dabitur mortali exquirere quidnam        265  
 ultra principium deus egerit, aut quo pacto  
 ediderit Verbum, quod principio caret omni?

In this passage Prudentius borrows Lucretius’ technical language in order to acknowledge the principal tenet held in the *D.R.N.*, that the atoms are the smallest particles of which all things are formed, but also succeeds in recalling Lucretius’ hexametric technique, by the use of a polysyllabic ending (*Apoth.* 264) and a very un-neoteric *spondeiazon* (*Apoth.* 266).<sup>39</sup> Clearly, in this case Prudentius’ reference to the subject matter of the *D.R.N.* serves the sole purpose of investing his own verse with Lucretian style in order to refute those Christians who denied the fatherhood of God and the doctrine of the Trinity.

Next, I shall discuss briefly Prudentius’ views on the Soul as they appear in the Fifth Refutation, for which some manuscripts give the title ‘De Natura Animae’.<sup>40</sup> Thereafter,

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<sup>38</sup> For the rejection of this philosophy in the very manner of Lucretius, see *Symm.* 2,203 ff. ‘nil uos, o miseri, physicorum dogmata fallant.’

<sup>39</sup> *D.R.N.* 1,484 ‘principiorum’ as a Lucretian ending; 1,55 ‘rerum primordia’, and *passim* ‘principia’ (gen., dat. and abl. pl.), ‘semina rerum’, ‘corpora prima’. In *Symm.* 2,239 Prudentius conveys the indivisibility of the Christian God by referring to him as ‘substantia simplex’, which again alludes to the atomic theory; *Perist.* 10,324 ‘natura simplex pollet unius dei’. Cf. *D.R.N.* 1,548 ‘sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate’ and 2,157.

<sup>40</sup> For *ATES* see Cunningham’s edition, *Praefatio*, x-xix. A is *Parisinus Latinus* 8084 (*Puteanus*), saec. VI, which is the earliest surviving manuscript of Prudentius’ corpus.

I shall proceed to demonstrate how in the *Apoth.* and the *Ham.* Prudentius appropriated Lucretian imagery, in order to illustrate Christian doctrines.

In *Apoth.* 782-951 Prudentius set out to refute not any specifically heretical doctrines but some generally held views about the Soul, for the purpose of which he imagined as his addressee a 'dubitans...dissertator' (782). However, the real reason for this discussion of the doctrine of the Soul is the instruction in some aspects of Christology, such as God's begetting of Christ, the latter's Incarnation and his Redemption of Mankind. From the beginning of the section, the human soul is differentiated from the Son of God, in terms of their creation, and also considering the statement in the first Refutation that God himself cannot suffer.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it could be said that the preoccupation with the nature of the Soul, in relation to that of Christ, deals both with anthropological and Christological aspects of the Christian faith, and with regard to both these aspects there are four main statements. Firstly, that the Soul being God's creation, *factura* (792), has its beginning in time, simultaneous with the creation of the body, and as such is limited in space and experience. Secondly, through its union with the body, the Soul is liable to sin and is, therefore, in need of Redemption. From these two statements it follows that, firstly, only Christ is God in the sense of *generatio* (791), and, secondly, Christ's assumption of human form, his Incarnation, is part of the process of Redemption, which is achieved through the subjugation of death in the Resurrection and which is perpetuated in the sacrament of baptism. As a result of this line of thought, it becomes clear that for its Redemption Mankind is fully dependent on God, and its salvation is realised by the hope of Resurrection as expressed in the Epilogue to the *Apoth.*<sup>42</sup> Since according to

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<sup>41</sup> For the heretical thought that God can suffer in Hell, see *Apoth.* 783-5 and 820-3.

<sup>42</sup> See Fabian (1988) p. 137-150 and especially p. 146.

Christian doctrine, it is the Soul that can be redeemed after the death of the body, the question of the Last Judgement is also relevant and Prudentius takes it up in the final section of the *Ham.*, where he makes use of Lucretian imagery in the most interesting manner.

Therefore, since Prudentius alludes only to general heretical views, he aims both to distinguish the Soul from God, and stress its divine characteristics, its immortality and quasi divine intelligence (*Apoth.* 802-6)<sup>43</sup>:

est similis saeculis quod non consumitur ullis,  
quod sapiens iustique capax reginaque rerum  
imperat, ante uidet perpendit praecauet infit,  
uerborum morumque opifex instructaque mille        805  
artibus et caelum sensu percurrere docta<sup>44</sup>.

With the intention of rejecting the possibility of the Soul being seen as ‘pars.../...Dei’ rather than as ‘res...Dei’ (*Apoth.* 824-5), Prudentius expresses a Christian belief, that the sinfulness of the Soul results from its close ties with the human body. As a result, the relationship between these two elements at the moment of creation by God is illustrated by means of the analogies with the human breath and the sound it produces with wind instruments.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, here Prudentius is influenced by Lucretius’ technique of using examples from everyday life to illustrate his ideas about the physical world; likewise, for the Christian poet, one should look at man to understand God, ‘sed speculum Deitatis homo est...’ (*Apoth.* 834).<sup>46</sup> Moreover, in the *Apoth.* the description of the human voice

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<sup>43</sup> For these characteristics of the Soul, see *Ham.* 545-6. As a statement about the characteristics of God, a similar description is found in *Apoth.* 87-8.

<sup>44</sup> This metaphor for the capacity for knowing of the Soul echoes *Ham.* 892 and 905-9, for which see below pp. 147 ff.

<sup>45</sup> For the Soul as the breath of God, see *Apoth.* 820 and 830.

<sup>46</sup> For the statement about the technique of analogy, see also *Ham.* 81-4.



multa per os exhalantur, cum languida anhelant,  
his igitur rebus rarescit corpus... 865

umor item discedit in omnia quae loca cumque 870  
poscunt umorem; glomerataque multa *uaporis*  
corpora, quae stomacho praebent incendia nostro,  
dissipat adueniens liquor ac restinguit ut ignem,  
urere ne possit calor amplius aridus artus.

Prudentius' second simile portrays the range of sounds produced by exhaling into a pipe, the intensity ('presso modulamine' or 'tumidum...bombum'), the timbre ('raucos...modulos' or 'lene') and the pitch ('sonitus...acutos' or 'murmur tenerum') (*Apoth.* 843-8):

adde et distinctum quem musica tibia flatum  
concipit. aut ille est presso modulamine parcus  
aut tumidum largo sublimat flamine *bombum* 845  
aut raucos frangit modulos aut lene susurrat  
aut exile trahens sonitus producit acutos  
aut murmur tenerum sublidit uoce minuta.

This passage combines several Lucretian features, the very first of which is the role it plays as an analogy for the illustration of the main argument. Secondly, Lucretius' technique is noticeable in the introduction of the example by 'adde' (843)<sup>48</sup>, in the use of 'modulamen' (844) and the employment of anaphora (845-8). Thirdly, this simile of the notes of the pipe alludes to the section in *D.R.N.* 4 about the sense of hearing, where, as examples of the contrasting timbres of the human voice, the natural philosopher referred to the sounds of musical instruments and birds (*D.R.N.* 4,542-8):

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<sup>48</sup> In *D.R.N.* 3,828-9 'adde' introduced the argument about the soul's mortality; 3,1036-7 introduced some examples to illustrate this argument.

asperitas autem uocis fit ab asperitate  
 principiorum et item leuor leuore creatur.  
 nec simili penetrant auris primordia forma,  
 cum tuba depresso grauitur sub murmure mugit      545  
 et reboat raucum retro cita barbara bombum,  
 et †ualidis necti tortis† ex Heliconis  
 cum liquidam tollunt lugubri uoce querellam.

It is also possible that Prudentius, when composing his two similes, was influenced by some of the themes in the portrayal in *D.R.N.* 5,1011-1457 of the dawn of civilisation. Thus, a parallel in the *Apoth.* for the different musical sounds that men produce deliberately, in all probability, stems from Lucretius' ideas about the origin of language and, more particularly, about the natural ability of human beings to express different feelings by different sounds (5,1056-61). Furthermore, Prudentius' analogy between human breath and the various sounds produced by a pipe may allude to Lucretius' image of the pipe as an example of mankind's discovery of music (*D.R.N.* 5,1379-1435). Although in this passage there is no mention of contrasting sounds as in *D.R.N.* 4, the pipe is said to accompany the voices of the singers and to adapt to the different tunes (*D.R.N.* 5,1384-5; 1405-7).

There is an additional link between the section, 'De Natura Animae', of the *Apoth.*, and *D.R.N.* 4, in that both are concerned with the question of images. To stress the limitations of the technique of using analogies from the natural world in order to explain God, Prudentius seems to recall Lucretius' theory of human thought, according to which this process is attributed to 'rerum simulacra.../.../tenuia' (4,724-6), which in the mind re-create the shape of real things (4,722-48). Prudentius also looks for a rational explanation as to how it comes about that human thought likens the image of God to a human being,

but only to deny its appropriateness as a basis for the analogy for the creation of the Soul. Therefore, the following passage is a good example of how Prudentius transforms Lucretius' practice of using analogies and his theories, in a way that suits the Christian argument, and finally rejects such a physical approach for the understanding of God (*Apoth.* 859-69):

numquid manus articulatim  
est digesta Dei? numquid uola<sup>49</sup>? numquid et ungues           860  
claudere flexibiles patulam seu tendere palmam?  
ista figura manus nostrae est, quam non habet in se  
incircumscriptus dominus, sed tradita forma est  
humanis quae nota animis daret intellectum,  
ut per corpoream speciem plasmasse feratur                       865  
corporis effigiem. sic est plasmata uicissim  
flatu incorporeo res flabilis, oris et esse  
fertur opus, tenuis per quod constructa refulsit  
forma animae atque rudi factam se munere sensit.

In addition to the above-discussed thematical similarities, this passage is highly reminiscent of the language and style of the *D.R.N.*, for example words, such as 'corpoream' (865) and 'incorporeo' (867), call to mind the theory of atoms or *corpora*. The influence of Lucretius is suggested also by the use of rhetorical questions and the repetition of 'numquid' (859-60), word formations and polysyllabic endings such as 'articulatim' (859)<sup>50</sup>, as well as the un-neoteric *spondeiazon* 'intellectum' (864).

In connection with the sinful nature of the Soul and the doctrine of the Original Sin, Prudentius toys with the themes of love and human reproduction which are found in

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<sup>49</sup> *Vola* is a rare prosaic word, which occurs only once in Prudentius. Cf. Var. *Men.* 110 (prov.) 'nec uola, nec uestigium'; Serv. *Georg.* 2,88 'uola, medietatis palmae et pedis' and Macr. *Somn. Scip.* 6,80.

<sup>50</sup> *D.R.N.* 4,555.

*D.R.N.* 4,1058 ff. His intention is to reject the heretical teaching of Traducianism that, since the cardinal sin of Adam, all Souls are transmitted at the moment of conception from parents to their offspring.<sup>51</sup> This goes against Christian doctrine, or Creationism, according to which God creates each new Soul anew. At the same time for his argument Prudentius considers Lucretius' physiological explanations of conception and childbirth (*Apoth.* 915-20)<sup>52</sup>:

Vitandus tamen error erit, ne traduce<sup>53</sup> carnis                      915  
transfundi in subolem credatur fons animarum  
sanguinis exemplo, cui texta propagine uena est.  
non animas animae pariunt, sed lege latenti  
fundit opus natura suum, quo paruula anhelent  
uascula uitalisque adsit scintilla coactis.                              920

The Pythagorean idea that at the point of birth pre-existent Souls entered into bodies transmigration occurs is found in Ennius' *Ann.* 8-10 (Sk.), 'oua parere solet genus pennis condecoratum/ non animam. [et] post inde uenit diuinitus pullis/ ipsa anima.' In the *Apoth.* passage Prudentius' 'lege latenti' (918) is reminiscent of Ennius' 'diuinitus', to which Lucretius alluded, not without some irony in *D.R.N.* 1,116 'an pecudes alias diuinitus insinuet se'.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Prudentius is concerned with two of Lucretius' topics, the disapproval of the passion of love and his contrasting attitude to the procreation of children as an act of mutual love (*D.R.N.* 4,1216) with the resultant creation of both body

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<sup>51</sup> For 'Traducianism' or 'Generationism', see the *ODCC* and Fabian (1988) p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> *Apoth.* 922 ff. recall *Aen.* 6,724 ff. on the rebirth of souls. In *Apoth.* 934, the rough sound of the hexameter line helps the didactic aim.

<sup>53</sup> Similarly Tert. *Apol.* 7,12 uses tradux,ucis (m), which as an agricultural term, 'a sidebranch of a vine', is found *passim* in the works of Varro, Pliny, Collumela and in Tac. *Hist.* 2,25 etc.

<sup>54</sup> Skutch, p. 163 comm. *ad loc.* translates 'diuinitus' as 'from the sky'. *D.R.N.* 3,679 ff. attacks the Pythagorean view of the soul's late entry into the body.

and soul from elements of the parents. It is typical that the Christian poet would seize on the idea of physical love as something repugnant, since Christian teaching often confuses licentiousness with matrimonial love and extols the virtues of virginity and celibacy. This view is implied by Prudentius' presenting as sinful the association of the Soul with the body, supplemented by the image of Adam's Fall (*Apoth.* 910-14). Presumably, because of Original Sin, all the generations born as a result of sexual intercourse since Adam and Eve are seen by the poet as being tainted by their sin, that is transmitted from parent to child. Thus, *Apoth.* 915-17 echoes the idea that children originate from the fusion of the respective elements of their parents and, hence, the stock passes from parent to child (*D.R.N.* 4,1212-14; 1220-22):

sed quos utriusque figurae  
esse uides, iuxtim miscentis uulta parentum,  
corpore de patrio et materno sanguine crescunt,

propterea quia multa modis primordia multis           1220  
mixta suo celant in corpore saepe parentes,  
quae patribus patres tradunt a stirpe profecta.

In fact, Prudentius, himself, does not disagree with the concept that the body of the child stems from its parents, and 'traduce', 'sanguinis' and 'propagine' (915-17) could be said to imitate 'sanguine' and 'tradunt a stirpe' (*D.R.N.* 4,1214; 4,1222). Like Lucretius, he seems prepared to tolerate this idea for the purpose of procreation, and the allusion to *D.R.N.* 4 only strengthens the point he wishes to make, that at its creation the Soul does not share any of the characteristics of the flesh.

These ideas about love and conception can be found in an earlier passage where the Virgin birth is discussed in the context of the divine nature of Christ (*Apoth.* 552 ff.).

Here a Christian idea is expressed by means of Lucretius' images of the passion and pleasures of love, and of the creation of offspring from the vital elements of their parents (*Apoth.* 564-75):

sequimur nullo quod semine terrae  
germinat, inmundum quod non de labe uirili            565  
sumit principium. tener illum seminat ignis  
non caro nec sanguis patrius nec foeda uoluptas.<sup>55</sup>  
intactam thalami uirtus diuina puellam  
sincero adflatu per uiscera casta maritat.  
inconperta ortus nouitas iubet ut deus esse            570  
credatur Christus sic conditus. innuba uirgo  
nubit Spiritui, uitium nec sentit amoris.  
pubertas signata manet; grauis intus et extra  
incolumis, florens de fertilitate pudica,  
iam mater, sed uirgo tamen, maris inscia mater<sup>56</sup>.    575

Prudentius employs Lucretian language and thought in order to extoll the extraordinary birth of Christ and, therefore, to argue for his divinity. Christ did not spring from any earthly seed, as it is in the case of all mankind, whereby 'semine' (564) placed in near proximity to 'uirili' (565), echoes Lucretius' reference to the union of essential male and female elements in *D.R.N.* 4,1209-10, 'Et commiscendo cum semine forte uirilem/ femina uim uicit...'. But by exaggeration of Lucretius' disapproval of excessive passion, Prudentius sees conception as the result of sexual intercourse as foul, 'foeda uoluptas' (567) and 'uitium...amoris' (572). In representing the flesh as sinful as a contrast to

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<sup>55</sup> *Jn.* 1:13 'qui non ex sanguinibus,/ neque ex uoluntate carnis,/ neque ex uoluntate uiri,/ sed ex Deo nati sunt.'

<sup>56</sup> *Lk.* 1:34 'Dixit autem Maria ad angelum: Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam uirum non cognosco?'

Christ's supreme divinity, Prudentius expresses another Lucretian idea whereby both the body and the mind are conceived as being mortal (*Apoth.* 558-64):

Omne opus egregium per quod sollertia pollens  
emicat ingenii est aut roboris; illud acuto  
corde uiget, duris excellet uiribus istud. 560  
mortale est sed utrumque homini; nam cana senescunt  
ingenia et ualidos consumunt saecula lacertos.  
haec nos in domini uirtute et laude perenni  
non sequimur...

In this section of the Fourth Refutation and in the Fifth Refutation Prudentius has the task of defending the doctrine of Christ's divinity by stressing the difference between the nature of God and that of human beings. Hence, he uses an analogy made by Lucretius in the context of his main argument about the mortality of the human soul (*D.R.N.* 3,417 f.). In the above-quoted lines from the *Apoth.* Lucretius' idea does not in the least undermine the Christian doctrine, but the image is borrowed to stress the mortality both of the body and the mind, in contrast to Christ's divine nature. Moreover, Prudentius' image that the mind is born with the body, and grows old and eventually dies with it, imitates the analogy with the different stages of man's life in *D.R.N.* 3,445-54<sup>57</sup>:

Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una 445  
crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.  
nam uelut infirmo pueri teneroque uagantur  
corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenuis.  
inde ubi robustis adoleuit uiribus aetas,  
consilium quoque maius et auctior est animi uis. 450  
post ubi iam ualidis quassatum est uiribus aeui

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<sup>57</sup> Prudentius may have had in mind the same passage when he portrayed the evolution of man from childhood to old age in *Symm.* 2,318-23. However, for the sake of his argument that with the passage of

corpus et obtusis ceciderunt uiribus artus,  
claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua, <labat> mens  
omnia deficiunt atque uno tempore desunt.

The image in the *Apoth.* does not portray mankind's evolution from childhood to old age, but clearly it alludes to the ageing process of the body and mind. Firstly, Prudentius transfers grey hair, an attribute of the body, to the mind, 'cana...ingenia'<sup>58</sup> (561-2), where for the mind he does not use 'mens', but 'ingenium' which is found also in Lucretius' passage (3,453). Secondly, the phrase 'senescunt/ ingenia' (561-2) echoes 'senescere mentem' (3,446), and Prudentius' depiction of the effect that the passage of time has on the body, 'ualidos consumunt saecula lacertos' (562), could be a variation on 'ualidis quassatum est uiribus aevi' (451), even if, in the original, the adjective refers to the power of time. The use and repetition of 'sequor' (564) only strengthens the argument that Prudentius employed the language in Lucretius' passage (3,448).

Finally, in *Apoth.* 952 ff. Prudentius alludes to the ideas about the body and Soul in the *D.R.N.*, in order to refute the Docetic doctrine that the human life of Christ was an illusion. The addressee of the Refutation is a representative of the Manichean heresy, but its belief that in his role as a Saviour Christ's appearance on earth was a mere illusion, stems from the Gnostic dualism, since it also held that the body as matter is corrupt.<sup>59</sup> In the opening lines of this Sixth Refutation, the heretical doctrine is described using the terminology of Lucretius, without any implied criticism of the ideas in the *D.R.N.* (*Apoth.* 952-5):

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time society had progressed for the better to Christianity, the connection between the body and mind is not reciprocal.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Apoth.* 559

<sup>59</sup> Fabian (1988) p. 151 ff. *Apoth.* 952-8 is seen as being close to the atomic theory in the *D.R.N.*, but the influence of Lucretius is not discussed any further.

Est operae pretium<sup>60</sup> nebulosi dogmatis umbram  
 prodere, quam tenues atomi conpage<sup>61</sup> minuta  
 instituunt, sed cassa cadit uentoque liquescit  
 adsimilis fluxu nec se sustentat inani. 955

Both the tone of arguing, strengthened by satiric overtones later in the section<sup>62</sup>, and the allusion in ‘atomi’<sup>63</sup> and ‘inani’ to Lucretian vocabulary, suggest strongly the connection here with the ideas in the *D.R.N.*, and, in particular, I am reminded of the passage on the nature of the Soul in *D.R.N.* 3,425 ff. In *Apoth.* 952 ff. the Docetics are said to claim that Christ who emanates from God, could have only an immaterial substance, so that he could liberate the earthly Souls from the corrupt bodies. For this purpose Prudentius portrays Christ as an ‘umbra’ that consists of fine tiny particles, easily dissolves and travels through the air. In such way Lucretius explained the atomic structure of the Soul, its great mobility and penetration of the air, in comparison to those of liquids and vapours (*D.R.N.* 3,425-9; 434-9):

principio quoniam tenuem constare minutis 425  
 corporibus docui multoque minoribus esse  
 principiiis factam quam liquidus umor aquai  
 aut nebula aut fumus-nam longe mobilitate  
 praestat et a tenui causa magis icta mouetur;

<sup>60</sup> This formula goes back to Enn. *Ann.* 494-5 (Sk.) ‘audire est operae pretium’, but is found in Hor. *Sat.* 1,2,37; 2,4,63; *Juv.* 6,474, Livy *Praef.* 1 ‘facturusne operae pretium sim...’

<sup>61</sup> The form ‘compago’ (-inis, n) is used in the singular, and ‘compages’ (-is, f) mostly in the plural, e.g. *D.R.N.* 6,1016 refers to the structure of the stone. Prudentius used it in the meaning of ‘framework’, see Luc. *Phars.* 1,72-3 ‘compage soluta/...mundi’.

<sup>62</sup> In *Apoth.* 979-81 Prudentius uses the language of Satire, e.g. *Pers.* 1,109 f. ‘canina/ littera’; *Juv.* 10,271 ‘canino/ latrauit rictu’, but he may also equate the heretics with the Cynic philosophers, cf. *Apoth.* 980 and Hor. *Sat.* 2,3,274 ‘...balba feris annoso uerba palato’.

<sup>63</sup> Lucretius used ‘primordia’ (*D.R.N.* 1,55) as the Latin equivalent of the Greek word. In poetry ‘atomus’ was used by *Lucil.* 28,753 (Marx) ‘eidola atque atomus uincere Epicuri uolam/ adde eodem’.

nunc igitur quoniam quassatis undique uasis  
diffluere umorem et laticem discedere cernis                    435  
et nebula ac fumus quoniam discedit in auras,  
crede animam quoque diffundi multoque perire  
ocius et citius dissolui <in> corpora prima,  
cum semel ex hominis membris ablata recessit.

The linguistic parallel between ‘tenuēs...minuta’ (*Apoth.* 953) and ‘tenuēs...minutis’ (*D.R.N.* 3,425), assists the implied comparison between the images in the two passages of Christ as immaterial phantom and of the Soul. Furthermore, the idea of the ‘umbra’ that passes away like the wind (*Apoth.* 954-5) imitates the imagery in *D.R.N.* 436 f., and it could be that ‘nebulosi’ (952) and ‘liquescit’ (954) are echoes of ‘nebula’ (3,428 and 3,436) and ‘liquidus’ (3,427) in Lucretius’ passage. In this last Refutation in the *Apoth.* the Lucretian influence on Prudentius is clear also from words, such as ‘peruolitasse’ (957) and ‘contractabile’ (958), the former being a typical example of Lucretius’ use of compound verbs and the latter being an imitation of a Lucretian *hapax*.<sup>64</sup> Thus, Prudentius makes use of Lucretius’ technique and imagery to illustrate the Docetic doctrine, in order to defend the orthodox views on the Incarnation and by it, the Redemption of mankind.<sup>65</sup> In this and in the previous sections of the *Apoth.* the echoes from the *D.R.N.* only strengthen the Christian arguments and facilitate the attack against the heretics as the poet’s opponents, and, therefore, ought to be viewed as evidence that Prudentius held Lucretius in high esteem. By no means did the Christian poet aim to weaken the views of his predecessor and if there should be any question of emulation, it

<sup>64</sup> *D.R.N.* 2,145 ‘peruolitantes’ and *D.R.N.* 4,660 ‘contractabiliter’.

<sup>65</sup> In the second part of the Sixth Refutation (*Apoth.* 1019-61), the images of God as the Creator of Mankind and Christ as its Redeemer are combined for the exposition of the doctrine of Resurrection of the body in the Peroration (*Apoth.* 1062-84). For the Virgilian echoes in *Apoth.* 1062-3 and 1080, see *Georg.* 4,325 and *Aen.* 1,562.

only confirms that Prudentius wished to be seen as the successor of Lucretius and, thus, of the classical poetic tradition.

### The Lucretian influence on the *Ham.*

There is a strong connection between the topics dealt with in the final sections of the *Apoth.* and at the end of the *Ham.*, where again the poet is concerned with the nature of the body and the Soul, as part of the main theme of the origin of sin, and in this context I will explore the relationship between the imagery and thoughts in the *Ham.* and in the *D.R.N.*

At the beginning of the poem Prudentius explains Marcion's dualistic view of the Godhead, in terms of an affliction of the mind conceived as double vision and the causes thereof (*Ham.* 85 ff.). This simile develops an earlier example from nature by which the oneness of the Trinity is compared to the sun and its three functions (*Ham.* 70-8).<sup>66</sup> In the former passage, however, the poet envisages that the ambivalent view of the sun, as a metaphor for God, could result, either from a cataract in the eye, or from a natural phenomenon, such as scattered light through dark clouds. Then the examples from natural science are applied to the schizophrenia of the mind, so that both natural causes, the cataract and the overcast sky, describe the psychological state (*Ham.* 85-90):

nemo duos soles nisi sub glaucomate uidit                    85  
aut, si fusca polum suffudit palla serenum,  
oppositus quotiens radiorum spicula nimbus  
igne repercusso mentitos spargit in orbes.  
sunt animis etiam sua nubila, crassus et aër,  
est glaucoma, aciem quod tegmine uelet aquoso            90

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Ham.* 76 'rota sideris' and *D.R.N.* 5,432 'solis rota'.

The prototype of these examples is to be found in *D.R.N.* 4,443-6 which has the image of clouds in the sky at night and light shining in an unusual way, and 447-52 which claimed that applying pressure to the eyes can result in double vision. Whilst Prudentius did not make much use of Lucretius' language, he was influenced by these images, modified the second as an affliction and reversed the order of the examples. As the poet of *D.R.N.* had concluded that the sensations received by the eyes are misinterpreted by the brain, so did Prudentius explain Marcion's hallucinations about the duality of God, by the state of his perverted mind.

Towards the end of *Ham.* and to a much greater effect, Prudentius evaluated such theories of the senses and evoked the images used in the *D.R.N.* in order to defend the Christian notion of the Soul's immortality. Unlike Lucretius, who believed in the corporeal nature of the Soul (*D.R.N.* 3,94 ff) and that its death occurs at the same time as that of the body<sup>67</sup>, the Christian poet held that the Soul survives after the death of the body and pays for the misdeeds committed during its lifetime. Yet, despite the disagreement between the ideas of the two poets, Lucretius' theories of sensation in *D.R.N.* 3 and 4 were applied in *Ham.* for the purpose of contrasting the limitation of the human vision with the omniscience of the Soul.

The phenomenon of seeing is a predominant motif throughout the section on the after-life in *Ham.* 863-930, where the very last word used is 'cernunt' (930), and there Prudentius describes the characteristics of the eye (*Ham.* 867-73)<sup>68</sup>:

errat quisque animas nostrorum fine oculorum

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<sup>67</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,798-9 'quare, corpus ubi interiit, periisse necessest/ confiteare animam distractam in corpore toto'. See also 3,30-69.

<sup>68</sup> For the eyes as 'fenestrae...animi', see Cic. *Tusc.* 1,46. In *Perist.* 10,434 the eyes are referred to as 'corporales...fenestras'. For the use of this metaphor by the Church Fathers, see Palla (1981) on *Ham.* 870.

aestimat, inuoluit uitreo quos lucida palla  
 obice, quis speculum concreta coagula texunt  
 inpediuntque uagas obducto umore fenestras.           870  
 numne animarum oculis denso uegetamine guttae  
 uoluuntur teretes aut palpebralibus extra  
 horrescunt saetis, cilioue umbrante teguntur?

In the description of the eye Lucretius' style is imitated successfully, for Prudentius uses the very technical terms and images from nature the former poet might have used <sup>69</sup>, as well as *hapax legomena*, such as 'uegetamen' (871) and 'palpebralis' (872), the former being in imitation of Lucretian practice. Furthermore, the *D.R.N.* provides parallels for the two analogies in *Ham.*, whereby the eye is likened, first, to a 'speculum' (869) and, second, to a window (870).<sup>70</sup> However, Prudentius deals with the eye only to pursue his main argument that the Soul is free of such bodily limits, which he does in the manner of Lucretius, despite the fact that this poet had expressed a very different view.<sup>71</sup> The example of the eye becomes the Christian poet's means of establishing a new relationship between the body and the Soul, which allows him to portray the latter with the attributes of the former, e.g. 'animarum oculis' (*Ham.* 871), 'uolucresque oculos' (882), 'aciem' (895), 'acutis/...luminibus' (900 f.) and 'ante oculos' (903). Having been presented in such terms, the Soul's vision is easily contrasted with and distinguished from that of the eye, 'corporeis oculis' (893).<sup>72</sup> Unlike the eye, the Soul has keen and immaterial sight that penetrates all elements throughout the universe, including the sky and the clouds at

<sup>69</sup> *Ham.* 873 *cilius*; 874 *pupula*. *Ham.* 871-2 'guttae/ uoluuntur teretes' describes poetically the tears of the eyes as gushing showers.

<sup>70</sup> *D.R.N.* 4,269 ff. and 3,359 ff. where the eyes are likened to doors through which the mind can see.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Ham.* 867 'errat quisque...' and *D.R.N.* 1,846; 3,105; cf. 'error' in *D.R.N.* 2,132; 4,824. In *D.R.N.* 3,94 ff. the mind is another sensation and therefore a part of the living body just as the hand, foot and eye are, and so is the soul - 3,117 f. 'nunc animam quoque ut in membris cognoscere possis/ esse'.

<sup>72</sup> *Perist.* 10,436-40. See also Palla (1981), p. 299 *ad loc.* where he finds parallels for this contrast in both classical and Christian authors, e.g. Cic. *Div.* 1,63; 1,129; Tert. *Anim.* 43,12.

night. Prudentius' argument of the unique nature of the Soul gains force especially by the image of the sky at night, since it alludes to an observation in the *D.R.N.* that in order to see the eyes need clear light.<sup>73</sup> Also, in terms of style, the section on the Soul's intangible nature displays Lucretian features, namely alliteration and repetition (*Ham.* 874-8):

illis uiua acies, nec pupula parua, sed ignis  
 traiector nebulae uasti et penetrator operti est.            875  
 nil ferrugineum solidumue tuentibus obstat,  
 nocturnae cedunt nebulae, nigrantia cedunt  
 nubila, praetenti cedit teres area mundi.

This praise of the vision of the omniscient Soul, with its divine qualities being to penetrate the limits of the world (*Ham.* 881) and see through the hidden parts (882), is strongly reminiscent of Lucretius' portrayal of the unbounded vision of Epicurus' *ratio*. Both *Ham.* 876 and later *Ham.* 905 echo the language in *D.R.N.* 3,26 where it is stressed that the philosopher's mind is not hindered by any obstacles (*D.R.N.* 3,25-30)<sup>74</sup>:

at contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa            25  
 nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur,  
 sub pedibus quaecumque infra per inane geruntur.  
 his ibi me rebus quaedam diuina uoluptas  
 percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua ui  
 tam manifesta patens ex omni parte resecta est.            30

Understandably, the suggested parallel between the qualities of the Soul and of the philosopher has its limitations since Epicurus believed in the Soul's existence only within

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<sup>73</sup> *D.R.N.* 4,348-52 'quod contra facere in tenebris e luce nequimus/ propterea quia posterior caliginis aer/ crassior insequitur qui cuncta foramina complet/ obsiditque uias oculorum, ne simulacra/ possint ullarum rerum coniecta mouere.'

<sup>74</sup> Ch. Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety*, Princeton (1990) p. 103 f. discusses the imagery used in the eulogy of Epicurus' intelligence in 3,25-30.

the body and its mortality.<sup>75</sup> Quite to the contrary and according to Christian doctrine, Prudentius expresses the belief that the Soul exists independently of the body and that that is its ultimate and perpetual state (*Ham.* 890-1).<sup>76</sup> Indeed, what interests the poet is Lucretian technique and imagery, which he employs to develop the contrast between the limit of the eyes and the freedom of the Soul, and also to illustrate the chief concept of the body as the prison of the Soul.<sup>77</sup>

As a simile for the Christian understanding of the separate existence of the Soul, Prudentius pictures the state of mind in dreams for the purpose of which he recalls yet another of Lucretius' scientific observations, namely on the phenomenon of sleep (*Ham.* 892-6):

Expertus dubitas animas percurrere uisu  
 abdita corporeis oculis, cum saepe quietis  
 rore soporatis<sup>78</sup> cernat mens uiua remotos  
 distantesque locos, aciem per rura per astra 895  
 per maria intendens?

Lucretius' influence on this passage is found not only in the vocabulary, 'quies' and 'sopor', that pictures the body at sleep (893-4), but also in the technique used, in particular, the manner of argument introduced by 'dubitas' (892), and the asyndetic list of nouns (895-6) (*D.R.N.* 4,453-9):

denique cum suaui deuinxit membra sopore  
 somnus et in summa corpus iacet omne quiete

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<sup>75</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,839-41 'sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai/ discidium fuerit quibus e sumus uniter apti,/ scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,/ accidere omnino poterit sensumque mouere'.

<sup>76</sup> For the superiority of the Soul over the body, see *Ham.* 543-52. Here, also in the manner of Lucretius Prudentius uses the archaism 'olli' (544), a Lucretian type of word 'oblectamine' (550), a *hapax* 'falsificatis' (549) and an irregular lengthening of 'opibus' before a vowel (549).

<sup>77</sup> *Ham.* 900 'uis cerea...sede'; 918 'membrorum carcere'.

<sup>78</sup> The picture of sleep as a liquid poured over the eyes goes back to Homer, e.g. *Od.* 23,342-3.

tum uigilare tamen nobis et membra mouere                   455  
 nostra uidemur, et in noctis caligine caeca  
 cernere censemus solem lumenque diurnum,  
 conclusoque loco caelum mare flumina montis  
 mutare et campos pedibus transire uidemur.

This picture of the body at rest and of the images experienced in a dream, brings out the truth about the Soul's qualities displayed by the Christian author. Like the vision of the dreamer in Lucretius' image, the Soul's power of perception is far-reaching and penetrates mountains, seas, the very limits of the Earth and even below into the regions of the 'Underworld'. In particular, Prudentius imitates the last two lines in the Lucretian passage quoted above, when he contrasts the keen sight of the Soul with that of the eyes (*Ham.* 880-2):

                                  oppositos sed transit lumine montes,                   880  
                                   oceani fines atque ultima litora Thylae<sup>79</sup>  
                                   transadigit...

From the same place in the *D.R.N.* Prudentius employs the images of light and dark, whereby the Soul, which as 'ignis' sees the heavenly bodies through the clouds, is portrayed in human terms, as a dreamer who in his sleep looks up to the sun. Like the dreamer in the dark of night who recalls the light of day, the Soul sees the skies through the nocturnal darkness (*Ham.* 900-9):

                                  uiscrea sed sede manens speculatur acutis                   900  
                                   omnia luminibus et qua circumtulit acrem  
                                   naturae leuis intuitum nullo obice rerum  
                                   disclusa, ante oculos subiectum prospicit orbem  
                                   atque orbis sub mole situm sordens elementum.  
                                   obiacet interea tellus nec uisibus obstat.                   905

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<sup>79</sup> Virg. *Georg.* 1,30 'ultima Thule'.



mugitus grauium mundi sub fine tubarum.  
haec ille ante obitum membrorum carcere saeptus  
secedente anima non discendente uidebat.

Here Prudentius offers a new kind of sleep simile - St. John's prophetic vision revealed in a dream - that simply rivals the images of Lucretius. As the last book of the *N.T.*, the example from *Revelation* about the Day of Judgement, becomes a suitable culmination of Prudentius' poem. In *Ham.* 922 ff., the 'certa fides' of the coming of the Second Kingdom and of the Resurrection of the body, rejects the possibility of the Soul's death. The poet's faith teaches that life is not restricted to the Soul's existence within the boundaries of the body, but survives after its death and is judged for its sins.

In the *Apoth.* and the *Ham.* discussed above, Prudentius was writing in the tradition of didactic Latin poetry and, therefore, should be seen as a successor to Lucretius, to whose poetic achievements he paid homage.<sup>84</sup> For his examples in favour of the Christian doctrines in the two poems Prudentius harks back to *D.R.N.* in order to give new contexts to its imagery. He seems to have been greatly impressed by the artistry of Lucretius' didactic techniques and use of analogy, despite the essence of his ideas.

#### The Lucretian influence on *Symm.* 1.

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<sup>84</sup> Puech (1888) p. 186 ff., considered *Apoth.* and *Ham.* to be the most original poems of the fourth century. In Prudentius recognised the "Lucrece Chrétien" and maintained that if the tradition of Latin didactic literature originated with Lucretius, Prudentius was its last representative.

Finally, some Lucretian influence should be acknowledged in the case of Prudentius' anti-pagan poems, where he alluded to his predecessor's manner of arguing against the pagan religion. For the most part, the Christian Latin writers considered Ovid to be the authority on pagan religions, customs and institutions, and used his works as their source of information.<sup>85</sup> Likewise, this poet seems partly to have influenced Prudentius in his treatment of the pagan myths and forms of worship in the *Symm.* poems.<sup>86</sup> However, although some of the poetic language and pagan details may have been borrowed from Ovid, even in these poems the tone of the attack against pagan superstition is more closely reminiscent of the *D.R.N.*<sup>87</sup> Like the Apologists who alluded to or quoted from the *D.R.N.* for the purpose of their attack, both on the pagan religion and on ancient philosophy, Prudentius employs the style and reasoning of Lucretius in his anti-pagan polemic. In *Symm.* 1-2 echoes can be found from some passages in the *D.R.N.* that include allegories of the myths and which criticise the pagan worship.

Like Lucretius, inevitably Prudentius showed ambivalence in his attitude to pagan poetry, in that, on the one hand, he set out to adapt it for the needs of his new theme, and, on the other hand, used the traditional poetic conventions. In the case of both poets this ambivalence is best perceived in the fondness with which they treated mythical themes.<sup>88</sup>

In order to illustrate Prudentius' delight in using the myths and point out the connection with the technique in *D.R.N.*, I shall discuss the passage on the worship of the Sun, which

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<sup>85</sup> *Lact. Div. Inst.* 1,13,6; 16,12 etc.

<sup>86</sup> For the Ovidian vocabulary in Prudentius, see M. L. Ewald, *Ovid in the Contra Orationem Symmachi of Prudentius*, Washington (1942), p. 198 ff.

<sup>87</sup> *D.R.N.* 5,1198 ff.

<sup>88</sup> For Lucretius, both as "a critic and successor" to Homer and Ennius (*D.R.N.* 1,112-35), see M. Gale (1997) p. 114.

belief Prudentius contradicts, by giving a scientific explanation of the functions of this heavenly body (*Symm.* 1,310-15):

cui tramite certo            310

condicio inposita est uigilem tolerare laborem  
uisibus obiectum mortalibus, orbe rotundo  
praecipitem teretique globo per inane<sup>89</sup> uolantem  
et, quod nemo negat, mundo caeloque minorem.    315

Here, Lucretius' influence is noticeable in the vocabulary and the reasoning, which echo especially *D.R.N.* 5,564 ff. where in a rather vague way the poet tried to explain the phenomenon of the sun, its size and orbit.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, Prudentius expresses the theory that the sun, as it appears in the eyes of men (312), is smaller than the *cosmos* (314) and stresses the fixed orbit and the temporal regularity of the sun (310), which points he then proceeds to elaborate.<sup>91</sup> The very fact that the Sun's functions are clearly defined, excludes the possibility of it being a god, since nothing created can be greater than the eternal God, who is limitless and pervades all things. It is God who gave the world its first momentum and imposed order in it, and the sun as God's creation obeys the laws which were assigned to it, and, therefore, it cannot be a true god (*Symm.* 1,325-30)<sup>92</sup>:

ille Deus uerus, quo non est grandior ulla            325

materies, qui fine caret, qui praesidet omni  
naturae, qui cuncta simul concludit et inplet.  
solem certa tenet regio, plaga certa coercet,  
temporibus uariis distinguitur: aut subit ortu

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<sup>89</sup> For this Lucretian phrase, see *D.R.N.* 2,217 etc.

<sup>90</sup> *D.R.N.* 5,564-5 'nec nimio solis maior rota nec minor ardor/ esse potest, nostris quam sensibus esse uidetur'. For the orbits of the heavenly bodies, see 5,614-49.

<sup>91</sup> The choice of 'mortales' (1,312) enhances the philosophical tone of this section, as does 'miseri' in *Symm.* 2,203.

<sup>92</sup> See also *Symm.* 1,334-40, compared with the sun, even mankind being superior to nature, has greater freedom. For Lucretius' rejection of the Sun cult, see *D.R.N.* 5,120 ff.

For a convincing rejection of the pagan myths, next Prudentius alludes to the fables of the Sun, the disruptions of its cycle in the myth of Phaethon and its supposed turning in its course in the myth of Thyestes (*Symm.*1,331-3).<sup>94</sup> In doing so, again he follows the example of Lucretius, who told the former story of Phaethon as an interesting but untrue explanation of the phenomena, such as conflagrations and floods, and by this account introduced the subject of the creation of the heavenly bodies in the following sections of Book 5.<sup>95</sup>

On his part Prudentius creates an *ekphrasis* of the deified Sun, which according to pagan tradition, is portrayed with its crown of rays and driving its chariot drawn by four steeds, in a sculpture shaped out of gilded copper, bronze or marble (*Symm.* 1,344-8):

hoc sidus *currum* rapidasque *agitare* quadrigas  
 commenti et radios capitis et uerbera dextrae, 345  
 et frenos phalerasque et equorum pectora anhela<sup>96</sup>  
 aeris inaurati uel marmoris aut orichalci<sup>97</sup>  
 iusserunt nitido fulgere polita metallo.

<sup>93</sup> See *D.R.N.* 5,614 ff. and, especially, the idea of the immutability of nature, 'tempore certo', which is expressed repeatedly in 5,656-79.

<sup>94</sup> The story of the sun's changing its course is found in *Ov. Ars.* 1,329-30 and *Trist.* 2,392. For the exploitation of this myth in Latin literature, see the commentary on 2,391-2 in *Tristium liber secundus*, ed. S. G. Owen, Amsterdam (1967).

<sup>95</sup> *D.R.N.* 5,380-415.

<sup>96</sup> *Ov. Met.* 2,84-5 'nec tibi quadripedes animosos ignibus illis,/ quos in pectore habent, quos ore et naribus efflant'. For the crown of rays and the golden chariot, see 2,40-1, 'at genitor circum caput omne micantes/ deposuit radios' and 2,105 ff., 'ad altos/...currus/ aureus axis erat, temo aureus, aurae summae/ curuatura rotae, radiatorum argenteus ordo; per iuga chrysolithi positaeque ex ordine gemmae'.

<sup>97</sup> Orichalc, i.e. bronze, was highly praised by the ancient writers, and in poetry the word was used in *Virg. Aen.* 12,87 and *Hor. Ars.* 202.

Whilst Ovid's well-known account in *Met.* 2 may have inspired this portrayal of a work of art, most significantly, the cult image of the Sun recalls Lucretius' description of the worship of Magna Mater (*D.R.N.* 2,600 f.):

Hanc ueteres Graium docti cecinere poetae 600  
sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones,

The first thing to notice is Prudentius' use in *Symm.* 1,344 of Lucretius' phraseology, which establishes the parallel between the two passages; just as the image of the goddess was carried in her chariot drawn by lions, so was the Sun believed to drive his chariot. Secondly, it is significant that Prudentius, like Lucretius, introduces the myth with third person plural verbs referring to those who invented the story.<sup>98</sup> Earlier in the poem, although being less specific than Lucretius, Prudentius attributes pagan worship to the *mos maiorum*, 'constituere patres' (*Symm.* 1,300), where he may have alluded again to the language and ideas in the passage on Magna Mater (*Symm.* 1,301-3):

uel Neptunum uocitantes  
Oceanum, uel Cyaneas<sup>99</sup> caua flumina Nymphas,  
uel siluas Dryadas, uel deuia rura Napaeas.<sup>100</sup>

Even if Lucretius allowed an allegorical use of the deities' names for poetic purposes, he denied all divine personification of nature (*D.R.N.* 2,655-60)<sup>101</sup>:

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 1,345 'commenti' and 1,348 'iusserunt', and *D.R.N.* 2,600 'cecinere', 2,604 'adiunxere' and 2,606 'cinxere'.

<sup>99</sup> Rather than implying its usual meaning as a reference to the Symplegades, Prudentius seems to use this adjective, in order to refer to the nymph Cyaneae, whom Ovid mentioned in *Met.* 9,452, 'cognita Cyaneae, praestantia corpora forma'. Consequently, in his text of *Met.* 9,452 Prudentius may have read *nympha* rather than *forma*, though the latter is preferable. For the prosody of *κυάνεος*, see below the Appendix, p. 282.

<sup>100</sup> 'Napaeae' occurs once in *Georg.* 4,535, '...et facilis uenerare Napaeas', and in Stat. *Theb.* 4,255 and 9,386.

<sup>101</sup> There may be echoes of *D.R.N.* 2,655-7 in *Symm.* 2,217-18. For Lucretius' use of the gods' names, see *D.R.N.* 2,472 and 6,1076 (of Neptune), and 3,221 (of Bacchus).

hic siquis mare Neptunum Cereremque uocare      655  
 constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti  
 mauult quam laticis proprium proferre uocamen,  
 concedamus ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem  
 esse deum matrem, dum uera re tamen ipse  
 religione animum turpi contingere parcat.      660

The suggested similarity between Prudentius' 'Neptunum uocitantes' (1,301) and Lucretius' 'Neptunum...uocare' (2,655), as well as the other linguistic parallels between the two poems, strengthen the main argument that the critique of pagan mythology in the *D.R.N.* influenced the style in *Symm.* 1. However, in their use of commonplace examples of pagan worship, the two poets had different aims and achieved different results. Whilst by means of allegoresis Lucretius distanced himself from the pagan religions and, possibly, reconciled them with his philosophical tenets<sup>102</sup>, in accordance with the Christian tradition Prudentius denied pagan worship altogether. What appears to be a limited allowance for pagan beliefs, 'hoc tamen utcumque est *tolerabile*', in fact strengthens the anti-pagan rhetoric and introduces the ultimate evil embodied in the pagan forms of worship; the nature of gladiatorial games as human sacrifice to Jupiter Latiaris exceeds by far the crime of offering animal sacrifices in the worship of gods (*Symm.* 1,354 ff.). As earlier in the case of the sleeping simile in *Ham.*, but also in a somewhat different way, in *Symm.* 1 Prudentius' technique rivals that of Lucretius, since for the purpose of teaching the Christian doctrines the former's invective against the pagan pantheon and customs had to be radical.

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<sup>102</sup> *D.R.N.* 2,658 'concedamus ut...'

### Chapter III

#### *Prudentius' exploitation of Virgil's poetry.*

Virgil was a common heritage for both pagan and Christian Latin-speakers with any pretensions to culture, and in the process of composing Prudentius naturally quotes words and expressions from this poet's works. As a writer who engages with the classical literary tradition, he has to adapt certain themes, in order to express Christian ideas and beliefs. For this purpose Prudentius consciously alludes to some of Virgil's well-known *topoi* and re-assimilates them in an imaginative way, to the extent that in some cases where he employs Virgil's language and images to illustrate his argument, the tone of his rhetoric becomes even ironic or critical of the pagan image. That the critics of Prudentius have arrived at contradictory conclusions about his attitude to Virgil can be shown by the views of Smith and Palmer. Smith's thesis, from which my own conclusions will differ significantly, is that in the *Psychomachia*, Virgilian language, themes and style are intended as a mockery of that poet's authority.<sup>1</sup> He finds faults with the views held by previous scholars, such as Mahoney and Hanley, that by imitating Virgil, Prudentius shows his appreciation of and pays his rightful tribute to the classical heritage as the foundation of the culture of his time.<sup>2</sup> In her study of the *Peristephanon*, Palmer gives a truer picture of Prudentius' debt to Virgil; she explains the imitation of Virgil by the poets of Late Antiquity as follows, they felt it necessary to see contemporary political

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<sup>1</sup> Smith (1976) p. 235 "The Vergilian presence in the *Psychomachia* being far more than rhetorical color, we must acknowledge that Prudentius, for whatever purpose, is working on more than one level of meaning with the one Latin language at his disposal."; p. 236 "Prudentius, it seems to me, is reacting against a real cult of Vergil at the close of the fourth century, and he conceives of this aristocratic movement as a form of pagan idolatry. He fights this movement on his own turf, using Vergil as a weapon against Vergil. In so doing, his stance towards the literary tradition is that of an extremist, his poetic techniques radically Christian."

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 235-6, n. 5.

events from the perspective of episodes in the *Aeneid* as the national epic.<sup>3</sup> In this way also Prudentius uses the authority imparted by Virgil's language and thoughts. For instance, in the *Symm.* "Virgilian enthusiasm for the Augustan régime" is evoked by the poet's praise of the Christian régime of Theodosius whereby the Virgilian promise of perpetuity for the Empire is given a new context.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Prudentius expresses the idea that the rule of Theodosius had brought a new kind of peace and prosperity to the Christian Empire (*Symm.* 1,541-2):

denique *nec metas* statuit *nec tempora* ponit:  
*imperium sine fine* docet...

These lines imitate closely Jupiter's prophecy in *Aen.* 1,278-9:

his ego *nec metas rerum nec tempora* pono:  
*imperium sine fine* dedi.

In Prudentius, Theodosius replaces Jupiter as subject of the verb, and the present tense conveys the idea of the eternity of the Christian kingdom.

The above-mentioned opposing conclusions about Prudentius' reception of Virgil can be understood only if they are viewed in the context of the larger question about the extent to which there was a continuity between Christianity and classical culture. It has been argued recently that the Christian writers showed ambivalence in their approach to Virgil whom, as the poet of *Eclogue* 4, they used to convince pagans of the Christian faith, but whom, nevertheless, they believed to have been simply a poet of the past, rather than a prophet.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Jerome does not seem to have been preoccupied with the authority of Virgil, Lactantius and Augustine were debating with themselves as to how far this poet's

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<sup>3</sup> Palmer (1989) p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> S. MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry. Vergil in the Mind of Augustine*, Los Angeles (1998) p. 26 ff.

views could be accepted.<sup>6</sup> The difficulty of defining a Christian attitude to Virgil becomes clear from the way they both quoted him as ‘poeta noster’ and yet criticised some of his pagan ideas.<sup>7</sup> Such selective use of Virgil’s authority in a Christian context is ambivalent and is best summarised in Lactantius’ own words (*Div. Inst.* 1,5,11):

nostrorum primus Maro non longe a ueritate, cuius de summo deo, quem mentem ac spiritum nominauit, haec uerba sunt...(Aen. 6,724-9).

As a Christian and a poet Prudentius made Virgil’s heritage his own by adapting the latter’s phraseology to fit his Christian views, which establishes a less ambiguous or polemical relationship between the two poets. He uses the poet’s language to explain and ridicule the religion of the past, but does not attack the authority of Virgil *per se*. In the first part of the Chapter, I shall examine different themes mainly from the *Aeneid*, which Prudentius used in the anti-pagan passages in *Symm.* 1-2 to recall Virgil’s version of the previous religious history of the Roman world. Also, it will be shown how he casts the miracles in the *Apoth.* in the form of the mythical scenes in the *Aen.*, so that his arguments benefit from the power of Virgil’s themes and style. In the second part of the Chapter, I shall discuss Prudentius’ treatment in *Symm.* 2 of a topic on agriculture, for which he used some of the imagery and vocabulary in the *Georgics*. His mini-version of Virgil’s didactic, that could almost be seen as parody of it, becomes an allegory for the spiritual harvest of the Soul and proves to be Prudentius’ most original use of his model.

### Prudentius’ appreciation of the *Aeneid*.

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<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 29 and p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 30. Lactantius accepted Virgil’s views on the cosmic order in *Georg.* 2,323-7; 4,219-27 and *Aen.* 6,724-9, but criticised his belief in and portrayal of Jupiter, e.g. *Div. Inst.* 1,10,19 (on *Aen.* 1,47) and *Div. Inst.* 1,11,6 (on *Aen.* 12,829). In *Ep.* 137,3,12 (CSEL) Augustine used *Ecl.* 4,25 and 13-14 to teach about Christ’s divinity, but in *Civ. Dei* 4,10-11 he criticised *Ecl.* 3,60.

## 1. His use of Virgil's accounts of the Golden Age.

Prudentius was aware of the Hesiodic idea of the different ages and the lost Golden Age in relation to the change in the quality of the life and values of mankind. In two passages in the *Symm.* poems, he takes both the opportunity to employ Roman mythology primarily in an ornamental manner, and aims to rationalise stories about the gods and discredit their characters. On the one hand, Prudentius refers to Hesiod's account only in so far as the former depicts the gods' successions in terms of the gradual deterioration of the subsequent Hesiodic ages, but he does not ascribe to those ages any metallic characteristics. On the other hand, he follows the tradition that had begun with Euhemerus who maintained that formerly the gods were kings or heroes who were worshipped for their benefactions to humanity.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the fusion of these traditions, Prudentius gives his own version of the conditions of human life in the Golden Age and of the evolution of mankind, which becomes part of his anti-pagan polemic. Yet, the accounts of the Golden Age in the works of Virgil have greatly influenced both Prudentius' adaptation in *Symm.* 1,42 ff. of some elements from the "metallic myth", and his reference to the Golden Age topos in *Symm.* 2,277 ff.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See the fragments from Ennius' *Euhemerus siue Sacra Historia* in J. Vahlen, *Ennianae Poesis Reliquiae*, Leipzig (1928<sup>2</sup>) pp. 223-9.

<sup>9</sup> P. Johnston, *Virgil's Agricultural Golden Age. A Study of the Georgics*, Leiden (1980) p. 43 ff. As in Hesiod, in *Ecl.* 4,31-36 the Golden Age is portrayed as free from labour, whilst toil is associated with a period of decline. But in the *Georg.* the end of the Golden Age is no longer seen as deterioration in the life of mankind and the farmer's life is reminiscent of the conditions during the Golden Age. *Op. cit.* pp. 48-9: "Virgil's conception, then, of a golden age shifts from a time of mortal happiness based upon unlimited leisure to a time of satisfaction and joy achieved through thought and toil." The Golden Age theme is said to change from "a metallic to an agricultural concept".

Prudentius's story begins in *Symm.* 1,42 ff. with Saturn who is to be considered as the first mortal who later became deified for the benefits he brought to Italy and whose arrival in Italy marked the establishment of Roman cults (*Symm.* 1,42-4):

Num melius Saturnus auos rexisse Latinos  
creditur, edictis qui talibus informauit  
agrestes animos et barbara corda uirorum?

Prudentius' portrayal of Saturn contains elements which reflect the development by Virgil of the Golden Age topos (*Symm.* 1,45-53):

“Sum deus.<sup>10</sup> aduenio fugiens. praebete latebras,     45  
occultate senem nati feritate tyranni  
deiectum solio. placet hic fugitiuus et exul  
ut lateam, genti atque loco Latium dabo nomen.  
uitibus incuruum, si qua est ea cura, putandis  
procudam chalybem nec non et moenia uestri     50  
fluminis in ripa statuam Saturnia uobis.  
uos nemus adpositasque meo sub honore sacranter  
(sum quianam Caelo<sup>11</sup> genitus) celebrabitis aras.”

In the *Aen.* Virgil had already presented Saturn's arrival in Latium as that of an outcast from Olympus and identified his reign on earth with the *aurea saecula* (*Aen.* 8,319-25)<sup>12</sup>:

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<sup>10</sup> The phrase was used in *Prop.* 4,6,60, an aetiological poem about the cult of Apollo Actiacus Palatinus.

<sup>11</sup> Enn. *Euhem.* 61-2 in Vahlen, p. 223 ‘...Caelo auo, quem dicit Euhemerus in Oceania mortuum et in oppido sepultum’; Cic. *ND* 3,44 ‘Qui si est deus [*Saturnus*], patrem quoque eius Caelum esse deum confitendum est.’

<sup>12</sup> Johnston (1980) p. 72 ff. discusses the influence on this passage of Ennius' translation of Ehemerus' account of Saturn. See Enn. *Euhem.* 95 in Vahlen, p. 225.



persequitur uitem attondens fingitque putando'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, since Virgil transformed the mythological concept of the Golden Age into an agricultural one, Prudentius, in his turn, presents a factual version of Saturn's reign to replace altogether the myth of the Golden Age, whilst at the same time he retains the idea of deterioration in Hesiod's account to discredit the characters of the gods themselves.

Prudentius follows the Hesiodic tradition and introduces the generation of the gods under Jupiter, the successor of Saturn, which marked the beginning of a worse period for mankind. His main interest is in demonstrating the depravity of Jupiter's character and therefore he indulges in telling well-known fables about the deity's love affairs (*Symm.* 1,59 ff.):

mox patre deterior<sup>19</sup> siluosi habitator Olympi  
Iuppiter incesta spurcauit labe Lacaenas 60

For the poetic expression of this view the poet is once again indebted to the account in *Aen.* 8,326-7:

deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas  
et belli rabies et amor successit habendi.<sup>20</sup>

However, when in *Symm.* 2 he takes up again the theme of the Golden Age, Prudentius alludes to the account of Jupiter's reign in *Georg.* 1,121 ff. As was explained above, in the *Georg.* Virgil developed the traditional myth by prolonging the Golden Age beyond the end of Saturn's rule on Olympus and into the reign of Jupiter. In his account Virgil accepted Euhemerus' version that Jupiter's succession of Saturn also had beneficial

<sup>18</sup> For 'procudam' (50) as a technical term in the context of farming, *Georg.* 1,261 f. provides the parallel, '...durum procudit arator/ uomeris obtunsi dentem'; cf. *Ov. Fast.* 1,238.

<sup>19</sup> For the thought that each generation is worse than its predecessor, see *Hor. Od.* 3,6,46-8.

<sup>20</sup> The moralistic tone in *Ham.* 250 ff. and especially *Ham.* 251-2 and 255, may recall the thought and expression in *Aen.* 8,327. *Ham.* 257 'auri namque fames' echoes Virgil's condemnation of greed, 'auri sacra fames!' (*Aen.* 3,57).

influence on human life, since it initiated the technological progress of mankind (*Georg.* 1,121-4)<sup>21</sup>:

pater ipse colendi  
haud facilem esse uiam uoluit, primusque per artem  
mouit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda  
nec torpere graui passus sua regna ueterno.

Although this view of the end of the Golden Age contradicts the Hesiodic concept in the *Aen.*, it is consistent with the adaptation of the theme for the purposes of the *Georg.*, one of which was to praise the reign of Augustus that was viewed as the new ‘Saturnia regna’. Likewise, Prudentius argues that the changes in human life have improved its condition, which also implies a political comment that the transition from a pagan to a Christian Roman régime has been for the better. For this purpose, Prudentius uses two almost exact quotations from Virgil’s account in *Georg.* 1 as a critique of the Roman custom of idealising the past (*Symm.* 2,282-5)<sup>22</sup>:

orbe nouo nulli subigebant arua coloni;  
quid sibi aratra uolunt, quid cura superflua rastro?  
ilignis melius saturatur glandibus aluus.  
primi homines cuneis scindebant fissile lignum;      285

*Symm.* 2,282 echoes the first line of Virgil’s account of the idyllic state of mankind which, according to the literary tradition before him, ceased with Jupiter’s legendary reign, ‘ante Iouem nulli subigebant arua coloni’ (*Georg.* 1,125).<sup>23</sup> In place of the

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<sup>21</sup> *Enn. Euhem.* 132 in Vahlen, p. 228 ‘Deinde Iuppiter...reliquitque hominibus leges mores frumentaue parauit multaue alia bona fecit...’ The opposite view is found in *Tib.* 1,3,49-50. Further on the subject, see Johnston (1980) p. 69 ff.

<sup>22</sup> For the satirical tone of this passage, see Chapter IV, p. 225 ff. In *Georg.* 1,118-59 Virgil set the daily troubles, such as birds, weeds and shade, of the husbandman against a background of social history, see Mynors (1990) p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Georg.* 1,136 ff. where this topos was used not to point out moral decline, but to show that agricultural tasks and skills form an essential part of the benefits of civilisation.

mythical reference, ‘ante Iouem’, Prudentius uses ‘orbe nouo’, an allusion to the Christian understanding of the world’s beginnings, but he appropriates the phraseology of the rest of the line, in order to recall the technical progress of civilisation, approved by Virgil in his didactic treatise. Having discarded the myths in *Symm.* 1, now Prudentius takes the *Georg.* as the starting point for Roman social history, in his own attack on the pagan values defended by Symmachus in his appeal to ‘mos maiorum’. Clearly, Prudentius considers Virgil an authority, and in *Symm.* 2,283 the idea of progress is stressed by an additional allusion to the technical terms of *Georg.* 1.<sup>24</sup>

Prudentius begins his satirical account by repeating the point that through the invention of arts and crafts the life of mankind improved gradually and by necessity, whereas if one always maintained tradition progress could never be made (*Symm.* 2,280-1):

placeat damnare gradatim<sup>25</sup>

quidquid posterius successor repperit usus. 280

In his acknowledgement of the advance of mankind Prudentius seems to recall Virgil, who evoked the lost pastoral world, only to explain the step by step progression of civilisation, albeit of necessity (*Georg.* 1,133-4):

ut uarias usus meditando extunderet artis

paulatim, et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam,

The allusion to this commonplace thought from the *Georg.* is supported by a specific imitation of Virgilian language, whereby in *Symm.* 2,281 ‘repperit usus’ is borrowed from *Georg.* 2,22 ‘sunt alii, quos ipse uia sibi repperit usus’. By substituting ‘posterius’

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<sup>24</sup> *Georg.* 1,162-4 ‘uomis et inflexi primum graue robur aratri,/ tardaue Eleusinae matris uoluentia plaustra,/ tribulaque traheaeque et iniquo pondere rastro.’

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 2,315-16 ‘...tardis semper processibus aucta/ crescit uita hominis et longo proficit usu’. In both passages Prudentius may echo *D.R.N.* 5,1452-3 ‘usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis/ paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis’, which Virgil, himself, imitates in *Georg.* 2,22.

for 'uia', Prudentius presents the idea of the progress of knowledge in terms of time, rather than the original metaphor of a journey. Last but not least, *Symm.* 2,285 is a near quotation from *Georg.* 1,144 'nam primi cuneis scindebant fissile lignum', and is used as an example of primitive tools employed before the discovery of metals.<sup>26</sup> Knowing well the conventional topos of the primitive state of mankind, Prudentius refers to acorns as being one of the symbols of the 'Golden Age' (*Symm.* 2,284) and here too may recall Virgil, who in *Georg.* 1,148-9 referred to them without any nostalgia, but to point out the changed conditions that led to the evolution of agriculture. However, Prudentius' sole aim is to ridicule Symmachus' exaggerated picture of the acorn-diet forced on the Romans of his day.

Elsewhere Prudentius alludes to the 'Golden Age' topos in *Georg.* 1 for the purpose of biblical exegesis; the best example is the picture of life after the Fall of Man for which he uses the traditional portrayal of the end of the 'Golden Age' (*Ham.* 216-18):

tunc lolium lappasque leues per adultera culta  
ferre malignus ager glaebis male pinguibus ausus  
triticeam uacuis segetem uiolauit auenis.

*Georg.* 1,152-4:

intereunt segetes, subit aspera silua  
lappaeque tribolique, interque nitentia culta  
infelix lolium et steriles dominantur auenae.

Whilst he presents the biblical story in the style of Virgil, Prudentius replaces 'nitentia culta' with 'adultera culta' in order to stress the new significance of the account, which would have reminded his Christian readers of Jesus' parable about the weeds sown among the crops.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Georg.* 1,143 'ferri rigor' and *Symm.* 2,286 'securus'.

<sup>27</sup> *Mt.* 13:24-30 and *Praef. Apoth.* 41-56.

Likewise, Prudentius alludes to Virgil's account of the 'Golden Age' in *Ecl.* 4,22 ff. to stress that, if such *adynata* in happier circumstances might have been symptoms of the return of Saturnian age, in the context of sin the decline in nature has become an allegory for the deterioration in human character (*Ham.* 219-23):

tunc etiam innocuo uitulorum sanguine pasci  
iamque iugo edomitos rictu laniare iuuenos           220  
occiso pastore truces didicere leones.<sup>28</sup>  
nec non et querulis balatibus irritatus  
plenas nocte lupus studuit perrumpere caulas.

Furthermore, in the passage those elements of lost innocence and harmony in nature recall appropriately the end of the 'Golden Age' in *Georg.* 1,129-30:

ille malum uirus serpentibus addidit atris  
praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moueri           130

In both episodes quoted above, Prudentius shows original thinking, in that he uses the classical topoi allegorically for the interpretation of biblical themes. In the second episode the 'Golden Age' theme, that snakes that were previously harmless then become poisonous, is preceded by the Christian allegoric portrayal in *Ham.* 195 ff. of the snake as evil which stems already from the account in *Gen.* 3:1 ff.<sup>29</sup> As well as being an interpretation of the cursing of the earth in *Gen.* 3:17<sup>30</sup>, the presentation in *Ham.* 203-5 of the origin of evil and the following corruption of mankind, could be seen as the Christian version of the end of the 'Golden age', which was accompanied by a deterioration in the

<sup>28</sup> Contrast *Ecl.* 4,22 '...nec magnos metuent armenta leones'. See Palla (1981) p. 181-4 for the influence on *Ham.* 216 ff. of the topoi in *Ecl.* 4,22 ff. and passages in the other two Virgilian poems.

<sup>29</sup> For the possible influence on *Ham.* 195 ff. of descriptions of snakes in Latin poetry, such as *Aen.* 2,214 ff.; *Georg.* 3,425-39 etc., see Palla p. 179 f. *ad loc.*

<sup>30</sup> *Gen.* 3:17-18 '...maledicta terra in opere tuo: in laboribus comedes eam cunctis diebus uitae tuae. Spinas et tribulos germinabit tibi et comedes herbas terrae.'

quality of human life and in human character itself, bringing us back to the question of the morals of the pagan gods.

## 2. The generations of Roman gods and their foreign origins.

In *Symm.* 1,45 ff. Prudentius changes the perspective of *Aen.* 8 where the mythical past of Latium is recounted, so that his assimilation of its motifs, such as the narrative, albeit in the first person, of Saturn's past and his intentions for the future, and the epic mode of expression contribute to the demythologising of the account in Virgil's text. Thus, *Symm.* 1 brings forward a character, no different from Evander or Aeneas who arrived as exiles in the country.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, one of the places Evander showed his guest was what became Romulus' retreat, 'asylum' (*Aen.* 8,342), to which Prudentius alluded in *Symm.* 1,196 in order to use the idea of Rome's being settled by outlaws or exiles in his invective on the divine origins of the City.<sup>32</sup> In *Symm.* 1,51-3, the words spoken by Saturn echo parts of Evander's speech in 8,351 ff. and contribute to the implied identification of the two characters. Saturn's proclamation that he will found a city 'Saturnia' (*Symm.* 1,51) imitates the reference to the ruins of the citadel on the Capitol in *Aen.* 8,357-8, and in Prudentius the word has the position that it had in the original text. In his reconstruction of the events since the arrival of Saturn, the poet deliberately alludes to Virgil's concept of pre-Roman history as a distant past and the relics of Saturn's city as the monuments of this past age (*Aen.* 8,355-8):

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<sup>31</sup> The first person narrative of Saturn in which a foreigner gives his name and background, is comparable to *Aen.* 1,378 'sum pius Aeneas,.. qui' and 3,613 'sum patria ex Itaca, comes infelicis Ulixi'. For the exiles of Aeneas and Evander, see *Aen.* 1,595 f. and 8,333-5 respectively.

<sup>32</sup> See below for the other echoes from *Aen.* 8 in this passage in *Symm.*



However, whilst Virgil spoke of the cult of Jupiter Capitolinus (352-3), Prudentius uses this allusion to present Saturn's claims for a sacred grove, in order to refute all superstitious fear. In *Symm.* 1, no mystery surrounding the deity increases religious superstition in the hearts of the early inhabitants of Latium. Virgil's reference to the indigenous population as 'agrestis' (349) is used by Prudentius in the satirical image of the primitive Latins, 'agrestes animos' (44). Prudentius shows that what Virgil portrayed as religious fear was simply fear born of ignorance and, therefore, in his version of this account he makes the 'god' reveal his identity. In this instance, on the theme of the Roman cults, it is seen how the Christian poet does not reject Virgil's account, but, by using its language and motifs, he interprets it from an anti-pagan perspective.

Prudentius also alludes to the episode in *Aen.* 8 in his criticism of the ancient ideas about the idyllic Primitive Age, which include the arguments common to the Christian Apologists against brutal pagan customs, in *Symm.* 2,277 ff. Although Prudentius attributes it incorrectly to the Romans, his criticism of the practice of human sacrifice for the celebration of 'Saturnia sacra' strengthens his argument against the concept of the 'Golden Age', as well as contributing to the denigration of Saturn's character which he began in *Symm.* 1.<sup>35</sup> But to return to the echoes of *Aen.* 8 in Prudentius' treatment of the 'Golden Age', there the image of life in early Rome imitates the picture of simplicity of life during the reign of Evander (*Symm.* 2,298-302)<sup>36</sup>:

ipsa casas fragili texat gens Romula culmo

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<sup>35</sup> *Symm.* 2,296-7. For the accusations about the Carthaginian custom of sacrificing human beings to Saturn (in response to the pagans' accusations against the Christians as to drinking of blood), see Tert. *Apol.* 9,2; Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1,21,9 ff. and Aug. *Civ. Dei* 7,26. In *Symm.* 2,294-5 Prudentius mentions the custom of throwing men over sixty into the Tiber, to which Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1,21,5 ff. explicitly referred as a form of sacrifice to Saturn. For this brutal nature of the pagan religion, see *D.R.N.* 1,80-101.

<sup>36</sup> For Virgil's language in Prudentius' text, see 'fragili...culmo' (*Georg.* 1,317); 'aurea fulcra.../regifico luxu' (*Aen.* 6,604-5) and 'Romuleoque recens horrebat regia culmo' (*Aen.* 8,654).

(sic tradunt habitasse Remum). regalia faeno  
 fulcra supersternant aut pelle Libystidis ursae 300  
 conpositam chlamydem uilloso corpore gestent.  
 talia Trinacrius ductor uel Tuscus habebant.

In this passage the image of the primitive dwellings of the founder of Rome and his people recalls Evander's humble abode on the future site of the Roman forum (*Aen.* 8,359-61):

talibus inter se dictis ad tecta subibant  
 pauperis Euandri, passimque armenta uidebant 360  
 Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.

Prudentius harks back to the concept in the *Aen.* 8 about the origins of Rome built as it was on the site where Pallanteum formerly stood, a city based on a high moral code and the modest needs of king Evander. With the phrase 'sic tradunt' (299) the poet accepts Virgil's account in this prophetic book as an authoritative statement about the previous state and values of 'Roma antiqua', and simply uses it to prove the evolution of its history (*Symm.* 2,303 f.).

Further, *Symm.* 2,299-301 contains a quotation of *Aen.* 8,368, which describes the simple amenities in Evander's hut that he offered to his guest (*Aen.* 8,366-8):

dixit, et angusti subter fastigia tecti  
 ingentem Aenean duxit stratisque locauit  
 effultum foliis et pelle Libystidis ursae.

Quite clearly in *Symm.* 2,299-300 the image of the primitive royal couches covered with hay, is an allusion to the beds in the hut of the king in *Aen.* 8,367-8, where the initial position of 'effultum' is imitated by 'fulcra', both words having similar etymology. As to the image in *Symm.* 2,300-1 of primitive clothes and the unkempt bodies of men, Prudentius strengthens his imitation of *Aen.* 8 by using 'uillosus' which could allude to

two lines in the Book. First, Virgil used the adjective to describe the lion's skin that covered the chair on which Aeneas was seated as a guest of honour.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, when Evander explained the aetiology of his people's cult to Hercules, he portrayed the body of Cacus by referring to the stubble on the chest of the mythological creature, 'uillosaque saetis/ pectora semiferi' (*Aen.* 8,266). In the first example, if the position of the word were to provide some proof that Prudentius wished to allude to the texture of the skin, this allusion is still weaker than the one in the second example. Ironically, in 'uilloso corpore' the poet presents the bodies of primitive men as being as those of beasts and, therefore, the implied comparison to Cacus seems to be highly appropriate and strengthens the polemical, disapproving tone of Prudentius' account of the Primitive Age which is aimed against Symmachus' claims.

Finally, Prudentius hints at the allusion to Evander's settlement in *Aen.* 8 when in *Symm.* 2,302 he compares the primitive way of life at Rome to that of 'Trinacrius ductor uel Tuscus', by which he must have intended to mean Acestes and Evander.<sup>38</sup> Although, strictly speaking, nowhere in the *Aen.* is Evander referred to as *Tuscus*, still this fact can be explained by Evander's alliance with the Etruscans and the reference to the site of Pallanteum being confined on one side by 'Tusco...amni'.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the numerous allusions in the passage to the episode in *Aen.* 8 exclusively support this interpretation. The reference to the Sicilian king, Acestes, can be explained by the fact that the expression in *Aen.* 8,368 that Prudentius borrows, was used first in connection with

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<sup>37</sup> *Aen.* 8,177-8 'praecipuumque toro et uillosi pelle leonis/ accipit Aenean solioque inuitat acerno'.

<sup>38</sup> Gnilka (2000) pp. 219-27 doubts the authenticity of the line and using *Aen.* 8,102 and 129 as evidence, suggests that it should have read 'taliam Trinacrius ductor uel *Arcas* habebant.' Such an emendation, however, is not acceptable on metrical grounds.

<sup>39</sup> *Aen.* 8,473 ff. and Thomson's note (*Loeb*) on *Symm.* 2,302. This is more likely than Lavarenne's suggestion that Tuscus may be a reference to either Mezentius, or Tarchon (*Aen.* 8,482 and 506).

Acestes. In the face of the hero Prudentius must have found an appropriate semblance for early mankind's appearance which he makes fun of.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, rather than being an example of Prudentius' lack of precision, the text ought to be seen as a demonstration of the poet's well-founded imagination by bringing together Acestes and Evander, both of whom have been Aeneas' kind hosts. To stress further the association between the characters, Prudentius creates alliteration of the sound 't', and the combination of generic adjectives beginning with 't' and *ductor* is reminiscent of Evander's address to Aeneas as 'Teucrorum ductor'.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the above-discussed passage in *Symm.* 2 is an instance of Prudentius' allusive methods of composition, so that usually what first seems to be a random echo of his model, turns out to be a conscious and elaborate recalling of passages (*loci*) which helps his arguments.

Finally, Prudentius mentions Saturn and the other indigenous Italian gods when he describes their statues along the Via Sacra (*Symm.* 1,232-5):

adsistunt etiam priscorum insignia regum,  
Tros Italus Ianusque bifrons genitorque Sabinus,  
Saturnusque senex, maculoso et corpore Picus,  
coniugis epotum sparsus per membra uenenum<sup>42</sup>. 235

These lines closely imitate *Aen.* 7,177-181 and 189-91, referring to the images of the old gods that were worshipped in the palace of Picus (171) as the forefathers of the Italians:

quin etiam ueterum effigies ex ordine auorum  
antiqua e cedro, Italusque paterque Sabinus  
uitisator curuam seruans sub imagine falcem,  
Saturnusque senex Ianique bifrontis imago 180

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<sup>40</sup> *Aen.* 5,37 'horridus in iaculis et pelle Libystidis ursae'.

<sup>41</sup> *Aen.* 8,470 (and 513). Note that 'Trinacrius ductor' has the same position in the line as 'Teucrorum ductor' but differs in its prosody.

<sup>42</sup> In line 235 'per' is to be taken with 'epotum...uenenum'.

uestibulo astabant, aliique ab origine reges

Picus, equum domitor, quem capta cupidine coniunx  
aurea percussum uirga uersumque uenenis 190  
fecit auem Circe sparsitque coloribus alas.

Prudentius recalls Virgil's lines to attribute the emergence of such worship to the times of king Latinus and, thus, once more to point out that these 'gods' were men; he interprets the reference to statues of ancient kings in *Aen.* 7,181 as evidence for the status of the alleged 'gods'. Since many stories about the gods involved their metamorphoses, here Prudentius does not miss the chance to echo the tale about Picus' transformation that Virgil had included, and adds more examples of such tales in the next invective against Jupiter.

Finally, Prudentius completed his satirical portrayal of Saturn's character by two allusions to the *Georg.* Firstly, Saturn is presented in terms of the 'rusticus', which detracts from his authority and, hence, is aimed at demythologising Virgil's account where all knowledge derived from the gods. The echo in *Symm.* 1,49-50 of *Georg.* 2,406-7 which was quoted in the first section of the Chapter, is noticeable as Prudentius retains 'uitis' and a compound of 'curuus', but most of all he imitates the original form of 'putare' and its position in the line. Secondly, to discredit the character of Saturn, Prudentius alludes to the story about the god's amoral passion that resulted in his being metamorphosed into a stallion (*Georg.* 3,92-5):

talis et ipse iubam ceruice effundit equina  
coniugis aduentu pernix Saturnus, et altum  
Pelion hinnitu fugiens impleuit acuto. 95

In the story Saturn was transformed into a stallion to escape from his wife who had discovered his illicit amours.<sup>43</sup> Prudentius might have thought it appropriate to recall this shameful behaviour, in order to link Saturn's expulsion from Olympus (45) to this infamous series of incidents, but in so doing he followed the already established tradition of the ancient philosophers and Christian writers who attacked the immorality of the gods as portrayed in the myths (*Symm.* 1,56-8):

aduena quos profugus gignens et equina libido  
intulit Italiae: Tuscis namque ille puellis  
primus adhinnuit simulato numine moechus.

Here Prudentius echoed Virgil's language<sup>44</sup>, such as 'equina' and 'hinnitu', and alluded to the sexual appetite of the stallion as a metaphor for the adulterous behaviour of the human Saturn. For his portrayal as the first to perform an adulterous act whilst claiming to be divine, the poet may also be referring to the extra-marital union whereby Saturn became father of Picus (*Aen.* 7,48-9). Appropriately, the myth is transferred to an Italian setting where the victims of Saturn's lusts are 'Tuscis...puellis'. The analysis of this passage prompts an important explanation about a quality of Prudentius' style of composition, and in relation to his use of Virgil; whilst the Christian poet borrows and echoes freely the language and style of his model, he not only adapts them to his needs, but combines them with the styles of other poets. Hence, traces from Juvenal's *Satires* and Ovid's images of the myths have been found in this account on Saturn. For instance, Ovid could have been Prudentius' model for his metaphorical use of 'adhinnuit' to denote courtship or the games of love.<sup>45</sup> More importantly, in his reference to Saturn as

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<sup>43</sup> See Mynor's commentary on *Georg.* 3,92-4.

<sup>44</sup> *Aen.* 7,385 'simulato numine'.

<sup>45</sup> *Ov. Rem. Am.* 534 'fortis equus uisae semper adhinnuit equae'; *Ars.* 1,280 'femina cornipedi semper adhinnuit equo'.

the 'primus...moechus' (58) the poet not only used a satiric word, which was appropriate for the anti-pagan polemic in *Symm.* 1, but also alluded to Juvenal's *Sat.* 6,24 'uiderunt primos argentea saecula moechos'. Prudentius, however, contradicts the pagan poet according to whom *moechi* did not appear until the Silver Age, and even surpasses Juvenal's style and thought by identifying Saturn as being the first adulterer.

Consequently, in his use of the 'Golden Age' topos Prudentius modified the pagan literary tradition in two ways; firstly, because he held that the situation had deteriorated already during the reign of Saturn<sup>46</sup>, and, secondly, because the deeds of the very gods provided the examples and hence it proved Prudentius' argument that they themselves were men. For his denigration of the characters of the gods and his ridicule of pagan myths, he thought it appropriate to imitate elements from Virgil's portrayal of Saturn, in order to deride his status as an exile and the worship of him as a civiliser and a god.

Following the example set by his father, Jupiter also committed many adulterous acts, of which the most famous stories of metamorphoses, commonly told by the poets, are referred to in *Symm.* 1,61 ff. In the manner of Ovid, Prudentius gives a catalogue of Jupiter's erotic transformations and although he disapproves of the fictional nature of the stories, he acknowledges the vividness by which the incredible appears to be true (*Symm.* 1,75-8)<sup>47</sup>:

ut illum,           75

uertere cum uellet pellem faciemque, putarent

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<sup>46</sup> For the view that piety disappeared with the beginning of Jupiter's reign, see *Ov. Her.* 4,131-4 'ista uetus pietas, aeuo moritura futuro,/ rustica Saturno regna tenente fuit./ Iuppiter esse pium statuit, quodcumque iuuaret,/ et fas omne facit fratre marita soror.' and *Juv. Sat.* 6,1 f.

<sup>47</sup> See McKeown on *Ov. Am.* 1,10,7-8 'talis eras: aquilamque in te taurumque timebam/ et quicquid magno de Ioue facit Amor.'

esse bouem, praedari aquilam, concumbere cycnum,  
et nummos fieri et gremium penetrare puellae.

In the context of moral decline, it is not surprising to find an echo, 'uirguncula' (64), of Juvenal *Sat.* 13,40 where the word was used of Juno in a similar account of deterioration marked by the god's deeds. Despite the general satirical tone, for the portrayal of Jupiter as the lover, Prudentius used some motifs from Latin elegy. Of particular excellence is the account of Danae's rape, which recalls both the theme in Horace's *Ode* 3,16 and the motif of the *exclusus amator* frequently used in Latin poetry (*Symm.* 1,65-8):

nunc foribus surdis, sera quas uel pessulus artis      65  
firmarant cuneis, per tectum diues amator  
imbricibus ruptis undantis desuper auri  
infundens pluuiam gremio excipientis amicae;

'Diues amator' (66) and 'nummos fieri' (78) extends the theme of moral decline to include corruption by means of money and is reminiscent of Horace's rationalisation of this particular myth, '...fore enim tutum iter et patens/ conuerso in pretium deo' (*Od.* 3,16,7-8), where he used allegorically Jupiter's metamorphosis into gold rain, in order to criticise men's worship of money.<sup>48</sup> Further, many parallels can be adduced for the motif of the 'deaf door': from Lucretius' 4,1178 'postis... superbos', where the door was given the quality of an animate object as an obstacle for the fulfilment of man's love, to Propertius' 1,16,18 'quid mihi tam duris clausa taces foribus' and 26 'tacitis mutua cardinibus', where the door remained deaf to the pleadings of the locked-out lover. Above all, Prudentius must have been largely influenced by the themes in Ovid's *Amores*, from which he borrows the expression 'foribus surdis' (65), and *Ars Amatoria*,

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<sup>48</sup> *Tib.* 1,5,47-8 '...quod adest nunc diues amator/ uenit in exitium callida lena meum'.

to which he alludes in ‘per tectum’ (66).<sup>49</sup> This example of Prudentius’ original treatment of the pagan myths in *Symm.* 1 again serves to illustrate the allusive character of his composition and the variety of styles that he employed. Whilst attacking the pagan belief in the beneficial role played by the gods in the life of mankind, he, nevertheless, almost as a believer, himself, enters into details about their existence.

In his account of Jupiter’s crimes, where the poet makes further use of the ‘Golden Age’ topos, the concept of Saturn’s golden rule is rejected as not only false, but also as the origin of all evil (*Symm.* 1,72-5):

haec causa est et origo mali, quae saecla uetusto  
 hospite regnante crudus stupor aurea finxit,  
 quodque nouo ingenio uersutus Iuppiter astus  
 multiplices uariosque dolos texebat... 75

Then Prudentius launches an invective against the minds of simple uncivilised men who first believed in the stories about the gods, and by this he departs from the literary tradition according to which, by the time of Jupiter, civilisation was evolving. *Aen.* 8,315-17 portrayed the state of mankind before Saturn came to Italy, but Prudentius includes this element in the invective on the time of Jupiter (*Symm.* 1,79-81):

nam quid rusticitas non crederet indomitorum  
 stulta uirum, pecudes inter ritusque ferinos 80  
 dedere sueta animum diae rationis egenum?

Here, the tone and the language of the passage change and allude to the theme of the beginnings of civilisation in the poetry of Lucretius and Ovid as his follower. Prudentius’ likening of primitive men who are devoid of any capacity for reasoning, to animals

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<sup>49</sup> *Ov. Am.* 1,6,54 ‘surdas...fores’, cf. 1,8,77 ‘surda sit oranti tua ianua’; *Ars* 2,245 ‘tecto delabere aperto’.

echoes the ideas of Lucretius, who considered superstition as the main obstacle in the search for wisdom.<sup>50</sup>

Once more the fallacy of mankind's belief in the pagan gods is blamed on the simple minds of its Roman ancestors, when the next age is introduced (*Symm.* 1,84 ff.). Without any evidence in the pagan tradition, Prudentius associates this period after Jupiter's rule with Mercury and theft, but following Roman traditional views suggests that up to that point the hardy countrydwellers have been virtuous (*Symm.* 1,84-5; 99-101)<sup>51</sup>:

Successit Iouis imperio corruptior aetas,  
quae docuit rigidos uitiiis seruire colonos. 85

artificem scelerum simplex mirata *uetustas*  
supra hominem coluit, simulans per nubila ferri 100  
aligerisque leues pedibus transcurrere uentos.

Prudentius was aware of the existence of an even older literary tradition as the authoritative source of the myths, but he doubts the reliability of ancient testimony and seems to disapprove of the poets who took it for granted. So does Virgil, who, when elsewhere there is no evidence of a story told, attributes it to ancient tradition, 'si qua fidem tanto est operi latura uetustas' (*Aen.* 10,792). Ovid also humorously attests to the authority of ancient testimony, 'quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste uetustas?' (*Met.* 1,400). Therefore, despite his admiration for the classical poets, it could be argued that in *Symm.* 1,99 Prudentius disapproves not only of the ancient literary tradition, but also of its supporters, such as Virgil.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 1,81 'rationis egenum' and *D.R.N.* 3,45; 4,502 and 5,1211; *Ov. Met.* 15,150. Lucretius used 'dius' several times, e.g. *D.R.N.* 1,22 etc. Cf. *Symm.* 2,165 ff. and *Ov. Met.* 1,84 ff. where he stressed the ability of mankind to stand erect and, thus, to look upwards and there search for divine wisdom.

<sup>51</sup> For the echoes in *Symm.* 1,89-94 of *Aen.* 4,242-4, see Schwen (1937), p. 37 ff. His view is that Prudentius uses exaggerated derision of Virgil's account.

At this point Prudentius interrupts his exploitation of the topos on the Ages and attacks gods that were of ill-repute for their shameful lusts and revelry. For the purpose of further examining Virgil's influence, it will suffice to discuss the passage in *Symm.* 1,122 ff. on the cult of Bacchus. In order to disapprove of the elements of the cult that stem from Bacchus' eastern campaigns, 'superatis...Indis' (122), the poet echoes an expression, in *Aen.* 4,215, spoken by Iarbas that refers to the Trojans (*Symm.* 1,125-28):

diffluit in luxum *cum semiuiro comitatu*<sup>52</sup>                    125  
 atque audus uini multo se proluit haustu,  
 gemmantis paterae spumis mustoque Falerno  
 perfundens biugum rorantia terga ferarum.

In line 125 Prudentius develops the view implied in Virgil's reference to Aeneas' companions, that the indulgence in luxury and effeminacy were brought to Rome through the customs and foreign cults of the East, and in *Symm.* 1,126-7 he may even suggest that such an atmosphere ruled in Carthage where Aeneas and his companions were delayed from their mission. Indeed, the language contains echoes from the scene of feasting during which Dido welcomed her guests (*Aen.* 1,738-9):

tum Bitiae dedit increpitans; ille impiger hausit  
 spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro.

The image of excessive drinking and the unsophisticated vigour of Dido's Carthaginians is transferred to Bacchus, and Prudentius' invective against the god becomes a moralistic attack against unRoman behaviour in general. These echoes are followed by yet another

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<sup>52</sup> To Virgil's contemporaries this phrase would suggest the eunuch priests of the Magna Mater cult in *D.R.N.* 2,612 'comites'; 628 'comitumque'; 640 'comitantur'.

imitation of Virgil that, however, implies irony and criticism of the original idea (*Symm.* 1,129-31)<sup>53</sup>:

his nunc pro meritis *Baccho caper omnibus aris*  
*caeditur et uirides discindunt ore chelydros* 130  
qui Bromium placare uolunt...

The quotation is taken from a passage on the growing of vines, where Virgil urged the farmer to perform the rites of Bacchus under whose protection the work will end well (*Georg.* 2,380-1):

non aliam ob culpam *Baccho caper omnibus aris* 380  
*caeditur et ueteres ineunt proscaenia ludi*

Prudentius alludes to the origin of the sacrifice, that the goat gnawed the vineshoots, but it is not clear why he uses 'nunc' and preserves the present tense 'caeditur', for these might suggest that the practice continued in Prudentius' day. Perhaps this is ironical and since the poet disbelieves the reason for the sacrifice of the goat, suggested by Virgil's 'culpa', he uses 'meritis' instead. Finally, since Virgil refers to the worship of the deity by the Trojan settlers in Italy, Prudentius' allusion to this episode in the *Georg.* strengthens the association between Bacchus' company and the people of Aeneas.

The discussion of the *Symm.* poems so far has shown how Prudentius uses Virgil's language and themes for the refutation of the pagan myths of the gods; next it will be seen how, for the purpose of Christian propaganda in *Symm.* 2, Prudentius interprets an episode of the Roman history as told in *Aen.* 8. As part of the argument that the pagan gods did not grant the Roman nation its victories, the poet included a brief account of the battle of Actium (*Symm.* 2,528-37):

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<sup>53</sup> It is worthwhile noting that after the exact quotation, Prudentius preserves a word of the same metrical shape and beginning with 'u'.

fluctibus Actiacis signum symphonia belli  
 Aegypto dederat, clangebat bucina contra.  
 institerant tenues cumbae fragilesque phaseli<sup>54</sup> 530  
 inter turratas, Memphitica rostra, Liburnas:  
 nil potuit Serapis deus et latrator Anubis.  
 stirpis Iuleae ductore exercitus ardens  
 praeualuit, gelido quem miserat Algidus axe.<sup>55</sup>  
 non armata Venus, non tunc clipeata Minerua 535  
 uenere auxilio, non diuum degener ordo  
 et patria extorris<sup>56</sup> Romanis adfuit armis.

Whilst generally the passage follows Virgil's account in *Aen.* 8,675 ff., for the purpose of ridiculing the claim that the gods played role in this Roman victory, it also recalls the portrayals of the battle in the poetry of Horace and Propertius. Prudentius' account begins with an allusion to Cleopatra whom Virgil was the first poet to portray as using a *sistrum* to call on her navy, 'regina in mediis patrio uocat agmina sistro' (8,696). However, in *Symm.* 2,528-9 the contrast between the harmonious note produced by the Egyptian musicians, *symphonia*, and the strident blast of the Roman *bucina*, recalls more closely Propertius who by such means heightened the contrast between the opposing navies (3,1,43-4):

Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro  
 baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi.

Or perhaps Prudentius refrained from any mention of the *sistrum*, which was the ritual rattle associated with the cult of Isis, so that he would weaken the supernatural element in

<sup>54</sup> Hor. *Od.* 3,2,28-9 'fragilemque.../...phaselon'.

<sup>55</sup> Hor. *Od.* 1,21,6 'gelido...Algido'. A similar construction and thought is found in *Aen.* 7,715-16 'quos frigida misit/ Nursia'.

<sup>56</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,48 'extorres...patria'.

his account of the battle, whilst by referring to the trumpet, he would couch the Roman victory in purely military terms.

Yet, it seems unlikely that the polemical tone in the passage can be used to explain the confusion in it between the vessels used by Augustus and the enemy.<sup>57</sup> In *Symm.* 2,530-1 Prudentius portrays the clash between the two fleets, where linguistically he alludes to *Aen.* 8,693 'tanta mole uiri turritis puppibus instant', but distorts the historical truth. He mentions the lightly built Roman boats that surrounded the turreted galleys of the Egyptians, 'turritas...Liburnas'. Actually, on the contrary, Augustus won the sea battle thanks to the mobility of his light *Liburnae*, in contrast to the heavier ships of the enemy.<sup>58</sup>

It seems that Prudentius' main intention in his account of the battle of Actium has been to free it from the tradition that stressed supernatural intervention by the gods, which is why in *Symm.* 2,533-4 he attributes the victory to the skills of Octavian, the army's general, and again recalls Virgil's account. As in *Aen.* 8,680-1 the star of Julius Caesar points to Augustus' glorious ancestry, so Prudentius refers to him as 'stirpis Iuleae ductore'. Overall, it is Virgil whom Prudentius imitates and, therefore, in spite of Cerri's defence of the historical truth, it seems that Prudentius made the mistake out of ignorance and understood Virgil's 'turritis puppibus' as referring to the *Liburnae*, which he took to be Egyptian boats. The passage is a good example also of the poet's versatility in combining the styles of several poets at one and the same time. Here, in order to ridicule Cleopatra's

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<sup>57</sup> A. Cerri, "Prudenzio e la battaglia d'Azio", *Athenaeum N. S.* 46 (1968) 261-72, especially p. 264 ff. argued for the historical accurateness of Prudentius's account and pointed out that by *institerant* (other variants being *instar erant* and *instabant*) the poet made a specific reference to the tactics used by Augustus as described by ancient historians. He attributed the misleading detail about Augustus' ships to the satiric tone in the passage and compares it to that in Propertius' verses.

<sup>58</sup> For Octavian's *Liburnae*, see Hor. *Od.* 1,37,30 and *Ep.* 1,1-2 'Ibis Liburnis inter alta nauium,/ amice, propugnacula'.





The quotation is taken from the passage that explains a peculiarity of the worship in Diana's grove in Latium (*Aen.* 7,778-80):

unde etiam templo Triuiaie lucisque sacratis  
cornipedes arcentur<sup>64</sup> equi, quod litore currum  
et iuuenem monstris puidi effudere marinis. 780

As earlier in his mention of the traditional etymology of Latium that was linked with the myth about Saturn, here Prudentius refers to the aetiology of pagan cult practice in connection with the myth of Hippolytus. He needed to replace Virgil's 'unde etiam', 'whence to this day' by the rhetorical phrase 'cur etiam', 'why also', which picks up 'cur' (51), in order to avoid the implication that the cult of Diana at Aricia continued until Prudentius' day. However, there seems to be no criticism of Virgil who is held in greatest esteem, which becomes clear from the way Prudentius refers to the *Aeneid* as 'Musa'. This, indeed, is the closest reference to the persona of Virgil, whose name the Christian poet avoids mentioning, in contrast to that of Homer (*Symm.* 2,46), of whom his criticism comes out more vehemently. By quoting the *Aeneid*, Prudentius wants to stress its unsurpassed poetic qualities and the influence it had on all educated Romans and poets, including himself. Thus, he undoubtedly aimed to disentangle Virgil from the claims of pagan culture and presents him as a heritage universal to all literate Romans.

### 3. The supernatural power of the pagan gods and the *NT* miracles.

In *Apoth.* 646-781, for the illustration of his argument in defence of the divine nature of the Incarnate Christ, Prudentius gives accounts of four miracles based on St. John's Gospel. The thought that unifies these miracles is the oneness of Christ and God the

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<sup>64</sup> 'Arceo' as a technical word is used in Hor. *Od.* 3,1,1.

Creator, for the purpose of which he establishes links between the two Testaments. Still, this presentation of biblical motifs and Christian doctrine shows the influence of Virgil, and, for this reason, here I shall discuss the first of these miracles. *Apoth.* (650-71) follows the account in *Jn.* 6:16-21 and illustrates the divine power of God the Creator through Christ over the forces of nature.<sup>65</sup> In his poetic version of the biblical episode in which during a storm Jesus walked on Lake Tiberias, Prudentius concentrates on the relationship between the powers of nature and their divine Creator. His technique is subordinate to the argument about the divine nature of Christ, and, therefore, he does not paraphrase closely the episode in the Gospel but portrays the image of Christ and the storm. In a tricolon the poet imagines how the violent winds and storm-lashed waters are calmed on the orders of Christ, by which act his divine power becomes manifest, and the culmination is reached in his act of walking on the water (*Apoth.* 650-654)<sup>66</sup>:

Insanos *uideo* subito mitescere uentos            650  
 cum iubeat Christus, *uideo* luctantia magnis  
 aequora turbinibus tranquillo marmore tendi  
 imperio Christi, *uideo* calcatus eundem  
 cum patitur gurges tergum solidante liquore.

In this vivid and highly rhetorical introduction of the miracle, Prudentius uses a variety of words for the mass of water, ‘aequora’, ‘marmore’, ‘gurges’ and ‘liquor’, and heightens the effect of Christ’s exercise of power over nature by the juxtaposition in ‘turbinibus

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<sup>65</sup> *Jn.* 6:16-21 ‘Ut autem sero factum est, descenderunt discipuli eius ad mare. Et cum ascendissent nauim, uenerunt trans mare in Capharnaum; et tenebrae iam factae sunt, et non uenerat ad eos Jesus. Mare autem, uento magno flante, exurgebat. Cum remigassent ergo quasi stadia uiginti quinque aut triginta, uident Jesum ambulans supra mare, et proximum naui fieri, et timuerunt. Ille autem dixit eis: Ego sum, nolite timere. Voluerunt ergo accipere eum in nauim, et statim nauis fuit ad terram, in quam ibant.’ For *Mt.* 14:22-33, see *Praef. Symm.* 2,1 ff.

<sup>66</sup> By the emphasis on the actual witnessing of the miracle achieved by the triple use of ‘uideo’, Prudentius casts himself as one of the disciples who were in the boat (*Jn.* 6:19 ‘uident’).

tranquillo' (652) and by the oxymoron 'solidante liquore' (654). To some extent there are parallels in pre-Christian Latin poetry for Christ's walking over the water (*Apoth.* 655-6):

ipse super fluidas plantis nitentibus undas     655  
ambulat ac presso firmat uestigia fluctu

One is reminded of *Met.* 14,48-50, where Circe is portrayed walking on the surface of the sea, or even of *Aen.* 7,810-11, which pictures Camilla's miraculous ability to flit over the seas.<sup>67</sup> In particular, the expression 'firmat uestigia' echoes the Virgilian phrase 'uestigia figit' in *Aen.* 6,159 that Juvencus also borrowed to portray Peter's walking on the water.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, for his poetic account of divine control over the winds the poet would have been influenced by the classical poets' use of the motif to stress the wonder of the power of the pagan gods, and in particular, by the treatment of this theme in the poetry of Ennius and Virgil.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, Christ is accorded the attributes of the chief of the pagan gods and rulers of the sky and the sea, Jupiter and Neptune (*Apoth.* 658-663):

quis iubeat saeuis aquilonibus, "ite, silete  
carceribus uestris amploque facessite<sup>70</sup> ponto,"  
sit nisi caelipotens aquilonum conditor idem?     660  
ninguidus<sup>71</sup> agnoscit Boreas atque imbrifer Eurus  
nimborum dominum tempestatumque potentem,  
excitamque hiemem uerrunt<sup>72</sup> ridente sereno.

<sup>67</sup> Ov. *Met.* 14,48-50 '...ingreditur feruentes aestibus undas/ in quibus ut solida ponit uestigia terra/ summaque decurrit pedibus super aequora siccis' and *Aen.* 7,810-11 'uel mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumentis/ ferret iter celeris nec tingeret aequore plantas'.

<sup>68</sup> Juvenc. *Euang.* 3,114-15 '...nauem mox linquere Petrus/ audet et innixus figit uestigia ponto', where he follows the account in *Mt.* 14:22-33.

<sup>69</sup> Hor. *Od.* 1,9,9 ff. 'permitte diuis cetera, qui simul/ strauere uentos aequore feruido/ deproeliantis...'

<sup>70</sup> In this sense of 'abire' the word was first used by Enn. *Trag.* 145 'uos ab hoc facessit<e>', and in the context of storms it is found in *D.R.N.* 6,956-7, 'et tempestates terra caeloque coortae,/ in caelum terrasque remotae iure facessunt'.

<sup>71</sup> The word was coined by Prudentius, cf. *Cath.* 5,97 'ninguidus cibus' [*manna*].

<sup>72</sup> Lucretius used the verb with reference to wind in *D.R.N.* 1,277-9 'sunt igitur uenti nimirum corpora caeca/ quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli/ uerrunt'. Pfeiffer on Call. *fr.* 806, 'λίστροισιν εοικότα', commented that 'de uento sermo esse uidentur terram uerrente'.

In line 663 the power that Christ exercises over the winds leaves the sky smiling, 'ridente sereno', which echoes the image in Ennius' *Ann.* 446-7:

Iuppiter hic risit tempestatesque serenae  
riserunt omnes risu Iouis omnipotentis.

Here, the idea of Jupiter's omnipotence over the forces of nature is echoed in the picture of the skies transformed by Christ, whom Prudentius calls 'caelipotens' (660).<sup>73</sup> In this way, the poet replaces the image of the pagan god with that of the Christian God and enhances the old attributes with new meaning. However, since in the passage in the *Apoth.* there are several echoes of *Aen.* 1, Virgil who, himself, imitated Ennius' image, is the more likely medium for Prudentius' allusion (*Aen.* 1,254-5):

Olli subridens hominum sator atque deorum  
uultu, quo caelum tempestatesque serenat, 255

Through 'carceribus' (659) Prudentius recalls the cave where, according to Virgil, Aeolus guards the winds.<sup>74</sup> The address to the winds that Christ utters (658-9) alludes to Neptune's rebuke to the raging winds, before his intervention to calm the seas (*Aen.* 1,132 ff.). This is even more true, since in Prudentius' account there is a further echo from the moment at which Neptune makes his entrance; the biblical storm that Christ tamed, 'excitamque hiemem' (663), recalls the mythical storm in *Aen.* 1,125 'emissamque hiemem'.

However, to stress Christ's role as the master-creator of the winds, the poet borrows almost verbatim a phrase that Virgil originally used of Aeolus, 'nimborumque facis tempestatumque potentem' (*Aen.* 1,80). Prudentius substitutes 'dominum' for 'facis' in

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<sup>73</sup> Except in *Apoth.* 660, 'caelipotens' is found once only in Plaut. *Pers.* 755 'Iuppiter...dique omnes caelipotentes'.

<sup>74</sup> *Aen.* 1,54 '...carcere frenat' and 1,141 'Aeolus et clauso uentorum carcere regnet'.

the original passage and creates a very neat metrical and syntactical parallel between the two halves of the hexameter, 'nimborum dominum tempestatumque potentem' (662). Although it is Neptune who subdued the storm to which Prudentius refers in line 663, *Apoth.* 661-2 alludes to Aeolus' control over the weather bestowed on him by Jupiter. Hence, Christ emerges as both the overall master, Jupiter, and the guardian, Aeolus, of natural forces, since he, as God the Son, by his Father's will both creates and exercises control over his worldly domain. This thought is made explicit in *Apoth.* 658-60 and developed in the closing lines, that Jesus in the *NT* account existed before the creation of the world (*Apoth.* 664 and 667-9)<sup>75</sup>:

quis pelagi calcarit aquas ...

aequoreae nisi factor aquae, qui Spiritus olim  
ore superflusus patrio uolitabat in undis  
nondum discretis nec certo litore clausis?

If in lines 658-63 the motif of the calming of the storm is embellished by means of classical accounts, in lines 664-71 the image of walking on water is developed through biblical material. While both parts of the passage are united by the argument for Christ Incarnate being one and the same with God the Creator, the strongest evidence for this appears in *Apoth.* 667-9, where the poet alludes to the account of the Creation in *Gen.* 1:2 ff.<sup>76</sup> Not only does Prudentius declare the oneness of the Father and the Son, in terms of the Creation, but also he interprets 'Spiritus Dei' as Christ, himself.<sup>77</sup> Thus, from the point of view of Christian exegesis and by means of biblical material, as well as by his

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<sup>75</sup> *Apoth.* 669 is reminiscent of *Met.* 1,21 f.

<sup>76</sup> *Gen.* 1:2 'Terra autem erat inanis et uacua, et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi; et Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas'.

<sup>77</sup> Christian theologians have recognised *Gen.* 1:2 as being the first reference to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For the close identification of Jesus and the Spirit, see *Rom.* 8:9-11.

use of the epic motifs and language in the *Aen.*, Prudentius has given an original presentation of this particular miracle. His account of Christ's miracles shows also that Virgil's poetry gave most motifs and language necessary for the Christian narrative in the *Apoth.*, which Prudentius used without the slightest of criticism or irony.

#### Prudentius' appreciation of the *Georgics*.

Equally, Virgil's didactic composition has an important place in the poetry of Prudentius, who in the opening lines of *Symm.* 2 echoes the books of the *Georg.*, in order to summarise the content of *Symm.* 1 and announce the subject matter of the second poem (*Symm.* 2,1-4):

*Hactenus* et ueterum cunabula prima deorum  
et causas quibus error hebes conflatus in orbe est  
diximus, et nostro Romam iam credere Christo.  
*nunc* obiecta legam, *nunc* dictis dicta refellam.

The beginning of the second part of his composition is modelled on *Georg.* 2,1-2 where Virgil had used the duplet 'hactenus'-'nunc' to link the first Book with the second:

Hactenus aruorum cultus et sidera caeli,  
nunc te, Bacche, canam...

Although the transition is completed in four rather than the two lines in the *Georg.*, Prudentius retains the adverbs in their original position at the beginning of the lines and, in particular, his 'nunc...legam' preserves the syntax of 'nunc...canam' and both occupy the first half of the hexameter line before the caesura.<sup>78</sup> This echo of the Books of the *Georg.* might be taken as a statement about the similarity between these and the *Symm.* as

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<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Claud. *Stil.* 2,1-5 'Hactenus armatae laudes: nunc qualibus orbem/ moribus et.../.../.../ mitior incipiat fidibus iam Musa remissis.' However, Claudian's imitation is less specific because he did not retain the original position within the line of the words, or the first person verb.

political didactic; for Virgil had intended the *Georg.*, not only as a handbook on agriculture and farming, but also as an implicit commentary on the contemporary political circumstances and encomium of Augustus' rule, and similarly the *Symm.* poems both provide instruction on the Christian faith, and eulogise the rule of the Christian Emperor Theodosius and his successors.

1. Prudentius' view on the beginning of natural order in the universe in an allusion to the *Georg.*

For a moment in *Symm.* 2,335 ff. Prudentius accepts the Romans' respect for their traditions, '...si tantus amor est et cura uetusti/ moris', to claim on such grounds that the Roman cults are only a recent invention and their expansion in number contradicts the hallowing of the morals of Roman ancestors. By means of relating the origins of religion to the beginnings of the human race, the poet maintained that monotheistic worship had existed since the world began and referred to the first inhabitants that appeared after the destruction of the human race in the Flood (*Symm.* 2,338-42):

iam tunc diluuii sub tempore uel prius uni  
inseruisse Deo gentem quae prima recentes  
incoluit terras uacuoque habitauit in orbe. 340  
unde genus ducit nostrae porrecta propago  
stirpis et indigenae pietatis iura reformat.

Although Prudentius calls on the authority of the *OT* account of the Flood in *Gen.* 6-8, 'antiquis...libris' (337), his verse was inspired by the account in the *Georg.* of the recreation of the human race after the Flood. There, in the manner of Lucretius, Virgil

repeated the view on the constant laws of nature in the universe, referring to the creation myth as his starting point (*Georg.* 1,60-3)<sup>79</sup>:

continuo has leges aeternaque foedera certis 60  
imposuit natura locis, quo tempore primum  
Deucalion uacuum lapides iactauit in orbem,  
unde homines nati, durum genus...

As can be seen from the echoes, the image of the primordial earth, 'uacuoque...in orbe' (*Symm.* 2,340), alludes to the myth of Deucalion in the *Georg.*, in order to recall the pagan view of how the world began and of the origins of the human race. However, Prudentius' real interest in the theme becomes clear only from his assimilation of the words 'unde' and 'genus' from *Georg.* 1,63, where by the expression 'durum genus' Virgil may have intended to declare the Roman ideal of a hardy race, unspoilt by the niceties of civilisation.<sup>80</sup> Prudentius seems to have accepted this notion, which he develops for his own argument, that if the Romans of his day followed faithfully the example set by their ancestors, they should worship only a few gods (*Symm.* 2,343-6). He also alludes to the line of thought in the original text where Virgil moved from metaphysical thoughts of the creation to the implicit ethical observations about the ancestors of all mankind. Therefore, in his refutation of the respect for 'mos maiorum' Prudentius expresses Roman values in the language of Virgil, in order to create a similar picture, that the ideal of religion was embodied in the first human beings, among whose descendants are the Christians of his day, and to identify the foundations of the Christian faith. And, since Prudentius refers to the *Georg.* passage only to explain the origins of

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<sup>79</sup> For the bonding forces of nature, see *D.R.N.* 1,586 f. 'foedera naturai'.

<sup>80</sup> Another instance of Prudentius' utilisation of the pagan myth of creation is *Ham.* 283-4 '...opifex quibus aspera membra/ finxerat et rigidos durauerat ossibus artus', where 'durauerat' might be an allusion to the

Christianity as being the only authentic religion, he omits the reference to the pagan myth of the creation of the human race, which for Christians has been replaced by the *OT* story of Adam and Eve.

## 2. Prudentius' imitation of Virgil's technique in the *Georgics*.

Still, the most interesting and original imitation of the *Georg.* is found in *Symm.* 2,910 ff. where the poet deals with Symmachus' second main claim, that famine was brought on as a result of the State's refusal to provide maintenance for the priestesses of Vesta.<sup>81</sup> For this reason Prudentius' argument falls into three parts, namely the natural causes affecting the harvests (917-1014), the allegorical harvest (1016-63) and the Vestal Virgins (1064-114)<sup>82</sup>, and the subject matter and the style of the *Georgics* are echoed exclusively in the first two topics.

In *Rel.* 3 Symmachus based his claims on the ritual of offering the fruits of the earth to Vesta and hence explained the shortage of crops by the goddess' retribution for the impaired privileges of her priestesses. In response, for the first part of his argument Prudentius chooses the topic of agriculture and inevitably enters the world of *Georg.* 1 on how the weather and various pests affect crops. As an introduction to this topic on natural phenomena and their effect on agriculture, the Christian poet adapts the favourite literary topos of the Nile to illustrate the vagaries of such phenomena.<sup>83</sup> His other reason for

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origins of mankind from the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha as told by Ovid in *Met.* 1,313-415. Cf. *Ov. Am.* 2,14,11 ff. and *Virg. Ecl.* 6,41.

<sup>81</sup> *Symm. Rel.* 3,15-17 and *Ambr. Ep.* 18,17-21. When Prudentius introduces this claim he refers to 'uirginibus castisque choris' (912), where he may echo Horace's phrase referring to the innocent boys and girls who performed hymns as part of the pagan rituals, *Carm. Saec.* 5-8 'quo Sibyllini monuere uersus/uirgines lectas puerosque castos/dis .../dicere carmen.'

<sup>82</sup> The passage dealing with the reputation of the Vestals will be discussed in Chapter IV, p. 245 ff.

<sup>83</sup> For the topos, see *Sen. Qaest. Nat.* 6,8,3-4; *Plin. Hist. Nat.* 5,9,48-59 and 6,184-6.

including the image of the fertile lands of Egypt is to deny that the provinces, on which Rome relied for its corn, experienced crop failure.<sup>84</sup> For this purpose, Virgil's treatment of the puzzling nature of the Nile in *Georg.* 4,287 ff. is echoed in *Symm.* 2,921-2:

audio per Pharios Nilum discurrere campos  
more suo uiridisque sata stagnare Canopi.

On the one hand, Prudentius' 'uiridisque...Canopi' (922) imitates the language in *Georg.* 4,291 'uiridem Aegyptum', and, on the other hand, the style in the *Symm.* passage is reminiscent of that in *Georg.* 4,287-8:

nam qua Pellaei gens fortunata Canopi  
accolit effuso stagnantem flumine Nilum.

Similarly, in his speculation about the site of the source of the Nile, Prudentius alludes to the statements in *Georg.* 4. Hence, *Symm.* 2,928-9 'nam refugus.../amnis et exustos cursum deflectit ad Indos', imitates the thought and structure of *Georg.* 4,293 'usque coloratis amnis deuexus ab Indis', except that Prudentius chooses another word to describe the 'sun-tanned' Ethiopians.<sup>85</sup> In short, by his use of the topos on the Nile, Prudentius may have wished to stress the generic relationship between his passage and the *Georg.*, and in this way to point out the natural causes for the wide variations in crop yields and, ultimately, to deny the belief in divine retribution.

This discussion of the phenomenon of the Nile is followed by a satirical portrayal of the starvation in the Roman provinces, where Prudentius refers to Symmachus' protest at men having to survive solely on acorns.<sup>86</sup> In order to express this thought, *Symm.* 2,946

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<sup>84</sup> *Symm.* 2,937-45.

<sup>85</sup> For the use of 'exuro' in connection with the tan of the Ethiopians, see Plin. *Nat.* 6,70; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 3,269. Further, *Symm.* 2,925 'nec Pelusiaca' is an echo of *Georg.* 1,228.

<sup>86</sup> *Rel.* 3,16 'siluestribus arbustis uita producitur et rursus ad Dodonaeas arbores plebis rusticae inopia conuolauit.'; 3,17 'quando in usum hominum concussa quercus, quando uulsae sunt herbarum radices.'

recalls the expression ‘quernas...glandes’ in *Georg.* 1,305, and the image in *Georg.* 1,159 ‘concussaue famem in siluis solabere quercu’, which Symmachus surely echoed. The reference to acorns, as one of the symbols of the ‘Golden Age’, was mentioned in connection with Prudentius’ treatment, earlier in the poem, of that topos, for which he used *Georg.* 1,118 ff. Here, towards the end of *Symm.* 2, again his argument about the natural causes of famine depends on *Georg.* 1, and those passages on the seasons, the pests, diseases and the changes of weather that may impair the crops (*Symm.* 2,955-64):

Sit fortasse aliquis paulo infecundior annus;                    955  
 nil mirum nec in orbe nouum.<sup>87</sup> didicere priores  
 perpassi plerumque famem, si tabidus aër  
 siccauit tenues ardenti sidere nubes  
 nec uernas infudit aquas creberrimus imber  
 fruge noua et uiridi, si messis, adulta priusquam            960  
 conceptas tenero solidaret lacte medullas  
 adflatum calido sucum contraxit ab euro  
 ieiunosque tulit calamos atque inrita uota  
 agricolae sterilis stipularum silua fefellit.

In line 956 the poet places his poetry firmly within the realms of didactic, by setting out to explain the failure of crops on the basis of observations from nature. There, ‘didicere priores’ could be seen as a reference to both Lucretius and Virgil and points to the combined influence of these two models on Prudentius’ treatment of the theme of agriculture.<sup>88</sup> Yet, here my main aim will be to examine Prudentius’ use of the *Georg.* as a source for *Symm.* 2,957-64, that is concerned with crops that were ruined by the dry

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<sup>87</sup> This betrays some Lucretian influence on the argument, see ‘nec mirum’ in *D.R.N.* 2,338; 6,130 and 375. Cf. *Ham.* 247 ‘nec mirum’ in a passage which echoes explicitly the *D.R.N.*

<sup>88</sup> *Symm.* 2,957 ff. alludes to *D.R.N.* 2,1144 ff. Likewise, in *Ham.* 206 ff. Prudentius employed the techniques of these two poets.

climate and the lack of rain. In this passage, Prudentius presents a succinct image of spoiled crops and alludes to the warnings against inclement weather given in *Georg.* 1,311 ff. and, in particular, spring showers. Although he inverts the idea of Virgil's passage whose imagery he uses to picture the lack of water, the language in lines 959-61 has strong similarities to *Georg.* 1,313-15:

uel cum ruit imbriferum uer,  
 spicea iam campis cum messis inhorruit et cum  
 frumenta in uiridi stipula lactentia turgent?                    315

First, Virgil's image of 'the spring that comes headlong down in rain' (313) is echoed by Prudentius in *Symm.* 2,959, where the subject, 'uer', as in Virgil's line, has become an attribute to the waters, 'uernas...aquas', and the forceful 'ruit' is replaced by the milder 'infundit'. As Mynors has pointed out the monosyllabic ending used together with 'ruit' conveys the "precipitous action" of torrential rain.<sup>89</sup> Prudentius, however, achieved the effect of the sudden and driving rain by the contrast between the softer 'n' and 'd', and the harsher 'r' sounds. In 'creberrimus imber' the effect of sudden downpour is created by the use of the superlative, the alliteration of syllables including 'r' sounds, the assonance of syllables including 'e' sounds, and the combination of syllables in '-berrim' and 'imber'. It is possible that this expression is reminiscent of 'densissimus imber' used by Virgil in *Georg.* 1,333. Finally, the rhythm is monotonous until the end where the coincidence of ictus and accent in the phrase referred to above, creates a powerful climax of an action.

The second image in *Georg.* 1,314-5 portrays the unripe grain in the newly-formed green ear of corn, which image Prudentius uses to express his idea of the premature growth of

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<sup>89</sup> Mynors, p. 71, comm. on *Georg.* 1,313.

the ear of corn because of the dry weather (961). Virgil's 'frumenta...lactentia turgent' is echoed by 'conceptas tenero solidaret lacte medullas' where by the juxtaposition of 'tenero' and 'solidaret' Prudentius creates a contrast between the milky fluid of the young grain and the process of maturing. Perhaps, his image conveys the feeling of regret for the crops untimely spoilt, whereas Vergil portrayed the springing up of the healthy crops to heighten the effect, in anticipation of the devastating rain. *Symm.* 2,960 is further evidence for the allusion to this image in the *Georg.*, since Prudentius retains the original position of 'messis', both within the line and within the passage. Similarly, the detail of the green stalks 'in uiridi stipula' in *Georg.* 1,315 is recalled by 'fruge noua et uiridi' in 960.

Also, here Prudentius assimilates the technical content of *Georg.* 1, where Virgil invited the farmer to direct his prayers to the gods. Prudentius' 'inrita uota/ agricolae' alludes to the advice given in *Georg.* 1,42 '...et uotis iam nunc adsuesce uocari' and 47 f. 'illa seges demum uotis respondet auari/ agricolae'<sup>90</sup>, but by his choice of adjective he wishes to reject the idea of a divine role in the yields. Yet, in *Symm.* 2,964 'agricola' could be a further echo of the lines following the portrayal of spring showers (*Georg.* 1,316-17):

saepe ego, cum flauis messorum induceret aruis  
agricola et fragili iam stringeret hordea culmo,

Furthermore, the picture in *Symm.* 2,963-4 of the forest of blades of barren corn recalls the passage on the rotation of crops in *Georg.* 1,72 ff. The expressions 'ieiunos...calamos' (963) and 'sterilis stipularum silua' (964) have linguistic similarities with 'sustuleris fragilis calamos siluamque sonantem' (76) and 'sterilis...agros/ atque leuem stipulam' (84-5). Appropriately, Prudentius elaborates the idea of the rustling

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<sup>90</sup> Also *Georg.* 1,100-1 'umida solstitia atque hiemes orate serenas,/ agricolae'.

noise made by growing cereals in *Georg.* 1,76, also strengthened by the alliteration of ‘s’ sounds, by choosing in turn three words from the original that begin with ‘s’ and ‘st’ sounds.

Towards the end of his discussion of the topic in *Symm.* 2,965 ff., the manner of rejecting the supernatural explanation, and preferring a purely naturalistic one, recalls Lucretius<sup>91</sup> and Prudentius’ allusion to *D.R.N.* becomes prominent especially in *Symm.* 2,973-5:

Antiquis elementa labant erroribus, ac de  
legitimo discussa modo plerumque feruntur  
in casus alios quam lex habet aut iter anni. 975

Perhaps, the traces of Lucretius’ ideas here came from Virgil’s use of *D.R.N.* in the opening of *Georg.* 1, where the knowledge of the universal laws of nature was said to be of use to the farmer.<sup>92</sup> However, Prudentius includes purely Lucretian vocabulary, ‘elementa’ and ‘errores’, and in support of his argument seems to call upon the authority of the *D.R.N.* that rejected the idea of the gods’ role in the workings of the world and in the life of men.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, in *Symm.* 2 Lucretius’ theory on the laws of nature is integrated in the imitation of the subject matter and imagery of the *Georgics*.

In the next section Prudentius alludes to Virgil’s discussion of the weather conditions and the relevant diseases that affect crops (*Symm.* 2,976-86):

nunc consumit edax segetem rubigo maligni  
aëris ex uitio, nunc culpam uere tepenti  
post zephyros gelidi glacies aquilonis inurit  
ambustumque caput culmi fuligine tinguit.

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<sup>91</sup> E.g. *D.R.N.* 6,749-55.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Lăbant’ (973) and ‘iter anni’ (975) may be echoes of *Georg.* 1,6 ‘lumina, lăbentem caelo quae ducitis annum’.

<sup>93</sup> Alessandro Schiesaro “The boundaries of knowledge in Virgil’s *Georgics*” in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, eds. Th. Habinek, A. Schiesaro, Cambridge (1997), pp. 63-98 and especially pp. 64-5, the

seminis aut teneri turgens dum germinat herba,           980  
 continuis nimiisque perit constricta pruinis  
 nec potis est tenuem telluri adfingere fibram.  
 mox eiecta solo glacie sidente superfit  
 nudaque subducto radix auellitur aruo.  
 ancipites tribuli subeunt et carduus horrens;           985  
 hos fert sicca sitis, hunc ebrius educat umor.

Since Prudentius stresses the irregularities in the functioning of the laws of nature, therefore, his picture of the changes of weather is more pessimistic than that of Virgil, who in *Georg.* 1 aims to stress the predictability and fixed rules in nature. The Christian poet inverts the natural order of the seasons, when in 977-8 he echoes the image of the coming of spring in *Georg.* 1,43-4:

Vere nouo, gelidus canis cum montibus umor  
 liquitur et Zephyro putris se glaeba resoluit,

Prudentius recalls Virgil's portrayal of the transition from cold to mild weather to portray the sudden blast of cold air in the middle of spring. He contrasts the image of the warm West wind with that of the cold North wind, *Aquilo*, and, since in this context 'inurit' is used at the end of the line, it may be an echo of *Georg.* 1,93 'acrior aut Boreae penetrabile frigus adurat'.<sup>94</sup>

Then, Prudentius imitates Virgil's account of diseases that affect crops in *Georg.* 1,150-3:

ut mala culmos           150  
 esset robigo segnisque horreret in aruis  
 carduus; intereunt segetes, subit aspera silua  
 lappaeque tribolique...

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*Georgics* are Virgil's "extended and sustained reaction to the non-theological views of his predecessor and reassertion of the active presence of the gods in all aspects of life."

<sup>94</sup> Mynors, comm. on *Georg.* 1,93, explained that the verb can be used both for cold and heat.

From this passage Prudentius borrows the image of the destructive rust-coloured fungus, ‘mala.../...rubigo’, even if in his expression, ‘rubigo maligni/aëris’<sup>95</sup> (976-7), the attribute refers to the air. He also includes the image of the blight that consumes the stalks and it is likely that ‘*edax*<sup>96</sup> segetem’ (976) imitates ‘culmos/ esset’ (150-1), with ‘segetes’ used in the following line. Next, Prudentius refers to some of the weeds mentioned by Virgil, such as ‘carduus’ and ‘tribuli’ (985), and strengthens his imitation by further linguistic parallels, such that Prudentius’ ‘carduus *horrens*’ is modelled on ‘horreret.../carduus’.<sup>97</sup> Finally, to portray the image of the growing thistle and calthorps, Prudentius uses ‘subeunt’ (985), which verb recalls the form used in *Georg.* 1,152 ‘intereunt’, but conveys the opposite idea to that of the original text.

For his picture of the crops damaged by the unexpected frost (980 ff.), once more Prudentius alludes to *Georg.* 1,311 ff. that he already used in the opening picture of dry weather in *Symm.* 2,959 ff. This time Prudentius’ ‘seminis aut teneri *turgens* dum geminat herba’ (980) recalls Virgil’s image of the young grain that swells within the ear of corn (315), whilst Prudentius’ reference to the unripe ear of corn torn up by its roots (983-4) may allude to the similar fate of the heavy ear of corn during the summer storm, ‘quae grauidam late segetem ab radicibus imis/ sublimem expulsam eruerent’ (*Georg.* 1,319-20).<sup>98</sup>

Prudentius’ choice to make use of precisely these episodes in *Georg.* 1 is appropriate for presenting a pessimistic view of the behaviour of nature that would strengthen his own

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<sup>95</sup> For ‘malignus’ in the context of vegetation, see Calp. Sicul. *Ecl.* 4,115 ‘malignum...lolium’.

<sup>96</sup> *Edax* occurs in comedy but also in other poetry where it describes fire and rain, as devouring (*OLD* 2).

<sup>97</sup> For his imitation of *Georg.* 1,153-4, see also *Ham.* 216-18.

<sup>98</sup> *Symm.* 2,984 ‘radix auellitur aruo’.

argument against any divine participation in crop yields.<sup>99</sup> Yet, an important reason for the difference in the tone of *Symm.* 2 and that of the *Georg.* is Prudentius' intention of addressing both Virgil and Lucretius. Indeed, at the end of the account on pests and diseases Virgil, himself, echoed Lucretius' pessimistic view about the laws of nature in *D.R.N.* 5,200 ff. But, although Virgil recognised a general tendency of deterioration in nature, still he believed that it could be controlled by the farmer's hard work. (*Georg.* 1,197-200)<sup>100</sup>:

uidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore  
degenerare tamen, ni uis humana quotannis  
maxima quaeque manu legeret: sic omnia fatis  
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri, 200

In the context of the above discussed Virgilian themes, Prudentius openly adopts Lucretius' ideas and methods of argument, in order to make use of the naturalistic approach of his predecessor and to argue against gods' control of nature (*Symm.* 2,987-96):

temperies effusa minus uel plus agit istos  
terrarum morbos et mundum uulnerat aegrum.  
non aliter nostri corruptus corporis usus  
in uitium plerumque cadit nec in ordine recto 990  
perstat et excessu moderaminis adficit artus.  
unus enim status est mundique et corporis huius  
quod gerimus, natura eadem sustentat utrumque.  
edita de nihilo crescunt nihilumque futura  
aut titubant morbis aut tempore uicta senescunt, 995

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<sup>99</sup> For the influence of the gods on nature, see *Georg.* 1,328 ff. that continues the passage to which Prudentius alludes.

<sup>100</sup> *D.R.N.* 5,206 ff. 'quod superest arui, tamen id natura sua ui/ sentibus obducat, ni uis humana resistat/ uitai causa ualido consueta bidenti/ ingemere et terram pressis proscindere aratri.'

nec natura caret uitio cui terminus instat.

In likening the unfavourable turns in nature to the founding laws in the universe, Prudentius accepts views that underlie the *D.R.N.*, and which ultimately serve the Christian didactic purposes in *Symm.* 2. By means of the Lucretian analogy between nature and the human body, he presents the notion of the eventual death of all things in the universe and relates it to the various results of the farmer's labour (*Symm.* 2,997-1000):

semper, crede, polus uariis prouentibus annos  
texuit; hos multa ditauit fruge fluentes,  
spe cassa et sterili curam frustratus agrestem. 1000

These lines are strongly reminiscent of Lucretius' use of the agriculture theme to illustrate his idea of the death of the universe in *D.R.N.* 2,1164-74:

iamque caput quassans grandis suspirat arator  
crebrius, incassum magnos cecidisse labores, 1165  
et cum tempora temporibus praesentia confert  
praeteritis, laudat fortunas saepe parentis.  
tristis enim uetulae uitis sator atque <uietae>  
temporis incusat momen saeclumque fatigat,  
et crepat, antiquum genus ut pietate repletum 1170  
perfacile angustis tolerarit finibus aeuum,  
cum minor esset agri multo modus ante uiritim.  
nec tenet omnia paulatim tabescere et ire  
ad capulum spatio aetatis defessa uetusto.

The images of old age (1173-4) and, especially, of the farmer's unfulfilled hopes (1164-5) are to be found in *Symm.* 2,994-5 and 1000. However, Prudentius' primary purpose in echoing Lucretius' ideas in the passage, is to develop their moralistic implications and impose on them his allegorical interpretation. Therefore, to convey the notion of decay in

nature by the image of bodily disease, he uses vocabulary with ethical connotation, 'uitium' (990), 'uitio' (996) and 'corruptus' (989). He also expresses the idea of the body being damaged by lack of moderation, '...excessu moderaminis adficit artus' (991), which alludes to the ideal of moderation in the acquisition of land expressed in *D.R.N.* 2,1172. At the end of his argument against divine vengeance as a logical explanation of the shortage of food, the poet, himself, appeals to the ideal of moderate needs (*Symm.* 2,1015-19)<sup>101</sup>:

sed nec magno opus est frugi uiuentibus, et cum        1015  
maxima proueniunt non amplo in gaudia censu  
soluimur inque lucrum studio exultamus auaro.  
nam quibus *aeternum* spes informatur *in aeuum*,  
omne bonum tenue est quod *praesens* ingerit *aetas*.

It is appropriate to assume that, here, Prudentius has in mind mostly Lucretius' argument about the farmers who complain about the small harvests in the present, by contrasting them with the abundant products of the past. At last, the reason behind this use of Lucretius' ideas is revealed, for *Symm.* 2,1018-19 serves as a denial of the preference of *praeterita* to *praesentia* in *D.R.N.* 2,1166-7, and through this topos of the failed hopes of the farmer, Prudentius teaches the Christian principle that faith should be placed in what is about to come and what is eternal. Since the poet was trying to find a place for his poetry within the classical tradition of writing, he employed the poetic language of agriculture in the *Georg.*, and the principles in *D.R.N.*, in order to illustrate the idea of the multiple rewards that are earned by the souls of Christians. Hence, the theme of the true reward from a spiritual harvest is introduced by the ideal of moderation in the use of material goods.

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 2,1017 'studio...auaro' and *Georg.* 1,47 f. 'auari/agricolae'.



luxuriat, suco mox deficiente sub aestu  
sideris igniferi sitiens torretur et aret<sup>104</sup>;  
neue in spinosis incurrant semina uepres,  
aspera nam segetem surgentem uincula texunt        1030  
ac fragiles calamos nodis rubus artat acutis<sup>105</sup>;  
et ne iacta uiae spargantur in aggere grana,  
haec auibus quia nuda patent passimque uorantur  
inmundisque iacent foeda ad ludibria coruis.<sup>106</sup>”

As has been rightly pointed out, here, Prudentius turned to the classical heritage and by successfully employing its language related the Christian message to real life. Consequently, the biblical simile underwent a significant transformation, in that the poet laid more emphasis on the literal meaning of the parable because his polemic against Symmachus was on the subject of ‘real grain’.<sup>107</sup> This view that the poet had wished to recreate the parable in a purely physical way can be demonstrated by, firstly, the different emphasis in Prudentius’ account and that in the Scriptures; whilst in the original parable, the sower is interpreted as God, the seed is ‘his Word’ and the soil is the heart of men, that needs preparation and continued cultivation, Prudentius gives another interpretation whereby, according to Christ’s instructions, men are the sowers who choose the soil appropriate for their grain.

Secondly but not least, Prudentius’ successful imitation of Virgil’s style in the *Georg.* strengthens this view. At the very opening of the speech, the echo of *Georg.* 1,223, ‘debita quam sulcis committas semina...’, is put in the mouth of Christ who assumes the

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<sup>104</sup> *Mt.* 13:5-6 ‘Alia autem ceciderunt in petrosa, ubi non habebant terram multam; et continuo exorta sunt, qui non habebant altitudinem terrae; sole autem orto aestuauerunt; et quia non habebant radicem, aruerunt.’

<sup>105</sup> *Mt.* 13:7 ‘Alia autem ceciderunt in spinas; et creuerunt spinae, et suffocauerunt ea.’ Cf. *Georg.* 1,76 ‘fragilis calamos’.

<sup>106</sup> *Mt.* 13:4 ‘Ecce exiit qui seminat, seminare. Et dum seminat, quaedam ceciderunt secus uiam, et uenerunt uolucres caeli, et comederunt ea.’

<sup>107</sup> Herzog (1966) pp. 23-4.

role of Virgil's poetic persona and addresses his advice to the farmers, who are to choose carefully the place where to sow their seed. The three biblical similes are arranged in an order different to that in the original text in the Gospel, and become transformed into real situations from the world of agriculture. Thus, the poet alludes to the *Georg.* and in particular may recall the accounts of pests in *Georg.* 1, and the various kinds of soils and crops that are suited to them in *Georg.* 2,177 ff. In his exegesis of the parable (*Symm.* 2,1040 ff.) Prudentius' image of the gravelly, barren soil, '*glarea ne tenuis ieiunis siccet harenis*'<sup>108</sup> (1044) is a close imitation of *Georg.* 2,212 '*nam ieiuna quidem cliuosi glarea ruris*'. As to the image of the birds who eat up the grain that fall on the path (1032-4), there is a parallel in *Georg.* 1 where they are seen as a threat to the crops '*et sonitu terribis auis...*' (156).<sup>109</sup>

Hand in hand with the more literal meaning, the spiritual value of Prudentius' poetic account of *Mt.* 13 should be enhanced, since, except for the interpretation of the birds as '*hosti... uolucris*' (1050) which is similar to that in the Bible (*Mt.* 13:19), the poet offers a novel exegesis of the parable through a set of allegorical images (1040-50).<sup>110</sup> Thus, whereas Jesus interprets the thorns as the cares of the world (*Mt.* 13:22), Prudentius presents them allegorically as sins in general (1040 ff.).<sup>111</sup> In his interpretation of the

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<sup>108</sup> *Georg.* 1,70 '*...sterilem exiguus ne deserat umor harenam*'.

<sup>109</sup> For '*uiae... in aggere*' (1032), see *Aen.* 5,273. For the allegorical biblical view of animals as a threat to the symbols of Christianity, see *Apoth.* 736-8, where in the miracle of the multiplication, the food is to be understood spiritually as faith. Cf. *Symm.* 2,1048-50 '*...ne spem, qua uescimur intus,/deserat obscenisque auibis permittat edendam,/ et proiecta fides hosti sit praeda uolucris*'.

<sup>110</sup> *Mt.* 13:19-22 '*Omnis qui audit uerbum regni, et non intelligit, uenit malus, et rapit quod seminatum est in corde eius: hic est qui secus uiam seminatus est. Qui autem super petrosa seminatus est: hic est, qui uerbum audit, et continuo cum gaudio accipit illud; non habet autem in se radicem, sed est temporalis: facta autem tribulatione et persecutione propter uerbum, continuo scandalizatur. Qui autem seminatus est in spinis: hic est, qui uerbum audit, et sollicitudo saeculi istius, et fallacia diuitiarum suffocat uerbum, et sine fructu efficitur*'.

<sup>111</sup> Herzog (1966) pp. 23-4.

biblical similes, both the physical and the spiritual meanings of Christ's instruction are clearly expressed (1035-9)<sup>112</sup>:

His Deus agricolam confirmat legibus; ille 1035  
ius caeleste Patris non summa intellegit aure,  
sed simul et cordis segetem disponit et agri,  
ne minus interno niteant praecordia cultu  
quam cum laeta<sup>113</sup> suas ostentant iugera messes.

If Prudentius used Virgil's own term *praecepta* for Christ's instructions to the farmers, in the introduction to the spiritual interpretation of the parable these precepts are defined as God's commands. As in the biblical text, the physical and spiritual meanings of the teaching are inseparable and this is the lesson that the farmer has to learn; as the well-prepared land would yield rich crops, so the tending of the soul brings spiritual rewards. Indeed, both texts view the harvesting as the culmination of the hearing and understanding of the Word, and in *Symm.* 2,1036 ff. Prudentius follows closely the interpretation in Mt. 13:23 'Qui uero in terram bonam seminatus est: hic est, qui audit uerbum, et *intelligit*, et fructum affert, et facit aliud quidem centesimum, aliud autem sexagesimum, aliud uero trigesimum.' In Prudentius' poetic account the images portray allegorically the need for preparation and continuous cultivation of the soul, 'frugem segetemque animae' (1042), 'de pectore uepres' (1040)<sup>114</sup>, 'spinosa malorum/...sentix (1042-3), 'pectoris aestus' (1045) and 'uilis cura' (1048). At the end Prudentius echoes the image of the hundredfold harvest in Mt. 13:23 (*Symm.* 2,1051-4):

talis nostrorum sollertia centiplicatos

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<sup>112</sup> For the 'psychic husbandry', see Hor. *Ep.* 1,14,4-5 '...spinas animone ego fortius an tu/ euellas agro', and R. Mayer (1994) on Hor. *Ep.* 1,1,40 with a reference to Cic. *Tusc.* 2,13, and Hor. *Sat.* 1,3,35-7.

<sup>113</sup> The epithet is both poetic and idiomatic, see *D.R.N.* 1,14 'pabula laeta' and Mynors on *Georg.* 1,1 'laetas segetes'; also Cic. *De Orat.* 3,155.

<sup>114</sup> In *Symm.* 2,1029 'uepres' was used in its literal meaning.

agrorum rediget fructus, quibus acrius instat,  
nec metuit ne congestum populetur aceruum  
curculio uel nigra cauis formica recondat.

By 'nostrorum.../ agrorum' the poet refers figuratively to the Christian soul where the ample harvest is kept safe and cannot be damaged by things of the world. The image of the pests is a close imitation of *Georg.* 1,185-6 '...populatque ingentem farris aceruum/ curculio atque inopi metuens formica senectae', whereby Virgil's theme is adapted to an entirely new context and is given Christian significance.

The use of the image of thorns for a spiritual exegesis of a biblical episode is found in *Apoth.* 55-70, where Prudentius portrays the image of God in the burning bush from *Ex.* 3:2 ff. Although in the *OT* there is nothing pejorative about the thorn bush, the Christian poet interprets it as a *typos* for Christ's Incarnation, so that the thorn bush becomes an allegory for the sinful nature of the human body (*Apoth.* 58-60):

esset ut exemplo Deus inlapsurus in artus  
spiniferos, sudibus quos texunt crimina densis  
et peccata malis hirsuta doloribus inplent. 60

In this case Prudentius uses the same technique as in *Symm.* 2,1040 ff. in that adverse moral connotations are attributed to the image of the thorn bush that needs attention in order to bear fruit once again (*Apoth.* 61-9):

inculto nam stirpe *frutex uitiosus* iniquis  
luxuriam uirgis *inhonesto* effundere *suco*  
coeperat et nodos per acumina crebra ligabat.  
cernere erat steriles subito splendescere frondes  
accensisque citum foliis magno inpete late 65  
conlucere Deum, nec spinea laedere texta,  
lambere sanguineos fructus et poma cruenta,  
stringere *mortiferi uitalia germina ligni*;

In this passage the poet may also echo the images, in *Georg.* 2,73-82, of the tree in which a graft has been inserted and, in *Georg.* 2,426-30, of the vegetation in the woods which does not need attention and yet is rich in berries.<sup>115</sup> The last image of the shoots of life on the deadly tree stands for the Passion of Christ and becomes an allegorical expression for the doctrine of Redemption. The moral-soteriological content of these images is close to that of the thorns in the heart in *Symm.* 2,1040-3 where the expression ‘germen uitale’ also occurs. Hence, together with the spiritual meaning of cultivating the Christian faith in the heart, the images in the parable have a soteriological content, and Prudentius develops the latter idea in the closing section of his account of *Mt.* 13.<sup>116</sup>

Finally, having dealt with the complaint in the first part of his didactic passage, that nature suffered because the Vestal Virgins were deprived of their stipend, at the end of it Prudentius answers the Senator’s claim that the respect paid to the priestesses has been impaired. For this purpose, the figurative interpretation of the parable of the sower is extended to be given a ‘virgin’ exegesis, in order to contrast the honours enjoyed by the Christian Virgins with those enjoyed by the Vestal Virgins. Like Ambrose in *Ep.* 18,12 the poet portrays the lifelong celibacy, modest appearance and way of life of Christian virgins (*Symm.* 2,1055-63):

sunt et uirginibus pulcherrima praemia nostris,            1055  
 et pudor et sancto tectus uelamine uultus  
 et priuatus honos nec nota et publica forma

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<sup>115</sup> *Apoth.* 338 ff. is another example of an adaptation of the imagery of the *Georg.* for Christian exegesis. Based on the image of Christianity as a graft on the tree of Judaism in *Rom.* 11:17-24, Prudentius echoes the imagery of grafting in *Georg.* 2. Cf. *Apoth.* 338 ‘heu, frondosa prius ramis felicibus arbor’ and *Georg.* 2,80-1 ‘et ingens/ exiit ad caelum ramis felicibus arbor’; *Apoth.* 343 ‘surculus’ is a technical term found in *Georg.* 2,87.

<sup>116</sup> In *Ham.* 208 ff. the simile of the robber introduces the theme of the Original Sin that contaminated the world and its nature. In a way similar to the parable of the sower, the simile is followed by a spiritual interpretation (*Ham.* 216 ff.) and is illustrated by images from the *Georgics*, for which see above p. 165.

et rarae tenuesque epulae et mens sobria semper  
 lexque pudicitiae uitae cum fine peracta.  
 Hinc decies seni<sup>117</sup> rediguntur in horrea fructus,      1060  
 horrea nocturno non umquam obnoxia furi,  
 nam caelum fur nullus adit, caelestia numquam  
 fraude resignantur; fraus terris uoluitur imis.

The Christian Virgins receive a sixtyfold fruit as a reward for their spiritual cultivation which Prudentius contrasts with the state rewards received by the Vestals.<sup>118</sup> The honours of the Christians are the eternal rewards of their faith and, therefore, their ‘harvest’ is immune to the dangers on earth, such as a thief by night.<sup>119</sup> This thought leads to Prudentius’ satirical attack on the chastity of the priestesses of Vesta, which will be discussed in the next Chapter.

In conclusion, the examples used in this Chapter prove that, both the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics* supplied Prudentius with ready-made phraseology and specific vocabulary. His imitation of Virgil’s epic poem, however, is more straightforward than that of his didactic poem, the language and imagery of which Prudentius successfully adapted to the context of his Christian teachings. There is no open criticism of his model and, without being corrected or changed, Virgil’s style and ideas are incorporated for the expression of the Christian arguments. If, however, occasionally the tone of invective and the satirical

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<sup>117</sup> This reading is confirmed by *Perist.* 14,121, but *deni* has also been attested.

<sup>118</sup> In Cyprian’s *De Habitu Virginum*, Jerome’s *Epistles* and other patristic writings on the topic of celibacy, there is a classification of the honours achieved by Christian women: hundred awards as martyrs, sixty – as virgins and thirty – as widows. Therefore, in *Perist.* 14,121-3 Agnes is awarded the sixtyfold rewards for her chastity and hundredfold – for her martyrdom.

<sup>119</sup> For the thief, see also *Praef. Apoth.* 45 ff.

echoes in the *Symm.* poems create an impression that the classical poet is imitated with some irony, in these cases Prudentius attacks solely the pagan ideology that had become identified with the Virgilian heritage.

## Chapter IV

### *Juvenalian Elements from the Classical Tradition in Prudentius'*

#### *Hexameters.*

In the second Chapter of the thesis where I argued that Prudentius was indebted to Lucretius for the argumentative and mocking style that he used in attacking those whom he considered as the enemies of Christianity, it also became clear that for the Christian poet *D.R.N.* was an example of how didactic and polemical styles of writing were combined successfully. At the same time, it is the blending of the serious and satirical that so well suits his Christian polemic, and, therefore, I now wish to turn to Satire, that for Prudentius is, in effect, synonymous with Juvenal. It seems that one of the reasons why Prudentius turned to Juvenal is the highly rhetorical nature of the *Satires*.<sup>1</sup> Another and equally important reason is that in the second half of the fourth century among the Roman educated classes there was a revival of interest in Juvenal's poems and, consequently, many manuscripts with glosses were produced, as well as the first recorded critical edition with a commentary on his work.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the fourth century

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<sup>1</sup> Prudentius' preference for the styles of both Lucretius and Juvenal gives no support to the view, expressed by G. Highet in *Juvenal the Satirist. A Study*, Oxford (1962) p. 173, that the satirist's attitude to poetry and its moral purposes was like that of Lucretius. For recent interpretations of the literary nature of the *Satires*, see S. H. Braund, *Beyond Anger: A Study of Juvenal's Third Book of Satires*, 1988 and (ed.) S. M. Braund, *Juvenal's Satires. Book I*, Cambridge (1996) Introduction, p. 17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> For this revival in Rome in 390s, see *Amm. Marc.* 28,4,14 'Quidam detestantes ut uenena doctrinas Iuuenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla uolumina praeter haec in profundo otio contrectantes; quam ob causam non iudicium est nostri'; also Highet (1962), Chapter 28, "Juvenal in the Late Empire", p. 180 ff. and 296 ff. During the fourth century a critical edition with a commentary of the *Satires* appeared under the name of Nicaeus, the pupil of Servius, who himself quoted Juvenal seventy four times, but Jer. *Vir. Ill.* 80 referred to an earlier source for Nicaeus' work. Alan Cameron, "Literary allusions in the *Historia Augusta*", *Hermes* 92 (1964) 363-77, especially pp. 369-70 gives the reasons for the dating of this revival of interest in Juvenal to the last quarter of the fourth century. At pp. 376-7 he proposes that, due to the allusions to Juvenal in the *Historia Augusta*, which dates back to the Constantinian period, either

Christian writers also showed interest in the style, themes and vocabulary of Roman Satire.<sup>3</sup> It gave them the opportunity to insult and ridicule particular enemies and opponents, such as the pagans, the Jews and the heretics, but above all, it was their chance to discuss sensual topics, such as the behaviour of women and matters sexual.<sup>4</sup> If among the fourth century poets Ausonius was the first to quote the *Satires* on many occasions, Prudentius is the main contemporary Christian poet who showed a preference for the style of the *Satires*.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Prudentius' use of Juvenal's language and techniques should be attributed to the then current fashions of the literary circles and the Christian preoccupation with the subject and tone of satire, and he may well have had access to one of the glossed copies of Juvenal's text that were being produced at the time. He demonstrates a good knowledge of the *Satires* from which he quotes, borrows

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the revival took place at least half a century earlier, or the *Historia Augusta* was completed or revised at the end of the century.

<sup>3</sup> However, several studies have argued that already Tertullian had showed appreciation of Juvenal's *Satires*. T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian. A Historical and Literary Study*, Oxford (1971) pp. 202-3, records at least two instances of intentional imitation of the *Satires*: *De Pud.* 1 'Pudicitia flos morum...tamen aliquatenus in saeculo morabitur, si natura praestruxerit' (cf. *Cult. Fem.* 1,1 'Si tanta in terris moraretur fides') - *Sat.* 6,1-2 'Credo Pudicitiam Saturno rege moratam/ in terris uisamque diu...'; and *Adv. Marc.* 4,24,12-14 'Quis nunc dabit potestatem calcandi super colubros et scorpios? Utrumne omnium animalium dominus, an nec unius lacertae deus?' - *Sat.* 3,231 'unius sese dominum fecisse lacertae'. For other examples, see Highet (1962), p. 297 notes 4 and 5.

<sup>4</sup> The most prominent Christian satirist of all was Jerome, for whose style of invective and moral criticism, see D. S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist*, Ithaca (1964) *passim*. Both Lactantius and St. Augustine referred to Juvenal and quoted him at least once. Lact. *Div. Inst.* 3,29,17, '...declarat Iuuenalis his uersibus: *nullum numen...*', cf. *Sat.* 10,365-6; Aug. *Ep.* 138 (a),3,16 (*PL* 33) '*audiant satyricum suum garriendo uera dicentem: Seruabat castas...*', cf. *Juv. Sat.* 6,287-95, and Aug. *Civ. Dei.* 2,23 quotes *Juv. Sat.* 1,49 ff. See also H. Hagendahl (1967) vol. 1, p. 193, n. 426-7, and vol. 2, p. 477.

<sup>5</sup> Green (1991), Introduction, p. 20 f. and Index. In *Cento* 8, fin. Ausonius referred to Juvenal by name and quoted *Sat.* 2,3. As a professor of rhetoric, Ausonius echoed the themes of rhetoric and poetry in *Satires* 7, 9, 10 and 11, while as a Consul, he may have been particularly sensitive to *Sat.* 7,197-8 'Si Fortuna uolet, fiet de rhetore consul;/ si uolet haec eadem, fiet de consule rhetor.' Claudian also borrowed ideas and phrases from the *Satires*, mainly for his invective *In Eutropium*. See Alan Cameron (1970) p. 284 ff. and p. 315 ff., and especially his conclusion about Claudian's knowledge of Juvenal, p. 303, "It is legitimate to wonder whether Claudian's real forte did not lie in the direction of satire, where his keen observation, his caricaturist's eye for the grotesque, and his power to coin a striking epigram, could be put to their best use." For the few possible echoes in *Paul. Nol.*, see Highet p. 298, note 9.

expressions and appropriates traditional motifs, and if his poems lack humour<sup>6</sup>, yet, by using irony, ridicule and the grotesque, Prudentius successfully creates his own miniature versions of Satire.<sup>7</sup>

Elements from the *Satires* are to be found in all the hexameter poems, *Apoth.*, *Ham.* and *Symm* 1-2, but there are also some in the *Psych.* and *Perist.* 2 and 10. The verbal and thematic parallels are taken mostly from the passages in Juvenal that deal with a more general idea, and which Prudentius used to present his Christian beliefs, but there are also a few quotations and borrowings which assimilate Juvenal's imagery and the vividness of his style.<sup>8</sup> Prudentius makes use of the phraseology and the everyday motifs in *Satires* 1, 2 and 3 which present a graphic, but dismal picture of Rome, its people and their lifestyle, and in *Satire* 6, which embodies Juvenal's sternest and most derogatory treatment of the topos on women and their sexuality. In spite of the fact that echoes from the earlier Satires are more numerous, the later ones, especially *Satires* 10, 11, 13 and 14, provide Prudentius with the opportunity, in the presentation of the Christian argument, to assimilate and exploit, with a novel effect, their subject matter and motifs.

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<sup>6</sup> Herzog (1966) p. 22, in his discussion of *Perist.* 2,313-15 pointed out that, because of his serious determination to expound the Christian faith, Prudentius is essentially devoid of humour.

<sup>7</sup> For the parallels of expression and thought between Juvenal and Prudentius, I have used the Indices of imitations from the two most recent critical editions of Prudentius, *CSEL* 61 (1920) pp. 455-69 and *CCL* 126 (1962) pp. 418-22. See also Palmer (1989) Ch. 6 "Prudentius and the Imperial Poets", pp. 180-4; Hanley, "Juvenal and Prudentius", *Phoenix* 16 (1962) pp. 41-52, based on the chapter on the Satirists' influence on Prudentius in her Doctoral thesis, *The Classical Sources of Prudentius*, Cornell University (1959). Prudentius' reminiscences of Juvenal did not escape the 'eagle eye' of J. E. B. Mayor in his *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal with a Commentary*, vols. 1-2, reprint, New York (1997), as quoted by Alan Cameron (1964) p. 364 n.4.

<sup>8</sup> For the second category see the discussion below on *Ham.* 761; *Symm.* 1,254 ff.; 2,1099; *Psych.* 449, 553-4; *Apoth.* 457 etc.

Prudentius' criticism of the shortcomings of mankind: his use of the topoi of immoral behaviour, *avaritia* and *ambitio*.

Since *Ham.* deals with Christian ideas about Sin, it is rich in images and phrases taken from the *Satires*. In his paraphrase of the story of Lot's wife in *Gen.* 19, Prudentius alludes to the sinful practices of the inhabitants of Sodom to illustrate the Christian concept of God's punishment for human vices (*Ham.* 758-64):

respicit alto

in cinerem conlapsa rogo populumque perustum  
et mores populi tabularia iura forumque 760  
balnea propolas meritoria templa theatra,  
et circum cum plebe sua madidasque popinas.  
*quidquid agunt homines* Sodomorum incendia iustis  
ignibus inuoluunt et Christo iudice damnant.

Both the technique of accumulation of nouns, mostly in asyndeton<sup>9</sup>, and the quotation in line 763 suggest an imitation of Juvenal's *Sat.* 1,85 ff.<sup>10</sup>:

quidquid agunt homines, uotum, timor, ira, uoluptas, 85  
gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est.  
et quando uberior uitiorum copia? quando  
maior auaritiae patuit sinus?...

By means of the list of public buildings and places the *OT* city is perhaps reminiscent of Rome, as portrayed by Juvenal, especially since *meritoria* could echo the detail in *Sat.* 3,234. The theme that mankind is responsible for its behaviour is also common both to Juvenal and Prudentius, with the difference that, according to the Christian poet, there is

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<sup>9</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 1,2,1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Some editors think that lines 85-6 are misplaced there.

such a thing as divine justice. By using Juvenal's reference to his subject matter, Prudentius is anxious to shun such examples of human behaviour, which is to be punished as sinful.

The imitation of the theme in *Sat.* 1,85 ff. is supported by another passage, earlier in *Ham.*, that presents the view that human life provides numerous examples of sin (*Ham.* 250-6):

exemplum dat uita hominum quo cetera peccent,      250  
uita hominum *cui quidquid agit* uaesania et error  
suppeditant, ut bella fremant, ut fluxa uoluptas  
diffluat, impuro feruescat ut igne libido,  
sorbeat ut cumulos nummorum faucibus amplis  
gurges auaritiae, finis quam nullus habendi      255  
temperat aggestis addentem uota talentis.

The passage alludes to the same phrase in *Sat.* 1,85 and also mentions the human vices *uoluptas* and *auaritia* that Juvenal included in his catalogue. In particular, Prudentius dwells on the image of greed, that by his time had become a topos, explored fully in the writings of Roman moralists.<sup>11</sup> The metaphor of the cavernous throat of greed and the idea of this unrestrained and ever-growing desire is based on the accepted association between avarice and discontent.<sup>12</sup> In his treatment of the topos on avarice, it is interesting to see how Prudentius used the themes of the Roman pagan moralists to express a Christian concept (*Ham.* 257-60):

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<sup>11</sup> The topos of greed has its origins in Hesiod's myth of the Five Ages, where the discovery of metals was one of the main reasons for the end of primitivism. In Roman poetry, for the decline of mankind through the Ages, see *D.R.N.* 5,1113 f., *Ov. Met.* 1,137-40, *Tib.* 2,3,63-74.

<sup>12</sup> The thought in *Ham.* 255 is reminiscent of that in Hor. *Sat.* 1,1, and especially his appeal for moderation in the acquisition of wealth in 1,1,92 'denique sit finis quaerendi...'. However, the phrase seems to be a *locus communis*, and is quoted by Aus. *Hered.* 15 'cui nullus finis cupiendi, est nullus habendi'. Since the lines immediately preceding the passage discussed contain Lucretian echoes, the phrase in *Ham.* 255 could be a borrowing from *D.R.N.* 5,1432-3 'habendi/finis', and an allusion there to the theme of lost primitivism.

auri namque fames parto fit maior ab auro.  
 inde seges scelerum, radix et sola malorum,  
 dum scatebras fluuiorum omnes et operta metalla  
 eliquat ornatus soluendi leno pudoris 260

This thought about avarice as the source of all men's evil is found in 1 *Tim.* 6:10, 'Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas; quam quidam appetentes errauerunt a fide, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis'.<sup>13</sup> In any case, by the time of Prudentius the image of the ever-growing 'hunger' for money (*Ham.* 257) had become proverbial, and, therefore, it is difficult to prove that here Juvenal was his prototype. It is likely, however, that Prudentius remembered the sententiousness of *Sat.* 14,139 'crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia creuit' and 14,173 'inde fere scelerum causae...'.<sup>14</sup> Even more likely imitation of Juvenal's imagery is found in *Ham.* 260, '...soluendi leno pudoris', where the corrupting effect of the obsession with wealth is likened to the pimp who markets a woman's chastity, an allusion, perhaps, to one of the characters in *Sat.* 1,55 and 14,46.<sup>15</sup> So far, from these examples of Prudentius' satirical technique it can be concluded that, firstly, he makes use of the traditions of the Roman moralists, and, apart from the quotation of *Sat.* 1,85, Juvenal's influence in the *Ham.* is to be seen as only part of those traditions. Secondly, Prudentius' use of the larger corpus of Latin literature and of more than one style, becomes obvious from the allusions to Lucretius and Virgil in *Ham.* 215 ff., and in the passage in question.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the thoughts the pagan authors have in

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<sup>13</sup> *Jer. Ep.* 22,31-2 quoted 1 *Tim.* 6:10 and other biblical teachings against avarice.

<sup>14</sup> 'Nummorum' (*Ham.* 254) and the framing of *Ham.* 257 by the same word are possible imitations of Juvenal's language and technique. But there are also similarities with *Hor. Od.* 3,16,17-18 'crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam/ maiorumque fames'.

<sup>15</sup> For similar thoughts, see *Sat.* 6,286-300 where wealth seductively kills all virtues, 'facinusque libidinis' (294). For Prudentius' metaphor, see Arevalo (1788-9), vol. 1, p. 519 where he quotes Giselinus' words that "non potuit melius epitheton dari" and compares it to *Tert. De Corona Militis* 12.

<sup>16</sup> In an invective against avarice, *Ham.* 257 alludes to *Aen.* 3,57 'auri sacra fames!', where greed is the cause of murder.

common, expressed by means of classical techniques, are identified with Christian ethics, which deny wealth and love of money and encourage simplicity, charity and spiritual rather than the possession of material riches.

Still on the theme of avarice, a passage in the *Psych.* that is in fact one of Prudentius' most extensive and closest imitations of Juvenal, contains echoes from *Sat.* 14, in which avarice is presented as by far the worst of human vices<sup>17</sup> (*Psych.* 553-5):

fit uirtus specie uultuque et ueste seuera<sup>18</sup>  
quam memorant Frugi, parce cui uiuere cordi est  
et seruare suum... 555

Thus, *Auaritia*'s transformation into the Virtue *Frugi* was inspired by Juvenal's image of avarice in disguise (*Sat.* 14,109-12):

fallit enim uitium specie uirtutis et umbra,  
cum sit triste habitu uultuque et ueste seuerum, 110  
nec dubie tamquam frugi laudetur auarus,  
tamquam parcus homo et rerum tutela suarum.

Prudentius imitates, not only the depiction of the vice in disguise, but also alludes to the image of the miser in *Sat.* 14. In this case, too, Prudentius' reference to pagan beliefs about deceptive vices has a Christian meaning and is part of the tradition, whereby the Christian writers developed this theme for the purposes of teaching believers how to distinguish between what was true and what was false.<sup>19</sup> For instance, when in *Ham.*

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<sup>17</sup> Prudentius' interest in *Sat.* 14, as revealed by these echoes, may also be justified by the similarity between the Christian view, expressed in *Apoth.* 913 ff., that the newly created souls of men are tainted at the outset with the Original Sin of Adam and Eve, and Juvenal's view that the sins of the parents are passed onto their children. Also the mockery of Jewish practices in *Sat.* 14 could have attracted the attention of Christian writers.

<sup>18</sup> Heinsius preferred the variant 'uoce' for 'ueste' (cf. *Perist.* 10,720 and Mayor comm. on *Sat.* 14,110), and 'cultuque' for 'uultuque' is another reading. Yet, *Sat.* 14,110 'uultuque et ueste' vindicates the same phrase in Prudentius. As in *Sat.* 14,109-10 'uitium' and 'seuerum' go together, so in *Psych.* 553 'seuera' should be taken with 'uirtus', and not with 'specie'.

<sup>19</sup> Mayor, comm. on *Sat.* 14,109 quoted many parallels of thought in Seneca, Quintilian, but also Jer. *Ep.* 107,6 'uitia non decipiunt, nisi sub specie umbraque uirtutum' and Aug. *Conf.* 2,6,12 'est quaedam

330-6 Prudentius relates the Christian ideal of virtue to the Roman ideal of moderation, which Juvenal also expressed in *Sat.* 14,179 ff., he repeats the warning that evil is often found disguised in the cloak of goodness, ‘qui sub adumbrata dulcedine triste uenenum/ deprendit latitare boni mendacis operto’ (335-6).<sup>20</sup> But, clearly, in his portrayal of the personified *Auaritia* Prudentius strives to imitate the images in *Sat.* 14 and, thus, adopt the style of Juvenal.

Both in the *Ham.* and in *Symm.* 2 Prudentius adopts the rhetorical technique of the Roman moralists to attack *auaritia* and *ambitio*.<sup>21</sup> In *Ham.* 432 ff. the contrasting examples of greed and ambition are used to alert the Christian soul to the evil powers of Satan. Similarly, *Symm.* 2,146 ff. is cast in the form of God’s speech, whereby the Christian mind is urged to attain virtue by fighting against the bonds of all desires. In both cases the classical topoi become part of Prudentius’ allegorical technique of portraying the struggle within the Christian soul between the virtues and the vices.<sup>22</sup>

In the first of the examples, the man who has an unquenchable thirst for the acquisition of land, far beyond his needs, is portrayed as a prisoner of Satan (*Ham.* 432-6):

ille superuacuis augens patrimonia<sup>23</sup> fundis  
 finitimisque *inhians* contempto limite *agellis*  
 ducitur innexus manicis et mille catenis  
 ante triumphales currus post terga reuinctus                    435  
 nec se barbaricis addictum sentit habenis.

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defectiua species et umbratica uitiiis fallentibus’. The prototype of the image is found in Xen. *Mem.* 2,1,26 where *Κακότης* appears as *Εὐδαιμονία*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ham.* 156 ‘quique bona infecit uitiiis et *candida nigris*’ is proverbial but may be an echo of *Sat.* 3,30 ‘...maneant qui nigrum in candida uertunt’. Prudentius rejects the possibility that God could cause evil and contrasts it with the blindness of the pagan religion that created gods from evils.

<sup>21</sup> These are among Horace’s favourite topics for moral diatribe, see *Sat.* 2,3,77-80 ‘...quisquis/ ambitione mala aut argenti pallet amore,/ quisquis luxuria tristiue superstitione/ aut alio mentis morbo calet...’

<sup>22</sup> In the last Chapter of the thesis Prudentius’ allegorical technique of using both classical and biblical motifs will be illustrated by more examples from the *Ham.*

<sup>23</sup> *Juv. Sat.* 10,13 ‘...cuncta exuperans patrimonia census’.

Here, the accusation against the man who persists in acquiring land adjacent to that of his ancestors, is typically Horatian and is strengthened by echoes from two of his Satires. On the one hand, the image of the man gawping at his neighbour's land imitates the laughable depiction of the *avarus* gloating open-mouthed over his money, *Sat.* 1,1,70-1 '...congestis...saccis/ indormis *inhians*'<sup>24</sup>, and 'contempto limite' (*Ham.* 433), with reference to the geographical boundaries, alludes to Horace's moral diatribe against disregarding the limits imposed by the laws of nature through excessive greed.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Prudentius touches on a traditional Roman trait, the respect for and the sanctity of boundary stones, the breach of which is criticised frequently. In *Ham.* 432-3 he portrays the extension of one's estate by trespassing over the legal boundaries, 'contempto limite', of a neighbouring property, 'finitimis-...agellis', i.e. the concept of *latifundia*, for which he uses the proper term 'fundis'. This is a possible imitation of Horace's *Od.* 2,18,23-6 'quid quod usque proximos/ reuellis agri terminos et ultra/ limites clientium/ salis avarus?'<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Prudentius' scornful use of 'agellis' echoes Horace's use of the diminutive in a similar situation of covetousness in *Sat.* 2,6,8-9 '...o si angulus ille/ proximus accedat qui nunc denormat agellum'.

In the allegory of the imprisoned soul, the second image is of the man who strives ceaselessly for power (*Ham.* 437-44):

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<sup>24</sup> This borrowing from Hor. *Sat.* 1,1 strengthens the suggested imitation in *Ham.* 255 of *Sat.* 1,1,92, in which case the image of 'gurgis auaritia' could also be an allusion to the wide-open mouth of the *avarus* in *Sat.* 1,1,70. Cf. *Psych.* 457-8 where *Auaritia* stares open-mouthed at the gold, '...uasto/ ore *inhians* aurique legens fragmenta...' The derisory nature of 'inhiare' has been appreciated since Plautus.

<sup>25</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 1,1,106-9.

<sup>26</sup> Also Hor. *Od.* 2,2,1 ff. and 3,16,41 ff. and Nisbet and Hubbard's Commentary, vol. 2, pp.304-5; Juv. *Sat.* 16,38. In *Symm.* 2,1006-9 Prudentius mocks the worship of the boundary stone as the god *Terminus*.

hic qui uentosae scandit fastigia fama  
 inflaturque cauo pompae popularis honore,  
 qui summum solidumque bonum putat *ambitionis*  
 crescere successu, praeconum uoce trementes 440  
 exanimare reos, miserorum in corpora fasces  
 frangere, terribiles legum exercere secures,  
 in laqueum iam colla dedit, iam conpede dura  
 nectitur et pedibus seruilia uincula limat.

Here, another familiar Roman thought is expressed, that of the vanity and capriciousness of political ambition. Although the passage is reminiscent of *D.R.N.* 3,996-9<sup>27</sup>, the tone is that of Juvenal's *Sat.* 10 on the false value of wealth and ambition. The destructive aspects of power in *Ham.* 440-2 may allude to *Sat.* 10,8 'nocitura toga'<sup>28</sup>, although by 'terruimus reos' (*Praef.* 18), Prudentius presents in a good light those in the high offices of civil power.

Albeit in a more declamatory manner, the images of avarice and ambition discussed above are summarised in a passage in *Symm.* 2, that alludes also to the allegorical struggle between the vices and the virtues (*Symm.* 2,146-56):

uincenda uoluptas,  
 elaqueanda animi constantia, ne retinaclis  
 mollibus ac lentis nexa et captiua prematur.  
 luctandum summis conatibus, inter acerba

<sup>27</sup> In *D.R.N.* 3,995 ff., because of its vulnerability, a public office is compared to Sisyphus' labour, and ambition and avarice are linked (1003-4). Cf. *Ham.* 437 'uentosae...famae' and *D.R.N.* 3,998 'imperium quod inanest' and possibly *Ham.* 442 'terribiles....secures' and 3,996 'saeuasque securis'. See also *D.R.N.* 5,1120 ff., those who seek to attain the pinnacle of honour, 'ad summum succedere honorum' (1123), will fall therefrom; 'angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis' (1132).

<sup>28</sup> Also Juv. *Sat.* 7,105 ff. on the awful corrupt characters of the lawyers; *Perist.* 10,141 ff. is a close imitation of the flaunting of public honours pilloried in *Sat.* 10,33 ff.

sectandum uirtutis iter, ne suaui fluxae 150  
 condicionis amet, nimium ne congerat aurum,  
 ne uarios lapidum *cupide* spectare colores  
*ambitiosa* uelit, ne se popularibus auris  
 ostendet pulchroque inflata tumescat honore,  
 ne natale solum, patrii ne iugera ruris 155  
 tendat<sup>29</sup> et externos animum diffundat in agros.

The passage has the features of a rhetorical declamation, wherein the *personae* of God and the poet himself argue for and against the Soul's existence after death. The poet expresses the view that this is what a 'sapiens' (163) should believe, but he, himself, assumes the role of a foolish speaker to contest God's promise of reward or punishment of the souls after death. Perhaps also rivalling Lucretius' view of Epicurus as the wise man<sup>30</sup>, Prudentius lists traditional examples of men's misdemeanours (*Symm.* 2,172-81):

ibo per impuros feruente libidine luxus,  
 incestabo toros, sacrum calcabo pudorem,  
 infitiabor habens aliquod sine teste propinqui  
 depositum, tenues auidus spoliabo clientes, 175  
 longaeuam perimam magico cantamine matrem  
 tardat anus dominum dilata morte secundum,  
 nec formido malum. falluntur publica iura,  
 lex armata sedet sed nescit crimen opertum;  
 aut, si res pateat, iudex corrumpitur auro, 180  
 rara reos iusta percellit poena securi.

Here Prudentius mentions common kinds of litigation that were the subject of the exercises in rhetoric that he must have known also from experience. In the *Praef.* the poet looks back with regret to his training in the school of rhetoric that taught him to argue

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<sup>29</sup> A. Hollis conjectures 'temnat'.

both sides of a case, ‘...mox docuit toga/ infectum uitiiis falsa loqui non sine crimine (8-9). Next, according to what was a standard career path, Prudentius’ ambition led him to practise as a solicitor in the law courts, ‘exim iurgia turbidos/ armarunt animos et male pertinax/ uincendi studium subiacuit casibus asperis’ (13-15). Consequently, in *Symm.* 2 the examples of offence and criminal behaviour can also be related to Prudentius’ involvement in lawsuits or the *progymnasmata* of his school days.

Yet, human frailties, such as avarice and licentiousness, which Prudentius regrets having experienced in his youth (*Praef.* 10-12), are the objects of attack in Juvenal’s *Satires*.<sup>31</sup>

Roman moralists often disapproved of any sort of indulgence or ‘luxus’, adultery and other immoral behaviour. ‘Spoliabo’ portraying the image of the greedy patron (*Symm.* 2,175) may echo *Sat.* 1,46-7 ‘cum populum gregibus comitum premit hic spoliator/ pupilli prostantis...’. Further, hastening the death of one’s parent in order to get hold of the inheritance (*Symm.* 2,176-7) was a crime commonly spoken of and both orators and Satirists made use of the topos.<sup>32</sup> Prudentius refers to the death of a mother caused, not by poison, but ‘magico cantamine’, which may allude to Juvenal’s image of a woman who consults the astrologers about the deaths of her mother, husband and all her relatives (*Sat.* 6,565).<sup>33</sup> However, the thought of a delayed inheritance, ‘tardat anus...dilata morte...’ (*Symm.* 2,177), imitates the image of the youth resentful at the prospect of the

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<sup>30</sup> *Symm.* 2,168-71 seems to refer to Lucretius’ belief in the simultaneous death of the body and soul, and, therefore, to his rejection of the fear of death. The examples that follow may also allude to *D.R.N.* 3,59 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Hanley (1962) p. 45, too, was reminded of Juvenal’s characters: the libertine, the defrauder, the dishonest patron, the poisoner, the corrupt judge.

<sup>32</sup> *Sen. Ep.* 119,6; *Stat. Silv.* 3,3,14-15; *Quint. Inst.* 7,2,17-18 included poisoning among the legal examples as topics for *controuersiae*, e.g. 5,10,19 for arguments in legal proceedings against adultery, poisoning of a stepmother etc.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Juv. Sat.* 1,69 f.

prolonged old age of his parent in *Sat.* 14,250-1 ‘...iam nunc obstas et uota moraris,/ iam torquet iuuenem longa et ceruina senectus’.<sup>34</sup>

Among the examples of common misdemeanours Prudentius mentions a relative’s refusal to return the deposit entrusted to him (*Symm.* 2,174-5). The theft of money deposited by the trustee was a breach of a sacred article of Roman common law and a normal legal situation, as well as a subject for a rhetorical exercise.<sup>35</sup> Yet, ‘infitiabor.../depositum’ could be an echo of *Juv. Sat.* 13,60 ‘nunc si depositum non infitietur amicus’. Further, Prudentius’ ‘sacrum’ (173) may be used in support of the reference to *Sat.* 13, since in *Sat.* 13,15, the word emphasises the seriousness of such a betrayal of trust, by describing the sum deposited as being sacrosanct, ‘...sacrum tibi quod non reddat amicus/depositum’. Perhaps, in *Symm.* 2 the situation is aggravated by the fact that the person betrayed is a ‘propinquus’ (*Symm.* 2,174) rather than an ‘amicus’ (*Sat.* 13,16).

The imitation of *Sat.* 13 is even more convincing, since the depiction in *Symm.* 2,178-81 of crime that flourishes unpunished finds a parallel in Juvenal’s portrayal of injustice, since men do not fear retribution in the afterlife and the gods do not care. At this point, having presented the anti-Christian point of view, Prudentius then negates it by the Christian side of the argument (183). The poet abandons his role of an ill-informed speaker, ‘sed quid ego haec meditor?’ (182), in order to allow the word of God to

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<sup>34</sup> Also, ‘longaeuam...matrem’ (*Symm.* 2,176) echoes the image of the aged mother poisoned by her son in *Hor. Sat.* 2,1,53-4, ‘...Scaevae uiuacem crede nepoti/ matrem’.

<sup>35</sup> *Quint. Inst.* 7,2,50 ‘Nam furti, depositis, creditae pecuniae et a facultatibus argumenta ueniunt, an fuerit, quod deponeretur, an ullum deposuisse apud hunc, uel huic credidisse credibile sit, an petitorum calumniari, an reum infitiatorem esse uel furem. *Quint. Min. Decl.* 245 ‘Depositum infitiator’ apud amicum deposuit’.

reassure men of the immortality of the Soul and of a just retribution after death for their crimes on Earth ( *Symm.* 2,184 ff).<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion, the above discussion of the topoi on human shortcomings, such as avarice and ambition, shows that Prudentius advocates typical Roman values in the form of a moral diatribe, for which he is indebted to the Latin literary tradition in general, and to Juvenal in particular. Although he uses commonplace rhetorical examples, many of his images resemble the satirical style of Juvenal, or echo the language of Horace, whilst portraying biblical scenes, conveying Christian ideas and serving the Christian argument. In this way, the ancient moral standards become identical with Christian ethics and create a sense of continuity between the pagan and Christian traditions.

Prudentius' use of the ideas of primitivism and the 'Golden Age' topos.

In *Symm.* 2,277 ff., as a reaction against the long-established idealised view of the primitive age and in defence of Christianity, Prudentius promotes the view that human society improves during the course of evolution. To refute Symmachus' defence of *mores maiorum*, Prudentius' portrayal, in a mock-laudatory manner, of the benefits of the primitive age suggests that the progress towards civilisation should be reversed (*Symm.* 2,277-80; 286-90)<sup>37</sup>:

si quidquid rudibus mundi nascentis in annis  
mos habuit sancte colere ac seruare necesse est,  
omne reuoluamus sua per uestigia saeculum

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<sup>36</sup> The following Christian views on the origin and nature of the body and the soul which contain echoes from the *D.R.N.*, replace Lucretius' scientific doctrines, 'physicorum dogmata' (*Symm.* 2,203).

<sup>37</sup> For *Symm.* 2,282-5, see Chapter III, p. 163 f.

usque ad principium...

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decoquat in massam feruens strictura secures  
rursus et ad proprium restillet uena metallum!  
induias caesae pecudes et frigida paruas  
praebebat<sup>38</sup> spelunca domos; redeamus ad antra  
pellibus insutis hirtos sumamus amictus!

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The satirical picture of the condition of early mankind is reinforced by a combination of almost exact quotations from both Virgil and Juvenal, which are arranged in such a way that, first, the quotations from *Georg.* 1,125 (*Symm.* 2,282) and *Georg.* 1,144 (*Symm.* 2,285) are twice followed by two lines of Prudentius ironically suggesting the denial of technical progress and the return of civilisation to its childhood.<sup>39</sup> Next, the quotation of *Sat.* 6,2-3 (*Symm.* 2,288-9) contributes further to the derision of the picture of primitive men dwelling in caves, their acorn-diet and their wearing of animal skins. Clearly, Prudentius strengthens the satirical connotation in the lines of Juvenal who used them to discuss moral decline<sup>40</sup> (*Sat.* 6,1-12):

Credo Pudicitiam Saturno rege moratam  
in terris uisamque diu, cum frigida paruas  
praeberet spelunca domos ignemque laremque  
et pecus et dominos communi clauderet umbra,  
siluestrem montana torum cum sterneret uxor 5  
frondibus et culmo uicinarumque ferarum  
pellibus...

<sup>38</sup> A different form from Juvenal's 'praeberet'.

<sup>39</sup> In *Symm.* 2,318 ff. for the stages of Roman history he uses the analogy with the stages of human life. Cf. *Amm. Marc.* 14,6,4 and *Flor.* 1 *Praef.* 4 ff.

<sup>40</sup> In *Sat.* 13 he referred to the Golden Age to deplore the disappearance of the ancient moral standards, and especially honesty: 'nona aetas agitur peioraque saecula ferri/temporibus...' (28 f.); 'quondam hoc indigenae uiuebant more...' (38 ff.) in contrast with 'nunc...' (60 ff.).

sed potanda ferens infantibus ubera magnis                   9  
 et saepe horridior glandem ructante marito.                   10  
 quippe aliter tunc orbe nouo caeloque recenti  
 uiuebant homines...

At the beginning of his account (*Symm.* 2,282 'orbe nouo') Prudentius sets the satirical tone by alluding to *Sat.* 6,11, which, however, in the original text is not in the same satirical position. He then quotes Juvenal's lines 2-3 to convey the image of the inhospitable caves, and through further echoes, such as 'pecudes' (*Symm.* 2,288) and 'pellibus' (*Symm.* 2,290), evokes the images of men sharing their caves with animals and using their skins (*Sat.* 6,4-7).<sup>41</sup> The satirical tone of Prudentius' reference to the shaggy skins (*Symm.* 2,290) is strengthened by the use of *hirtos*.<sup>42</sup> Juvenal's image of the acorn-belching husband (6,10) is used by Prudentius to deride the acorn-diet as an emblem of the Golden Age when man relied on Mother Nature for all his food (*Symm.* 2,284).<sup>43</sup> In fact, the irony may suggest that, contrary to the ideals of the ancient tradition, Symmachus disapproved of the acorn-diet in his rhetoric against Christianity.<sup>44</sup>

Following his treatment of the age of primitivism, in *Symm.* 2,294 ff. the subject of Prudentius' rhetoric becomes uncivilised Roman customs, but he exaggerates when quite mistakenly he attributes the alien rituals of human sacrifice to Romulus' time. In these lines, Prudentius ends his argument against primitivism by presenting his Christian view of the history of the Roman people, and, indeed, that of all mankind, which ultimately will reach its apogee, the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, in his version of the primitive age,

<sup>41</sup> *Sat.* 6,6-7 'ferarum/ pellibus' imitates *D.R.N.* 5,1417-8 'pellis...ferina'. See *Symm.* 2,292-3 'ferinos/ in mores'.

<sup>42</sup> *Lucil.* 1246 (Marx) 'pectore...hirto'.

<sup>43</sup> *Sat.* 13,57 'plura domi fraga et maiores glandis aceruos'.

<sup>44</sup> In *Symm.* 2, 946 Prudentius repeats Ambrose's argument in *Ep.* 18 that, if the pagans held the acorns of Dodona to be sacred, they should not complain about the acorn diet during the alleged famine. See Chapter III, p. 194, n. 86.

Prudentius separates Juvenal's language and imagery from the original context and uses them in a satirical context, in order to express his idea that the evolution of human society is irreversible and looks forward to the era of the Christian way of life.<sup>45</sup>

Prudentius' attack on pagan forms of worship.

In the further development of his argument against the *mos maiorum* theory, Prudentius seems also to recall Juvenal's ridicule of superstition in his praise of the primeval age in *Sat.* 13. Both poets stress the discrepancy between the present worship of a large plurality of gods and the tradition of their Roman ancestors who worshipped only a few gods. In agreement with the Christian apologetic tradition, in *Symm.* 2,335-42 Prudentius claims that the *OT* provides evidence that monotheism is mankind's oldest form of religion since the time of the Flood, if not earlier, 'iam tunc diluuii sub tempore uel prius...' (338). To make the point, he uses another argument common in Christian apologia that there were very few genuinely Roman cults (343-6)<sup>46</sup>:

sed, quia Romanis loquimur de cultibus, ipsum  
sanguinis Hectorei populum probo tempore longo  
non multos coluisse deos rarisque sacellis                    345  
contentum paucas posuisse in collibus aras.

Similarly, according to Juvenal the first inhabitants were able to preserve their morals at a time when there were few gods in heaven, in contrast to the 'hordes of gods' adopted subsequently by the Romans (*Sat.* 13,46-8)<sup>47</sup>:

prandebat sibi quisque deus nec turba deorum

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<sup>45</sup> *Symm.* 2,274-6.

<sup>46</sup> Christian apologetic writers frequently used the argument that Christian monotheism is older than Roman polytheism, see *Tert. Apol.* 10,6 ff.; *Arn. Adv. Nat.* 2,70 ff.

<sup>47</sup> Mayor, comm. on *Sat.* 13, *ad loc.*, quoted *Symm.* 2,335 ff., together with other parallels, such as *Sen. Ep.* 110 (in *Aug. Civ. Dei* 6,10) and *Aug. Civ. Dei* 3,17,3.

talis ut est hodie, contentaque sidera paucis  
numinibus miserum urgebant Atlanta minori  
pondere...

Although there is a close parallel in thought, Prudentius' account is devoid of the ridicule evoked by Juvenal's phrase 'turba deorum' to describe the gods sitting cheek by jowl at dinner in their celestial abode. However, according to the poet's practice of heightening his imitations by the use of a single word from the original context, in *Symm.* 2 'indigenae' (342) and 'contentum' (346) reinforce the suggested allusion.<sup>48</sup> Later in the poem in his polemic against mankind's various religious fantasies, he ridicules the Egyptian worship of various plants and animals in a manner that recalls that in *Sat.* 15 (*Symm.* 2,866-7)<sup>49</sup>:

uilia Niliacis uenerantur holuscula in hortis,  
porrum et caepe deos inponere nubibus ausi.

The religious practices of Egypt, which became a Roman province after the future Augustus won the battle of Actium, were well known to the Romans and, therefore, the thought was not original to Juvenal. Further, the phrase 'porrum et caepe' at the beginning of a hexameter was used by Horace in *Ep.* 1,12,21, 'seu porrum et caepe trucidas'. Yet, the imitation of Juvenal could be supported by the construction used in *Symm.* 2,866 and the echo 'in hortis' (*Sat.* 15,9-11):

porrum et caepe nefas uiolare et frangere morsu  
(o sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis 10  
numina!)

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<sup>48</sup> *Sat.* 13,38 'indigenae' and 47 'contentaque'. For his mention of the OT Flood Prudentius may have been prompted by *Sat.* 1,81 ff. that refers to the mythical flood and the second generation of Deucalion and Pyrrha. There are some echoes in *Symm.* 2 of the pagan myths of creation.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Perist.* 10,253-65 and *Jer. Adv. Iov.* 2,7.



10.<sup>52</sup> The satirical tone of the portrayal of superstitious behaviour results from the figure of the child, who is impressed by the rituals performed by his mother when praying to the statue of Fortuna with the Cornucopia, as it was traditionally represented in art. Prudentius' choice of Fortuna as an object of worship is in line with Juvenal's complaint about the invention of such a goddess in both *Sat.* 10 and *Sat.* 14.<sup>53</sup> An ironic detail is the damage caused by the baby's fervent worship of the statue (*Symm.* 1,208-9). Finally, both the superstitious behaviour and the pecuniary demands of the child (*Symm.* 1,209-10) imitate Juvenal's own attack on mistaken religious beliefs in *Sat.* 10.

In *Sat.* 10 Juvenal criticised the falsity of many pagan beliefs (*Sat.* 10,54-5):

ergo superuacua aut quae perniciosa petuntur,  
propter quae fas est genua incerare deorum?                      55

Prudentius imitates *Sat.* 10,55 in a satirical diatribe against the Emperor Julian's apostasy from Christianity in *Apoth.* 449 ff.<sup>54</sup> Although the hexameter does not allow the inclusion of his name, Julian's identity is inferred from the portrayal of the Emperor's devotion to the pagan religions and from his participation in a sacrifice to Hecate. By including the autobiographical remark about his childhood (450), the poet presents the account from the point of view of a witness, which may suggest that Prudentius came from a Christian family. He begins by acknowledging Julian's reputation as a military commander, legislator, capable orator and caring ruler<sup>55</sup>, but the highly rhetorical nature

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<sup>52</sup> *Sat.* 10,346-66 comes close to the Christian view of prayer that God grants what is best. Cf. *Sat.* 10,347-9 and *Mt.* 6:8-10; 26:39 and *Jn.* 5:30.

<sup>53</sup> *Sat.* 10,365-6 'nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia: nos te/ nos facimus, Fortuna, deam caeloque locamus'. Cf. *Sat.* 14,315-16. These must have become proverbial by the fourth century, see note 5 above.

<sup>54</sup> For this passage, see also Chapter I, p. 23 ff.

<sup>55</sup> In *Perist.* 3,81-90 Prudentius used a similar technique to ridicule the superstition and to attack the anti-Christian actions of the Emperor Maximian, 'dux bonus, arbiter egregius/ sanguine pascitur innocuo' (86-7).

of the passage should be taken into account, as well as the ironical note about the Emperor's worship of 300 000 gods (452) (*Apoth.* 449-54):

Principibus tamen e cunctis non defuit unus,  
me puero, ut memini, ductor fortissimus armis,<sup>56</sup> 450  
conditor et legum<sup>57</sup>, celeberrimus ore<sup>58</sup> manuque<sup>59</sup>,  
consultor patriae<sup>60</sup>, sed non consultor habendae  
religionis, amans ter centum milia diuum.  
perfidus ille deo quamuis non perfidus orbi.

Julian who was brought up as a Christian, though Arian, abandoned monotheism, and, therefore, is seen by Prudentius as having betrayed God.<sup>61</sup> The poet mocks Julian's superstitious and rather humiliating behaviour in his worship of the pagan gods, wherein the echo from Juvenal adds to the satirical nature of the image (*Apoth.* 455-59):

Augustum caput ante pedes curuare Mineruae, 455  
fictilis et soleas Iunonis lambere, plantis  
Herculis aduolui, *genua incerare Dianae*,<sup>62</sup>  
quin et Apollineo frontem submittere gypso  
aut Pollucis equum suffire<sup>63</sup> ardentibus extis.

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<sup>56</sup> This may be a reference to the success of Julian's campaigns in the Rhineland and his military ambitions in Persia, that proved to be a failure and where the Emperor met his death. See *Amm. Marcel.* 22,12,1 and 25,3,2-6.

<sup>57</sup> Perhaps, the poet's bitter memory of Julian's infamous law of 17 June 362 (*CTh* 13,3,5) that prohibited Christians to teach in schools. See Chapter I, p. 25, note 48.

<sup>58</sup> Julian claimed to have been a sophist and even the most eloquent man in the world (cf. *Jul. Ep.* 82,444c (*Loeb*); *Lib. Or.* 18,157) which gave Christian writers the chance to use this claim in their polemic against him, e.g. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 4,4,11; 6,12.

<sup>59</sup> The 'well-known deeds' may refer to the anti-Christian measures of Julian's reign, the persecutions of martyr cults (*Jul. Gal.* 335b ff.) and the destruction of Christian shrines. However, during the fourth century both pagans and Christians behaved violently towards each other (*Jul. Gal.* 205e- 206a). In *Mis.* 361b Julian tells that in response to his order for the destruction of the *Martyrium* of St. Babylas, a Christian crowd burnt the shrine of Apollo in Delphi.

<sup>60</sup> In his satire *Misopogon* Julian does not mention his anti-Christian policy and, therefore, this may be an ironic reference to Julian's claims of being a peaceful, merciful and beneficent ruler (*Mis.* 340c). See also *Greg. Naz. Or.* 5,41 where he ridicules such claims.

<sup>61</sup> Fragments of the text of Julian's *Contra Galilaeos* survive in Cyril of Alexandria's refutation of this work. For Julian's Christian upbringing and knowledge of the Scriptures, see *Greg. Naz. Or.* 4,23,8 ff.; *Soz.* 5,2,10. For his initially secret apostasy and his study of Chaldean astrology, prophecy and magic, see *Greg. Naz. Or.* 4,31 ff.; *Jul. Ep.* 12.

The grotesque portrayal of worship culminates in the last image where the Emperor is imagined to venerate the equestrian statue of Pollux, by burning entrails, rather than aromatic substances. The satirical effect is similar to that in a passage in *Symm.* 1 where the poet attacks pagan myths and superstitions. There, Prudentius ridicules an elderly state official who worships a sculpture of the Sun's chariot (*Symm.* 1,349-53):

post trabeas et eburnam aquilam sellamque curulem  
cernuat ora senex barbatus et oscula figit                    350  
cruribus aeripedum<sup>64</sup>, si fas est credere, equorum,  
inmotasque rotas et flecti nescia lora  
aut ornat redimita rosis aut ture uaporat.

When compared, both episodes portray the men of high rank performing similar forms of worship, such as bowing to, kissing and purifying an equestrian statue. Whilst the image of the *senex* evokes some sympathy<sup>65</sup>, the ridicule directed at the Emperor is powerful, because of the contrast between his status and the several references to the feet of the sculptures, which he licks ardently (*Apoth.* 455). In these episodes Prudentius alludes to Juvenal's satirical portrayal of the *mulio consul*, Lateranus, who offers a libation to Jupiter, in order to disguise his eccentric belief in one deity only, Epona (*Sat.* 8,155-7):

dum lanatas robumque iuuencum                    155  
more Numae cedit, Iouis ante altaria iurat  
solam Eponam et facies olida ad praesepia pictas.

Again Prudentius echoes this passage in another attack on pagan superstitions (*Apoth.* 197-9):

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 1,202 and *Ham.* 404 'incerat lapides fumosos Idololatric'.

<sup>63</sup> *Lucr.* 4,1175 used the verb. In Prudentius the activity is made to sound degrading.

<sup>64</sup> The variant 'aenipedum' does not scan. Alan Cameron (1976) 147 f. conjectures 'aëneus' for 'aereus' in *Symm.* 1,102.

<sup>65</sup> Prudentius uses solemn language; for 'oscula figit' (*Symm.* 1,350) see *Lucr.* 4,1179; *Aen.* 1,687, and for 'ture uaporat' (353) see *Aen.* 11,481 used in a religious context.

Nemo Cloacinae aut Eponae super astra deabus  
dat solium, quamuis olidam persoluat acerram  
sacrilegisque molam manibus rimetur et exta.

Here, he not only borrows words from *Sat.* 8,155-7, but also uses its thought to argue that the worship of deities is the expression of the ultimate belief in the one God (191-3).

The second part of the satire on Julian gives the account of an ominous incident that disrupted the Emperor's nocturnal sacrifices. Evidence for the portent is found in two accounts included by Gregory of Nazianzus in *Or.* 4,54,1 ff. The first episode relates how, on one occasion, the intestines of an animal, sacrificed by Julian, revealed the sign of the Cross and it was interpreted by his teacher, Maximus of Ephesus, as an auspicious omen.<sup>66</sup> The second episode describes Julian's initiation into the cult of Hecate, by performing a nocturnal sacrifice in the company of a sophist, most likely Maximus. Julian was so scared by the darkness, the unusual noises, the unpleasant smell and fiery visions that he made the sign of the Cross to ward off the demons.

Prudentius seems to know such stories about Julian but creates his own version of the event narrated in mock-solemn language (*Apoth.* 460-502).<sup>67</sup> The episode begins with the details of a Roman sacrifice to Hecate which, however, is performed in a temple (500). It is a hecatomb, that involves the slaughter of 'agmina uaccarum' (462) adorned according to the ancient rituals. Next, the poet portrays a repulsive picture, helped by the alliteration of 't', 'f' and 'r' sounds, of the elderly priest, 'senex' (465)<sup>68</sup>, who examines the intestines of the animals to interpret, presumably, the Emperor's future. The image of his hands, 'manibusque cruentis', (465) and the mention earlier of intestines, 'extis'

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<sup>66</sup> For another appearance of the cross to Julian, see Greg. Naz. *Or.* 5,4.

<sup>67</sup> For the text, please, use an edition of Prudentius' *Apoth.*, the passage is far too long to be quoted in full here.

<sup>68</sup> There could be a deliberate connection between the priest and the *senex* in *Symm.* 1,350.

(459), recall the satirical portrayal of pagan sacrifice in *Apoth.* 199. But this so far quasi-solemn and traditional portrayal of a pagan sacrifice is completely transformed into a caricature of the priest scared at the sight of the omen (469 ff.). Unlike Gregory's version, the priest acknowledges the power of the divinity that disrupts his sacrifice, '...maius, rex optime, maius/ numen nescio quid' (470-1). The references to 'callidus interpres' (468), Thessalian spells (477-8), demonic powers (478) and the worship of Proserpina, the goddess of the Underworld (488), all give clues to the identity of the priest as being Maximus. The use of some terminology in 473, 'palatinus...minister' (481) and 'flamen' (483), and of some Virgilian expressions in 472, 475 and 489 build the contrast with the satirical image of the priest and help the intended caricature of a pagan superstition.<sup>69</sup>

As a culmination of the caricature, Prudentius portrays the Emperor's fear and flight at the discovery of a Christian soldier among his guards (491 ff.). Julian has a vision of Christ who has the symbol of Jupiter himself, '...exerto minitantem fulmine Christum' (490)<sup>70</sup>, and, panic-stricken, drops his crown and symbol of power. Here, Prudentius' satire appears to be strengthened by the inclusion of a Christian member in the Emperor's Praetorian Guard.<sup>71</sup> Since the reign of Constantine, Christianity had become an integral part of the power of the Emperor and, thus, of the Roman Empire. To strengthen the satirical tone of his portrayal of Julian, as an introduction to the episode, Prudentius refers to the Christian Emperor as 'summus dominator' (*Apoth.* 448) due to the new religious affiliation. At the end of the episode Julian is punished for his apostasy from Christianity

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<sup>69</sup> Virg. *Aen.* 3,66, 10,646 and 11,818. Line 487 alludes to a pagan formula that warned the uninitiated to stay away from the secret cult.

<sup>70</sup> In the text in *CCL* 126, there is a full stop at the end of line 490 and thus it is the priest who has the vision. However, I accept Thomson's *Loeb* version where he understands the clause as applying to the Emperor.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter I, p. 27, note 52.

whose victory is proclaimed by the chorus of believers, invoking the name of Christ instead of the Emperor's.

In conclusion, Prudentius's attack on pagan forms of worship and superstitious behaviour is manifold and ranges from the more traditional caricature, as in the case of the Roman child and the state official, to the powerful satire of the Emperor's religious practices. His portrayals imitate largely sentiments in Juvenal's Satires, but are often strengthened by their vocabulary and imagery. However, for his attack on Julian Prudentius makes use of a non-pagan and less known theme, used by another contemporary Christian polemicist, and there he shows his poetic talent. For the purpose, he uses the rhetorical and satirical technique of Juvenal and combines it with Virgilian language, the result being a vivid and highly grotesque portrayal of the Emperor's Julian beliefs and his defeat by Christians.

Prudentius' use of traditional moral diatribes against Roman behaviour.

Full of Juvenal's imagery is a passage in *Ham.* 308 ff. in which Prudentius criticises some Roman activities. Following the tradition of other Christian Apologists who had condemned the Roman partiality for the arena, the theatre and the circus, Prudentius imagines the five senses of man as the willing agents of the Roman pastimes criticised by Juvenal. Firstly, Prudentius imagines the immoral acting of the eunuchs during the theatre performances, also a favourite theme of anti-pagan polemics in Christian writers<sup>72</sup> (*Ham.* 308-11):

idcircone, rogo, speculatrix pupula molli  
subdita palpebrae est, ut turpia semiuirorum

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<sup>72</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 38,4 'inpudicia theatri'; *Spect.* 10; 17; 23 etc.; *Cult. Fem.* 1,8,5 'scaenae turpidinis'; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 4,35; Lact. *Div. Inst.* 6,20,29.

membra theatri spectet uertigine<sup>73</sup> ferri 310  
incestans miseros foedo oblectamine uisus?

The disgraceful picture of the mutilation of a eunuch's body (309-10) recalls *Sat.* 3,95-7 where in a most obscene manner Juvenal satirised Greek eunuch actor.

Secondly, the indecent pleasures associated with the image of the harlot with her hair glistening with perfumed oils, echo Juvenal's portrayal of such behaviour in Rome.<sup>74</sup>

The following image pictures entertainment, such as songs and music by trained girls, that took place usually at Roman *conuiuia* and induced immorality (*Ham.* 316-18):

num propter lyricae modulamina uana puellae  
neruorumque sonos et conuiuiale calentis  
carmen nequitiae patulas deus addidit aures

This picture calls to mind particularly *Sat.* 11,162 f. where the performance of the Spanish female dancers and singers led to adulterous acts. By insisting that the senses were implicated in mankind's excesses, Prudentius' passage seems to echo Juvenal's portrayal of the men at the banquet, who in the process of watching and listening experienced an erection.<sup>75</sup>

In the next image the echoes from *Sat.* 11 become stronger, since Prudentius uses Juvenal's language to satirise the glutton with his exotic dishes and unrestrained appetite (*Ham.* 321-2):

medicata ut *fercula* pigram  
ingluuiem uegetamque gulam *ganeonis* inescens<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Sat.* 6,513-14. The language in *Ham.* 310 is reminiscent of Claud. *Eutr.* 2,359-60 '...uibrata puer uertigine molli/membra rotet.' 'Vertigine' (310) describing the whirl of dancing on the stage recalls the sensations of the drunken lady in *Sat.* 6,304 f. Since Juvenal satirised eunuchs in the company of women, it is possible that, indirectly, Prudentius wishes to criticise women.

<sup>74</sup> For the word-formation 'pigmentato', see Tert. *Cult. Fem.* 2,13,7.

<sup>75</sup> *Sat.* 11,170 'auribus atque oculis concepta urina mouetur.' For the common disapproval of musical entertainment provided by girls, *tibicinae*, see Lact. *Div. Inst.* 6,21,1ff.; *CTh* 15,7,10.

<sup>76</sup> *Sat.* 11,58 'ganeo'; 64 'fercula'. Cf. Lact. *Div. Inst.* 6,22.

The tight-rope walker and the circus in *Ham.* 367-70 are also reminiscent of these popular Roman pastimes that are ridiculed in the *Satires*.<sup>77</sup>

In order to illustrate his argument that God created nothing evil, Prudentius refers to the frequently criticised Roman passion for circus games (*Ham.* 361-4):

nec equum uesania feruida circi<sup>78</sup>  
auctorem leuitatis habet rabidiue fragoris.  
mens uulgi rationis inops, non cursus equorum  
perfurit; infami studio perit utile donum.

It is solely the fault of men that the works of God have been used for wicked purposes, so that the irrational thirst of the people for blood brought into being the *ludi circenses*. The logic of the argument echoes Tertullian's criticisms of gladiatorial, theatrical and athletic performances that involved the noble creations of God.<sup>79</sup> Here, the theme may allude also to the degrading atmosphere at Rome summarised in *Sat.* 10,80-1 '...duas tantum res anxius optat,/ panem et circenses' and 'fragor' (*Ham.* 362) could be an echo of *Sat.* 11,197-8 'totam hodie Romam circus capit, et fragor aurem/ percutit'.<sup>80</sup> Prudentius is given the chance to imitate specifically such pictures of Rome, when, in order to ridicule Symmachus' accusations about the alleged famine, he evokes the images of the ships arriving empty in the port of Rome, and the famine in the provinces that ceased to supply corn to Rome and caused the shortage of bread (*Symm.* 2,944-50):

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<sup>77</sup> *Sat.* 14,266; 272-3.

<sup>78</sup> Both pagan and Christian writers before Prudentius had criticised the insanity of the circus games. Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 9; Tert. *Apol.* 38,4 'insania circi'; *Adv. Marc.* 1,27,5 'Quid non frequentas tam sollemnes uoluptates circi feruentis et caeuae saeuientis et scaenae lasciuientis?'; Lact. *Div. Inst.* 6,20,32 'circensium quoque ludorum ratio quid aliud habet nisi leuitatem, uanitatem, insaniam?...'; Jer. *Ep.* 43,3 'Habeat sibi Roma suos tumultos, harena saeuat, circus insaniat, theatra luxurient...'. The games were still popular in the fourth century.

<sup>79</sup> For the argument and examples taken from the performances, see Tert. *Spect.* 2,1 ff. where he refers to the misuse of horses, lions, physical strength, iron etc. Cf. *Ham.* 360-1.

<sup>80</sup> Mayor, comm. on *Sat.* 10,80-1 quoted *Ham.* 361.

ergo piris mensas siluestribus inplet arator  
 Poenus et auulsas<sup>81</sup> Sículus depascitur herbas,           945  
 iamque Remi populo quernas Sardinia glandes  
 subpeditat, iam corna cibus lapidosa Quiritum?  
 quis uenit esuriens magni ad spectacula circi?  
 quae regio gradibus uacuis ieiunia dira  
 sustinet aut quae Ianiculi mola muta quiescit?           950

In this portrayal of the famine in the provinces Prudentius satirises the image of the starving populace that will seek entertainment at the Circus (948), where ‘esuriens’ may echo the image of the starving foreigners in *Sat.* 3,78 ‘Graeculus esuriens’, or allude to the preceding invective against the passion for the circus (3,65). The poet deliberately uses a highly rhetorical style to rival, if not outdo, the eloquence of his opponent, Symmachus. Finally, in the very style of Juvenal, Prudentius remarks ironically that, indeed, the prosperity of Rome is such, that it did supply bread to its large and indolent population, that spent its time at the Circus (*Symm.* 2,953-4):

indicio est annona, tuae quae publica plebi,  
 Roma, datur tantaeque manus longa otia pascit.

In fact, in his argument against the pagan claims of Symmachus, Prudentius does not give a distinctly Christian character to the topoi borrowed from pagan literature. However, on other occasions Prudentius imitates the image of Rome’s inhabitants as found in the *Satires*, but with no connection with the original context. Thus, he borrows a phrase from Juvenal to portray the conversion to Christianity of the entire population of Rome and the veneration of the Holy places in Rome as the Christian capital (*Symm.* 1,580-6):

omnis qui celsa scandit cenacula uulgus                   580

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<sup>81</sup> Most editions favoured ‘euulsas’, but for this reading see Cunningham’s edition *ad loc.* ‘Bergman ex Dressel, sine auctoritate’.

quique terit silicem uariis discursibus atram  
 et quem panis alit gradibus<sup>82</sup> dispensus ab altis,  
 aut Vaticano tumulum sub monte frequentat,  
 quo cinis ille latet genitoris amabilis obses,  
 coetibus aut magnis Laterani adcurrit<sup>83</sup> ad aedes,     585  
 unde sacrum referat regali chrismate signum.

Although in *Sat.* 6,350 Juvenal used ‘silicem...conterit atrum’<sup>84</sup> to portray a woman of easy virtue, Prudentius assimilates the language in his description of the Christianised ‘uulgi’ out on the streets of the City (580-2). His imitation of Juvenal’s language is strengthened by echoes from two consecutive lines in *Sat.* 10; the references to Lateranus’ mansion (585) and to the dwellings of the populace (580) imitate *Sat.* 10,17-18:

et egregias Lateranorum obsidet aedes  
 tota cohors: rarus uenit in cenacula miles.

Prudentius refers to the Basilica of St. John Lateran as a mark of the new topography of the Christian Capital. Although he does not allude explicitly to the theme of excessive wealth, nevertheless, the echoes seem to convey some of Juvenal’s irony that portrayed the fate of the rich aristocrat as far worse than that of the poor people in Rome. In the eulogy of Christian devotion, the *plebs* of Rome occupied the Christian Basilica that was erected on the site of the aristocratic mansion during the reign of Constantine.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the details from the Satires helped the poet to create a new more felicitous picture of Christian Rome and its pious population.

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<sup>82</sup> *Symm.* 2,949. ‘Gradibus’ is a technical term that refers to the flight of steps in Rome, where the *annona* was distributed, see *CTh* 14,17,2 (364 AD)- 5 (368 AD).

<sup>83</sup> Other editors give ‘Lateranas currit’.

<sup>84</sup> *Prop.* 2,23,15 ‘cui saepe immundo Sacra conteritur Via socco’.

<sup>85</sup> For the Basilica built on the site of Lateranus’ house, see *Jer. Ep.* 77.

In a similar passage in *Perist.* 2,509 ff. celebrating the triumph of Christianity in the City, Prudentius portrays the veneration paid at the shrine of St. Laurence by Rome's population, that had deserted the old religious cults. An important detail is the image of Claudia, a priestess of the most ancient cult of Vesta, who also becomes a Christian (527-8).<sup>86</sup> When describing in *Perist.* 2,514 the end of the worship of the ancient cults of Vesta and those introduced by Numa, he used 'simpuium Numae', Juvenal's own term.<sup>87</sup> Since Juvenal himself criticised the debasement of Roman religious tradition, Prudentius uses the symbol of the ancient religion both to evoke the authority of the religious institutions of ancient Rome as defended by Juvenal, and to proclaim the irrevocable death of paganism. In these two imitations of the Satires the poet shows his knowledge of the original context, but chooses to borrow only Juvenal's language and, thereby, replaces the picture of a pagan Rome with that of a Christian Capital.<sup>88</sup>

#### Prudentius' invective against the male sex.

In *Ham.* 279-97 Prudentius begins his attack on male degeneracy with the biblical reference to God's creation of man as a superior being to woman, '...ipse caput muliebris corporis et rex'.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the portrayal of the effeminacy of men is more ironical than his invective against the behaviour of women, '...pudet esse uiros...' (285). As did Juvenal in *Sat.* 2, here the poet ridicules the fashion of wearing soft diaphanous garments,

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<sup>86</sup> Contrast his favourable image of a Vestal to his satire in *Symm.* 2 discussed below.

<sup>87</sup> *Sat.* 6,343 'simpuium ridere Numae nigrumque catinum'.

<sup>88</sup> Here I would disagree with Palmer, p. 181 who maintains that in this imitation of Juvenal "in recalling the words of the satirist, Prudentius satirises his position in turn."

<sup>89</sup> *Gen.* 3:16; 1 *Cor.* 11:3 'caput autem mulieris uir'; *Eph.* 5:22-3 etc.

with rich and multi-coloured designs. The reference to fabrics into which lozenge-shaped patterns were woven, ‘...durum scutulis perfundere corpus’ (289), alludes to the shameful behaviour of the homosexuals in *Sat.* 2,97.<sup>90</sup> Next, the perverse state of the male is illustrated by their use of perfumes and exotic powders that are associated usually with women (296-7). In his polemic against male behaviour, the poet makes use of the Christian view of man as the superior being, as well as the Roman ideal of enduring bodies, another element of the ‘primitivism theory’. Also, Prudentius alludes to the tradition of criticising women’s appearance that became a main part of Christian discourse, and consequently in *Ham.* the juxtaposition of a robust nature and soft or effeminate practices contributes not only to the presentation of men’s disgrace as being worse than the corruption of the female sex, but also appears to be an indirect attack on women (282-6). To some extent Prudentius’ manner of castigating such behaviour evokes very strongly Juvenal’s condemnation of the homosexual characters in *Sat.* 2. At the end of this section in *Ham.* 329 the phrase ‘cutem...polimus’, that is also imitated by Jerome, strongly recalls the attack on effeminacy in the Satire.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Sat.* 2,66 refers to the see-through clothes ‘multicia’; 97 ‘caerulea indutus scutulata’. For the use of make-up, see 2,93 ff.

The topoi of the invective against the female sex. The influence of Juvenal's style in Prudentius' satires against Livia and the Vestal Virgins.

In *Ham.* the subject of sin provided Prudentius with his best opportunity to imitate Juvenal's imagery and motifs. As in the case of Ambrose, Jerome and other patristic writers, Prudentius' criticisms of women's preoccupation with jewellery, hairstyles and make-up are inherited from the ancient literary tradition which gives an entirely male perspective.<sup>92</sup> The Latin Satirists often criticised the behaviour of women, above all, Juvenal, who in *Sat.* 6 overdid his ridicule of the noble ladies of Rome, echoes of which have been found in Jerome's polemical treatises and Epistles on the subject of women. Prudentius must have read the Sixth Satire and uses in his poems some of its motifs and style, but, in recalling Juvenal's imagery, he adopts a polemical manner of a more general moralising tone and only occasionally quotes phrases from *Sat.* 6 in wholly Christian contexts.<sup>93</sup> But he is far from indifferent on the subject of women's vices and the pagan personages in *Psychomachia* echo Juvenal's images.

Thus in *Ham.* the image of the ponderous gems that stretch women's ears recalls the one in *Sat.* 6<sup>94</sup>, whilst the reference to the excessive use of make-up to the point of making

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<sup>91</sup> Jer. *Com. Zephaniah* (PL 25, 1350 C), 'cutem polit'. See, Wiesen, p. 57 who states that the treatise dates to the beginning of the fifth century and, although Prudentius composed at about the same time, he imitated Juvenal rather than Jerome. This is an example of these Christian authors' interest in Juvenal's poetry.

<sup>92</sup> G. Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity*, Oxford (1993) p. 105 ff.

<sup>93</sup> Unlike Jerome, Prudentius does not write for an explicitly female readership and he is only really at ease on the subject of women when describing the sufferings of the female martyrs in *Perist.* 3 and 14. Whilst in *Ham.* his attack on women follows the tradition found in Christian writings, the *Symm.* poems which deal with the more traditional subject of pagan religion, contain two of the most satirical passages, both directed at specific Roman women.

<sup>94</sup> *Ham.* 270 'auribus aut grauidis uirides suspendere bacas'. Cf. *Sat.* 6,458-9 'cum uiridis gemmas collo circumdedit et cum/ auribus extentis magnos commisit elenchos'. Also *Ov. Med. Fac.* 22 'et quantos onus est aure tulisse duos.'

themselves unrecognisable is a commonplace in the Classical authors.<sup>95</sup> Unmistakable is Prudentius' imitation of another image in *Sat.* 6, which he used to express a Christian ideal by means of the allegorical victory of *Mens Humilis* over *Superbia*, the latter being portrayed thus (*Psych.* 183-5):

turritum tortis caput adcumularat in altum  
 crinibus<sup>96</sup>, extractos auget ut addita cirros  
 congeries celsumque apicem frons ardua ferret.      185

Although the 'towering hair' is an essential element of the standard portrayal of vain women, Prudentius' depiction of the pile of platted hair that stands on the head of *Superbia* recalls the appearance of the aristocratic lady in *Sat.* 6,502-3<sup>97</sup>:

tot premit ordinibus, tot adhuc conpagibus altum  
 aedificat caput: Andromachen a fronte uidebis.

Clearly in the passage in *Psych.* Prudentius was indebted to Juvenal and it seems that the Christian poet felt more confident in recalling the Satirist when his characters were the pagan heroines of his allegorical epic and there he certainly does equal the vividness of his prototype's technique.<sup>98</sup>

Although there are very few occasions when Prudentius directs polemics against women, his most successful display of satirical tone concerns the behaviour of the Vestal Virgins and of the Empress Livia, both of which passages Juvenal himself would have been

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<sup>95</sup> *Ham.* 276 '...falso non agnoscenda colore', sounds very close to *Sat.* 6,467-8 'tandem aperit uultum et tectoria prima reponit,/ incipit agnosci'. *Ov. Rem. Amor.* 351-6 also finds repugnant the sight of a made-up face, but in his *Med. Fac.* instructed women on the use of cosmetics.

<sup>96</sup> 1 *Tim.* 2:9 'Similiter et mulieres in habitu ornato, cum uerecundia et sobrietate ornantes, et non in tortis crinibus, aut auro, aut margaritis, uel ueste pretiosa'.

<sup>97</sup> Jerome echoed the image in *Sat.* 6 to ridicule the behaviour of an elderly lady, *Ep.* 38,3 'quae capillis alienis uerticem instruunt..., quae denique ante nepotum gregem trementes uirgunculae componuntur'. Cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 25,85-6 'aut inplexarum strue tormentoque comarum/ turritum sedeas aedificata caput' and Tert. *Cult. Fem.* 2,7.

<sup>98</sup> Hanley (1962), p. 45 has rightly recognised the image in *Sat.* 6,302-5 of the drunken woman, in *Luxuria* returning back from a feast in *Psych.* 367-70. Cf. *Psych.* 368 'despuit effusi spumatia damna Falerni' and *Sat.* 6,303 'cum perfusa mero spumant unguenta Falerno'.

proud to have written. On the one hand, the subject of the Vestals' piety gives the poet an ample opportunity to imitate Juvenal's preoccupation with the appearance, morality and activities of women. On the other hand, by choosing this most respected cult of Roman religion, Prudentius compares it with the Christian tenets of celibacy and virginity practised by Christian women in the fourth century. The cult of Vesta was one of the very few Roman cults in which the priestesses were required to observe celibacy.<sup>99</sup> In essence, Prudentius imitates Ambrose's refutation of Symmachus' claim that the state rewards should be restored to the priestesses of Vesta, by stressing that they were outnumbered by the Christian virgins.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, for the purposes of his satire Prudentius sets a contrast between the honours of celibate Christian women and those of the Vestals.

The patristic exegesis of the parable of the sower, set in the style of the *Georgics*, serves as a nice transition between the topic of spiritual agriculture and that of virginity.<sup>101</sup>

Although Christianity does not deny that religious devotion can take place within the marriage, it extolled celibacy in the service of Christ and encouraged young girls to devote themselves to a life of virginity and widows not to remarry. Prudentius, however, openly attacks marriage as part of his satirical portrayal of the Vestal Virgins, whose virtues he sets out to question (*Symm.* 2,1064 ff.):

Quae nunc Vestalis sit uirginitatis honestas  
discutiam, qua lege regat decus omne pudoris.            1065  
ac primum paruae teneris capiuntur in annis,

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<sup>99</sup> Clark (1993), p. 51 ff. There is some evidence for the existence of virgin priestesses in Asia Minor. The new Christian code of behaviour was encouraged by the revision of the old laws on marriage.

<sup>100</sup> For this argument, see Ambr. *Ep.* 18,11 '...quantas tamen illis uirgines praemia promissa fecerunt? uix septem Vestales capiuntur puellae.'

<sup>101</sup> See also Chapter III, p. 209 f.

ante uoluntatis propriae quam libera secta,  
 laude pudicitiae feruens et amore deorum,  
 iusta maritandi condemnet uincula sexus. 1069

Prudentius disapproves of the pagan way of recruiting the priestesses, for only a prescribed period of service<sup>102</sup> and at their parent's choice; he also suggests that this denies the young girls their right of free will, of which the Christians believe all human beings to be in possession (1066-7). The passage also confirms as Christian norms for celibacy the vows of chastity, women's fervent love of God, their freedom of choice and contempt for marriage (1067-8). As soon as the bonds of marriage are mentioned, immediately there is a change in tone, Prudentius develops a satirical style for what seems to be his attack on marriage, for the purpose of which he imaginatively adapts Juvenal's manner and themes on the subject of women. In an ironical manner he pities the girls whom he portrays as the chaste prisoners of the altar (1070), and with the metaphor of imprisonment introduces the theme of marriage *per se* (1070-4):

captius pudor ingratis addicitur aris, 1070  
 nec contempta perit miseris sed adempta uoluptas  
 corporis intacti. non mens intacta tenetur  
 nec requies datur ulla toris quibus innuba caecum  
 uulnus et amissas suspirat femina taedas.

Prudentius seems to have a double standard for chastity, since, whilst praising the virginity of the Christian women (1059), he shows sarcasm for the undefiled body of the Vestals (1071-2).<sup>103</sup> Going into further details, he accuses the Vestal virgin of sighing

<sup>102</sup> He shows his knowledge of the technical term for such recruitment, 'capiuntur'. Cf. Aul. Gel. *Noct. Att.* 1,12.

<sup>103</sup> For the distinction between mind and body, see Ov. *Amor.* 3,4,4-5; Juv. *Sat.* 13,208-10 'has patitur poenas peccandi sola uoluntas./ nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum/ facti crimen habet.' Cf. *Ex.* 20:17; *Mt.* 5:8 and 5:28.

over the postponement of the joys of marriage during her restless nights, as if this was a crime (1073-4). In this context the expression ‘caecum/ uulnus’ is used appropriately to refer to the loss of virginity in the desired marriage.<sup>104</sup> In his disapproval of women’s sexual desires and his caricature of the state of marriage, the poet may have been influenced by the castigation of women’s excesses in *Sat.* 6. and he applies the tone of Juvenal to satirise the prospects for the ageing Vestal of becoming a bride (1077-85). Here again, he returns to the subject of the prescribed period of service to the cult of Vesta (1078)<sup>105</sup> and the irony comes from the fact that even the goddess disdains an elderly virgin, ‘tandem uirgineam fastidit Vesta senectam’ (1079). For the portrayal of the retired Vestal, the poet uses even military vocabulary (1082-5):

nubit anus ueterana sacro perfuncta labore  
 desertisque focus, quibus est famulata iuuentas,  
 transfert<sup>106</sup> emeritas ad fulcra iugalia rugas,  
 discit et in gelido noua nupta tepescere lecto.            1085

To ridicule the Vestal bride, here Prudentius uses the topos of mocking women who have lost their beauty and, therefore, her sexual activity is diminished by being defined as warm, ‘tepscere’ (1085), rather than hot.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, Satire gave Christian writers the opportunity to discuss sex and was appropriated for their polemic against the unchristian behaviour of some women. Like Juvenal, Prudentius uses a rather obscene satiric tone to discredit marriage, but, whilst the Satirist disapproved of the behaviour of all women, Prudentius’ line of thought is that all married or unmarried pagan women lack virtue, but

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<sup>104</sup> *D.R.N.* 4,1120 ‘usque adeo incerti tabescunt uulnere caeco’ of the romantic lover, who suffers from love-sickness. *Aen.* 4,2 ‘uulnus alit uenis et caeco carpitur igni’. In *Symm.* 2,1075-6 love is portrayed with the standard metaphor of fire, ‘ignem’ and ‘faces’.

<sup>105</sup> *Ambr. Ep.* 18,11 ‘...praescripta denique pudicitiae tempora coegerunt’.

<sup>106</sup> For ‘transferre’ as a technical term, see *OLD* 7c ‘transferre signa’, to transfer a soldier to another unit.

<sup>107</sup> *Hor. Epod.* 8 and 12; *Od.* 4,13; *Ov. Ars.* 2,663-72. For the language, see *Hor. Od.* 1,4,19-20 ‘...quo calet iuuentus/ nunc omnis et mox uirgines tepebunt’.

all Christian virgins are admirable. In doing so, he pretended to be well-versed in the mentality of women, showed his interest in their sexual experience and gave his own interpretation of women's virtues.

Again, to heighten the contrast between the virtues of the Christian virgins and the Vestals, Prudentius portrays the public behaviour of the priestess still in service (1086 ff.). He disapproves of the ostentation of her priestly ornaments, the uncovered face and the unbound hair (1089; 1105-6).<sup>108</sup> In Juvenal's manner, he borrows a phrase from Virgil to satiric ends, to parody the Vestal's appearance on a carriage, 'pilento...molli' (1089) borne through the streets of Rome<sup>109</sup> and to condemn their performance of blood sacrifices that are as violent as the slaughter of gladiators in the arena (1108).<sup>110</sup>

In the manner of Juvenal, who in *Sat.* 6, 246-67 censured Roman ladies for their love of violence, Prudentius' most vituperative onslaught against the reputation of the Vestals is his criticism of their enthusiasm for gladiatorial contests. In fact, his portrayal of the unseemly interest in these pastimes of the 'pure and pious priestess' gives him an opportunity to condemn such homicide (1091 ff.)<sup>111</sup>:

inde ad consessum caeuae<sup>112</sup> pudor almus et expers  
sanguinis it pietas hominum uisura cruentos  
congressus mortesque et uulnera uendita pastu  
spectatura sacris oculis<sup>113</sup>. sedet illa uerendis

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<sup>108</sup> Contrast with *Symm.* 2,1056-8. The same elements of criticism are found in *Ambr. Ep.* 18,11 '...infulae uittati capitis, purpuratarum uestium murices, pompa lecticae ministrorum circumfusa comitatu, priuilegia maxima, lucra ingentia...coegerunt.'

<sup>109</sup> *Aen.* 8,665-6 '...castae ducebant sacra per urbem/ pilentis matres in mollibus' of the Roman matrons.

<sup>110</sup> *Aen.* 11,199 'in flammam iugulant pecudes'; cf. *Symm.* 2,1106 and *Georg.* 1,285 f. '...et licia telae/ addere'.

<sup>111</sup> For the origin of gladiatorial games, see *Symm.* 1,379 ff.; 2,1114 ff., which could be used as evidence for the continuing practice of gladiatorial shows in AD 404.

<sup>112</sup> *D.R.N.* 4,78.

<sup>113</sup> *Ov. Trist.* 2,511-14 of Augustus 'haec tu spectasti spectandaque saepe dedisti/ maiestas adeo comis ubique tua est-/ luminibusque tuis, totus quibus utitur orbis,/scaenica uidisti lentus adulteria.'

uittarum insignis phaleris fruiturque lanistis. 1095

o tenerum mitemque animum consurgit ad ictus

et, quotiens uictor ferrum iugulo inserit, illa

delicias ait esse suas... 1098

By borrowing a phrase from *Sat.* 3,36 ‘...uerso pollice uulgus/ cum iubet, occidunt populariter’, the image of the mob’s gesture is transferred to that of the Vestal, ‘conuerso pollice’ (1099). To parody the Vestal’s excitement, Prudentius enters into the spirit of a gladiatorial show and borrows the technical vocabulary from Juvenal. The scene of the fighting between a ‘secutor’ and a ‘retiarius’ (1101; 1110-11) recalls the theme and tone in *Sat.* 8,200 f. It may be that Juvenal’s invective against the priest’s participation in a gladiatorial contest is alluded to in Prudentius’ satirical diatribe against the presence of the Vestals at such spectacles. Further, the portrayal of the Vestal who shows tender feelings and utters sweet words to the gladiator (1095, 1098) is reminiscent of the Satirist’s sarcasm in his portrayal of noble ladies who fall in love with gladiators, e.g. *Sat.* 6,82 ff.

Again, Prudentius took the opportunity to discuss the adulterous behaviour of women when in *Symm.* 1 he attacked the worship of pagan gods. Thus, in *Symm.* 1,251-70 he is indignant at the established cult of Livia-Juno and exploits the historical facts in a satirical manner. Having established a link between Juno’s incestuous marriage and Livia’s second marriage, the poet caricatures the wedding (*Ham.* 254-61):

nondum maternam partu uacuauerat aluum

conceptamque uiri subolem paritura gerebat. 255

pronuba iam grauidae fulcrum et geniale parantur,

iam sponsus saliente utero nubentis amicos

aduocat, haud sterilem certus fore iam sibi pactam.

uitricus anteuenit tardum praeferuidus ortum

priuigni nondum geniti. mox editur inter

260

Fescennina nouo proles aliena marito.

For the purpose of satire, there is no mention of Livia's first marriage to Ti. Claudius Nero, and the image of the bride who, already pregnant by another man (255), receives for a second time the rituals of a first wedding night, is highly incongruous.<sup>114</sup> Prudentius, himself, enters into the mocking spirit of the wedding songs, *Fescennina* (261), with the catalogue of family connections, the eager bridegroom, a second husband and a future step-father, who accepts the premarital conception as a good sign<sup>115</sup> (258-60), and the as yet unborn step-son (161). The satire is strengthened by the irony that Augustus and Livia produced no children together. The Juvenalian tone of the passage is strengthened by *Symm.* 1,258, which is an allusion to the theme of women's adultery and its unwanted consequences in *Sat.* 6, with a possible echo of 'quae steriles facit..' (596). The language in which the poet refers to the baby in the mother's womb, 'saliente utero' (257), echoes *Sat.* 6,599 'et uexare uterum pueris salientibus...' Thus, in his adaptation of an episode of Roman history for the refutation of the validity of pagan cults, the Christian poet recalls Juvenal's attitude to women and, perhaps, at the back of his mind was the latter's satire of another dead Empress.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Dio, *Rom. Hist.* 48,44,2 who narrates that Livia was six months pregnant, when she was remarried to Augustus. Tac. *Ann.* 5,1 tells us that Augustus was in haste to marry her, while pregnant.

<sup>115</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1,10 'Abducta Neroni uxor et consulti per ludibrium pontifices an concepto necdum edito partu rite nuberet'. Cf. *Ann.* 12,6 'datum ab ea fecunditatis experimentum' on Claudius' marriage to Agrippina.

<sup>116</sup> *Sat.* 6,114-35 (Messalina). The gist of the thought in *Symm.* 2,1084 may be a slight echo of *Sat.* 6,131-2 'lucernae/ foeda lupanaris tulit ad puluinar odorem'.

In conclusion, the examples in Prudentius of Juvenal's influence give an impression that the Christian poet imitated the *Satires* to the maximum, by evoking different images that could either illustrate a thought common to both poets, or be transposed in a new context to support certain Christian ideas. For instance, the parallels discussed above between *Symm.* 2 and *Sat.* 13 were established mainly on the basis of thoughts common to both and strengthened by certain verbal similarities. Whilst Prudentius disagrees with Juvenal's conclusions on the theme of just punishment, he would have agreed with certain others, such as Juvenal's idea that the mere thought of sinning is already a sin, that belongs also to the Christian moral code. However, in the context of Christian faith and symbolism Prudentius' most successful imitations of the *Satires* concern the more traditional themes and imagery that are closely associated with Rome, and the activities and morals of its men and women.

## Chapter V

### *The versatility of Prudentius and his use of allegory.*

Allegory is a main feature of Prudentius' poetry and therefore in this Chapter I shall examine two passages from *Ham.*, which is the most allegorical of his hexameter poems, as examples of how Prudentius creates biblical allegories through a variety of classical styles.<sup>1</sup> The first passage is taken from *Ham.* 445-89, where events from the history of the Israelites in the *OT* are used as allegories for the experience of all mankind, and it is also an excellent example of an adaptation of biblical verse, *Psalms* 136.<sup>2</sup> Prudentius' allegorical technique is most evident in *Ham.* 697 ff., where he presents examples of the Christian doctrine of free will that God gave mankind. From here comes the second passage, *Ham.* 723-76, which presents the story of Lot and his wife from *Gen.* 19:1-26 and which is also the longest and most elaborate biblical narrative in Prudentius' hexameters.

In *Die allegorische Dichtkunst des Prudentius*, Herzog discussed the Bible as the main source for Prudentius' allegorical technique, and stressed the importance of *Ham.* for the understanding of Prudentius' poetic style, since it appears to be a transitional work from the didactic poem *Apoth.* to the allegorical epic *Psych.*<sup>3</sup> In *Ham.* 445-61 the account of

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<sup>1</sup> Mastrangelo (1997) "Chapter 4. Doctrine and the Origins of Allegory in the Psychomachia", p. 193 ff. argued that Prudentius' allegorical interpretation of the *OT* events was closer to that of the Greek Patristic tradition, whereas the Latin Fathers gave a more literal-historical exegesis.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant to the allegorical images from Jewish history are also *Apoth.* 321-551 and *Psych.* 823-87.

<sup>3</sup> Herzog (1966) p. 93 ff.; p. 104 the purpose of his examination of the allegorical technique in *Ham.* is to point to a unique aspect of the poem but little noted, the debatable relationship of its 'fingierten allegorischen Gefüges' to the 'heilsgeschichtlichen Allegorie' which still obtrudes. The two have merged by the time of the *Psych.* G. Nugent, *Allegory and Poetics. The Structure and Imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia*, Frankfurt (1985) p. 69-70 also sees the *Ham.* as a precursor of the *Psych.*, in that the former "argues against the concept of two counter-balanced forces of good and evil. It presents a more complex view of evil which sees it as a perversion of that which is originally or inherently good."

the Israelites' captivity in Babylon is used as an allegory for the suffering of any soul that is in servitude to the Devil (*Ham.* 448-51):

haec illa est Babylon, haec *transmigratio* nostrae  
gentis et horribilis uictoria principis Assur,  
carmine luctifico quam deflens Hieremias 450  
orbitam propriis ululauit ciuibus urbem.

The poet refers to the capture of Jerusalem by king Nebuchadnezzar and the expulsion of the Israelites from the city that is recorded in 2 *Kings* 24-5. The story is suitable for the lyric tone of Jeremiah's lamentations who foresaw the exile of his people as a punishment for Israel's infidelity to its God, and whose language had influenced Christian authors, including Prudentius.<sup>4</sup> However, Prudentius does not use the prophet's authority to criticise the Jews, who brought such punishment on themselves, but in *Ham.* the poet identifies with the Israelites the entire human race, himself including, which he stressed by the use of 'nostrae'. In the allegory the captivity of the Jews stands for that of mankind itself and its struggles against sin, as invoked at the beginning of the passage, 'captiui mortales' (445). Albeit used to a different end, Prudentius' technique of interpreting a biblical event allegorically is highly reminiscent of Lucretius' technique of using the myths as allegories. In the context of sin, especially appropriate is the parallel with *D.R.N.* 3,978 ff. in which the torments of the sinners from mythology are applied to situations in the life of mankind (*D.R.N.* 3,992-7):

sed Tityos nobis hic est<sup>5</sup>, in amore iacentem  
quem uolucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor  
aut alia quauis scindunt cuppedine curae.  
Sisyphus in uita quoque nobis ante oculos est 995

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<sup>4</sup> *Jer.* 13:19 'Translata est omnis Iuda transmigratio perfecta'.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 3,1000 'hoc est' and 1008 'hoc...id est'.

qui petere a populo fascis saeuasque securis  
imbibit et semper uictus tristisque recedit.

Prudentius' passage combines such features of Lucretian style with a Virgilian turn of phrase and, perhaps, even sentiment of grief, as found in *Aen.* 7,128-9 'haec erat illa fames, haec nos suprema manebat/ exitiis positura modum.' *Ham.* 451, a golden line, has also been written in the manner of Virgil and imitates the end of a Virgilian line, thus comparing the Assyrian king's depriving Jerusalem of its people, 'orbitam...ciuibus urbem' to Mezentius' leaving Pallanteum bereft of its people 'tam multis uiduasset ciuibus urbem' (*Aen.* 8,571). To strengthen his allegorical interpretation of episodes of the Jews' hardship, Prudentius refers to this people's slavery in Babylon in a free adaptation of *Psalms* 136 (*Ham.* 452-61)<sup>6</sup>:

num latet aut dubium est animas de semine Iacob  
exilium gentile pati, quas Persica<sup>7</sup> regna  
captiuas retinent atque in sua foedera cogunt?  
illic natali desuescunt uiuere ritu 455  
moribus et patriis exutae in barbara iura  
degenerant linguamque nouam uestemque sequuntur  
deque profanato discunt sordescere cultu  
nutricemque abolent petulanti e pectore Sion.  
iam patriae meminisse piget, iam mystica frangunt 460  
organa, et externi laudant anathemata regni.

However, this picture of the Jews' life in a foreign land is unfaithful to that in the biblical text, where, whilst the people's grief does not allow them to maintain their religious practices, nevertheless they do not forget their home and religion (*Ps.* 136:1-6)<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>6</sup> However, Prudentius is faithful to *Ps.* 136 in *Tituli* 89-92.

<sup>7</sup> *Prop.* 3,11,21.

<sup>8</sup> Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 9,1-9:

Sedimus ignotos dirae Babylonis ad amnes

Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et fleuimus,  
cum recordaremur Sion.

In salicibus in medio eius 2  
suspendimus organa nostra;

quia illic interrogauerunt nos, qui captiuos duxerunt nos, 3  
uerba cantionum;  
et qui abduxerunt nos:  
Hymnum cantate nobis de canticis Sion.

Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini 4  
in terra aliena?

Si oblitus fuero tui, Jerusalem, 5  
obliuioni detur dextera mea.

Adhaereat lingua mea faucibus mei, 6  
si non meminero tui;

Instead, Prudentius presents an exaggerated version of the account in the Psalm, whereby he portrays the people's forgetfulness of their native culture and arrogance in adopting a new one. He uses rather strong vocabulary, such as 'degenerant' (457) and 'sordescere' (458), to condemn the Jews' apostasy from their own language, customs and, most of all, from their God. Furthermore, the use of Greek terms, 'mystica' (460) and 'anathemata' (461), is somewhat reminiscent of the style of Roman Satire, and suggests that what the

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captiui, Judaea manus, miserabile flentes.  
cum patrium memori traheremus *pectore Sion*  
et meritum iusta suspiraremus ab ira  
exilium: lentis qua consita ripa salictis, 5  
hospitibus populis umbras praebebat amictas.  
illic Assyriae mediis in moenibus urbis,  
obliti laetas per maesta silentia uoces,  
de salicum ramis suspendimus organa nostra.

poet did was to create, out of a biblical lyric poem, a satirical one.<sup>9</sup> The satirical tone culminates in the last two lines, in which the Jews are even guilty of breaking their musical instruments.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, Prudentius' adaptation of the Psalm, rather than being ascribed to poor knowledge of the *OT*, or regarded as extreme, should be seen as an example of the poet's versatile use of classical styles for presenting biblical themes. With this satirical twist of the account Prudentius wanted to make the point that the sins of the Jews are representative of the sins of all nations, including his own compatriots and contemporaries. His message becomes clearer, when the Virgilian echoes in the passage are taken into account, the references to changing one's native tongue and traditions (*Ham.* 457) that have been applied earlier to a purely Roman context, in Juno's words 'aut uocem mutare uiros aut uertere uestem' (*Aen.* 12,825). There, Jupiter dispelled the goddess' fears that the very identity of the Italian people was threatened by being assimilated by the Trojans, and contaminated by their foreign customs and forms of worship (*Aen.* 12,834-7):

sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt,  
utque est nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum       835  
subsident Teucri. morem ritusque sacrorum  
adiciam faciamque omnis uno ore Latinos.

In Prudentius' passage the parallel between *Ham.* 457 and *Aen.* 12,825, as well as the echo in *Ham.* 456 'moribus et patriis' of *Aen.* 12,834 'sermonem...patrium moresque', suggest that behind the poet's criticism of the Jews' apostasy from the traditional norms lay his critique of the enthusiasm for and the introduction of foreign manners and cult practices by the Roman world. The Jews' sins are simply an allegory for the behaviour

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Juv. Sat.* 6,574 'ephemeridas', 7,52 'cacoethes', 8,66 etc. Perhaps 'anathemata' is a faint echo of *D.R.N.* 4,1129 'anademata' used in a highly satiric passage.

that was the object of his attack in the previous passages in *Ham.*, including pagan superstition, and in this passage the poet calls for return to universal values as defined by Virgil. But Prudentius differs from his predecessor in that he refers to a nation, which is united not only by one language, Latin, but also one religion, Christianity.

Therefore, the adaptation of *Psalms* 136 shows the versatile poetic technique of Prudentius and his ability to experiment with styles; he interpreted the lyric motif by using his characteristic technique of combining, in an original way, the styles of his three main models, Lucretius, Virgil and Juvenal.

As well as being an excellent example of Prudentius' technique, *Ham.* 723-76, shows that an intended plurality of meanings characterises Prudentius' use of biblical examples. Thus, the story from *Gen.* is given several scriptural exegeses; according to the first, the fate of Lot's wife was used to caution those who might waver in their devotion to Christ.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the Apostles Luke and Peter established the tradition for Christian exegetes to use Lot as an example of righteousness in Christian terms.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, on two occasions, *Ham.* 735 and 763-4, the image of Sodom in flames serves as a portent of the Last Judgement.

Above all, for the purpose of his argument Prudentius transforms the *OT* narrative into an allegory of mankind's freedom to act according to its own will, 'en tibi signatum libertatis documentum' (*Ham.* 769) and opens the account by drawing the audience's attention to the allegorical significance of the event (*Ham.* 723-37):

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<sup>10</sup> Contrast *Ps.* 136:2 and Paul. *Nol. Carm.* 9,9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ham.* 738-9. Cf. *Lk.* 17,31-33 'In illa hora qui fuerit in tecto, et uasa eius in domo, ne descendat tollere illa; et qui in agro similiter non redeat retro. Memores estote uxoris Lot. Quicumque quaesierit animam suam saluam facere, perdet illam; et quicumque perdiderit illam, uiuificabit eam.'

<sup>12</sup> *Lk.* 17:28-9; *2 Pet.* 2:7-8. Ambr. *De lapsu virg. consecr.* 41; Aug. *Sermones ad Scripturas* 5; *Quest. Evang.* 43; *Civ. Dei* 10,8; 16,30.

Accipe gestarum monumenta insignia rerum,  
 praelusit quibus historia spectabile signum.  
 Loth fugiens Sodomis ardentibus omnia secum 725  
 pignera cara domus properabat sede relicta  
 nubibus urbicremis<sup>13</sup> subducere, sulphure cum iam  
 nimboso ignitus caelum subtexeret aër  
 flagrantemque diem crepitans incenderet imber.  
 angelus hanc hospes legem praescripserat ollis 730  
 emissus uirtute dei sub imagine dupla,  
 omnis ut e portis iret domus utque in apertum  
 dirigeret constans oculos nec pone reflexo  
 lumine regnantes per moenia cerneret ignes:  
 “Nemo, memor Sodomae, quae mundi forma cremandi est, 735  
 ut semel e muris gressum promouerit, ore  
 post tergum uerso respectet funera rerum.”

By the exhortation ‘accipe.../...spectabile signum’ (723-4), the poet seems to stress the pictorial nature of the event and urges his audience to imagine the events he describes, as if they were happening before their very eyes.<sup>14</sup> Prudentius makes a selective use of the events in *Gen.* 19:1 ff., that lead to the phenomenon of transformation, and arranges them dramatically. The account begins spectacularly with the flight of Lot and his family against the background of Sodom in flames (725-9).<sup>15</sup> While ‘sulphure’ (727), ‘ignitus...aër’ (728) and ‘imber’ (729) recall the details given in *Gen.* 19:24, his portrayal is influenced by classical accounts of volcanic eruptions. In *Ham.* 728 Prudentius alludes to a phrase, ‘...caelum subtexere fumo’, that Virgil used for his description of the

<sup>13</sup> For Prudentius’ *hapax legomena*, see the Appendix, p. 288.

<sup>14</sup> It would be reasonable to suppose that Prudentius’ narrative style was inspired by the effect, resulting from the use of the rhetorical device of *ἐνεργεία* or *illustratio* (*evidentia*), as defined by Quintilian in his *Instit. Orat.* 6,2,32.

<sup>15</sup> *Gen.* 19:24-5 ‘Igitur Dominus pluit super Sodomam et Gomorrhham sulphur et ignem a Domino de caelo, et subuertit ciuitates has, et omnem circa regionem, uniuersos habitatores urbium, et cuncta terrae uirentia.’

eruption of Mount Etna in *Aen.* 3,582.<sup>16</sup> The reference to the subterranean furnaces of Etna and its sulphurous fires was a commonplace in ancient literature, that is found in the poetry of Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid<sup>17</sup>, and it seems only too appropriate that the comparison in the *OT* account of the smoke rising from the doomed cities with those of a furnace would have reminded Prudentius of the episode in Latin poetry.<sup>18</sup> Prudentius' reference to Virgil is supported by another echo, this time in his portrayal of Lot's wife as 'saxumque liquabile facta' (*Ham.* 743), which is modelled on 'liquefactaque saxa' (*Aen.* 3,576).<sup>19</sup> But although, in echoing Virgil's phrase, Prudentius shows his liking for the style of that poet, still he does not refer to the mythical cause of the eruption, as suggested by Virgil in *Aen.* 3,578-82. It is more likely that he would have agreed with the accounts of natural phenomena in *D.R.N.* and, like Lucretius, he is portraying the conflagration without any explicit reference to a supernatural force.<sup>20</sup>

The potential of the biblical story from *Gen.* 19 for poetic narrative, is attested by *Sodoma*, of an uncertain authorship, which gives a lengthier account in hexameters, and if indeed it was written earlier in the second or third centuries, it might have been known to Prudentius.<sup>21</sup> There, the anonymous poet interpreted the fate of the *OT* city as a prefiguration of the Apocalypse, 'sic Sodomum meruit tellus ardentibus uri/ roribus et

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<sup>16</sup> *D.R.N.* 5,466 'subtexunt nubila caelum' that Virgil, himself, might have imitated.

<sup>17</sup> *D.R.N.* 6,681 'uastis Aetnae fornacibus'; *Aen.* 3,580: 'ruptis...caminis' and *Met.* 15,340 'quae sulphureis ardet fornacibus Aetna'. See also Corn. Sever. *ap. Sen. Ep.* 79,5,1.

<sup>18</sup> *Gen.* 19:27-8 'uiditque ascendentem fauillam de terra quasi fornacis fumum'. In the *Vetus Latina (E)* 'uapor camini' is attested.

<sup>19</sup> *Georg.* 1,472-3 '...quotiens Cycloperum efferuere in agros/ uidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Aetnam,/ flammarumque globos liquefactaque uoluer saxa.'

<sup>20</sup> *D.R.N.* 6,686-92 mentions that in Sicily there were large deposits of sulphur and pitch that would have facilitated the creation and the spread of fire.

<sup>21</sup> It appears in the collected works of Tertullian (*PL* 2,2). See Chapter I, p. 14, note 7.

finis portendere signa futuri' (1101c), and used the myth of Phaethon to portray its destruction in poetic terms (1103d-1104a):

nam totos radios armauerat igni,  
aemula subsequitur caligo includere lucem  
coeptans, atque globos confuso intexere caelo;  
fumantes coeunt nubes, nouus irruit imber,  
sulphura cum flammis flagrantibus aestuat aether,  
exustus crepitat<sup>22</sup> liquidis ardoribus aether  
hinc habet in falso de uero fabula famam  
solis progeniem currus optasse paternos,  
nec ualuisse leuem puerum frenare superbos  
ignis equos, arsisse orbem; tunc fulmine raptum  
aurigam...

Whilst not referring explicitly to mythical accounts from Latin poetry, in his presentation of the biblical story Prudentius alludes to them by using a combination of different styles, Lucretius' technique in treating the myths as allegories, Virgil's vocabulary and Ovid's versions of the myths. For example, in *Ham.* 730-7 Prudentius does not simply paraphrase closely *Gen.* 19:17 where the fateful warning, not to look back, was given to Lot and his family, with *Ham.* 737, 'post tergum...respectet', echoing the biblical words.<sup>23</sup> The motif of the taboo against making backward glances is characteristic also of ancient mythology, and the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice, and, to a lesser extent, of Cupid and Psyche are adequate parallels for the story of Lot and his wife.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the phrase 'hanc...legem' (*Ham.* 730) that describes the divine command, suggests strongly

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<sup>22</sup> *Ham.* 729 'crepitans'.

<sup>23</sup> *Gen.* 19:17 '[angeli] eduxeruntque eum [Loth], et posuerunt extra ciuitatem; ibi locuti sunt ad eum, dicentes: Salua animam tuam, noli respicere post tergum, nec stes in omni circa regione; sed in monte saluum te fac, ne et tu simul pereas.'

<sup>24</sup> S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, vol. 1, Copenhagen (1955), "Taboo".

that Prudentius used a deliberate echo of the warning given to Orpheus in both Virgil's and Ovid's versions of the myth. Whilst the latter's influence on the poet will be argued for in the discussion of his account of the metamorphosis of Lot's wife, in the allusion to Orpheus Prudentius is influenced by the style of Virgil whose use of the pluperfect 'dederat' (*Georg.* 4,487) is imitated by 'praescripserat' (*Ham.* 730).<sup>25</sup>

Both the author of *Sodoma* and Prudentius associate the biblical story of the woman's transformation into a pillar of salt (*Gen.* 19:26) with miracles of metamorphosis from the ancient myths. In the anonymous poem the comparison of the city ablaze with the conflagration resulting from Phaethon's failed attempt to ride the chariot of the Sun (*Met.* 2,47), is developed to include the fate of his sisters whose grief, according to the myth, transformed them into trees (1104a-1104b):

illicitum planctum mutasse sorores.  
 uiderit Eridanus, si qua illic populus albet,  
 aut si quis plumat senio modulatiores ales.  
 hic aliter uersae moerent miracula formae.  
 namque comes coniux, heu me, male tum quoque legis  
 foemina non patiens, diuina ad murmura coeli  
 audaces oculos nequicquam sola retorsit<sup>26</sup>,  
 nec<sup>27</sup> habitura loqui quod uiderit; et simul illic  
 in fragilem<sup>28</sup> mutata salem stetit ipsa sepulcrum,  
 ipsa imago sibi formam sine corpore seruans<sup>29</sup>.  
 durat<sup>30</sup> adhuc etenim nuda statione sub aethram,

<sup>25</sup> *Georg.* 4,487 '...namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem' and *Met.* 10,50 'hanc simul et legem Rhodopeius accipit Orpheus'. See G. Stegen, "Notes de lecture", *Latomus* 22 (1963) p.846.

<sup>26</sup> *Ham.* 739 'torsit'.

<sup>27</sup> 'Non' is a possible conjecture.

<sup>28</sup> *Ham.* 743 'fragili'; 756 and 766 'fragilis'.

<sup>29</sup> *Ham.* 744 'seruans'.

<sup>30</sup> *Ham.* 743 'diriguit'.

nec pluuiis dilapsa situ, nec diruta uentis.  
quin etiam si quis mutilauerit aduena formam,  
protinus ex sese suggestu uulnera complet.  
dicitur et uiuens alio iam corpore, sexus  
munificos solito dispungere sanguine menses.

Whilst stylistically this portrayal of metamorphosis in the *Sodoma* shows some traces of Ovidian influence, certain expressions and, in particular the motif of the renewing powers of the lasting monument, strike the reader also as being remarkably close to Prudentius' version where he poeticised the transformation of Lot's wife in the following manner (*Ham.* 738-53)<sup>31</sup>:

Loth monitis sapiens obtemperat, at leuis uxor  
mobilitate animi torsit muliebre retrorsus  
ingenium Sodomisque suis reuocabilis haesit. 740  
traxerat Eua uirum dirae ad consortia culpae,  
haec peccans sibi sola perit. solidata metallo  
diriguit fragili saxumque liquabile facta  
stat mulier, sicut steterat prius, omnia seruans  
caute sigillati longum salis effigiata, 745  
et decus et cultum frontemque oculosque comamque  
et flexam in tergum faciem paulumque relata  
menta retro, antiquae monumenta rigentia noxae.  
liquitur illa quidem salsis sudoribus uda,  
sed nulla ex fluido plenae dispendia formae 750  
sentit deliquio, quantumque armenta saporum  
attenuant saxum tantum lambentibus umor  
sufficit attritamque cutem per damna reformat.

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<sup>31</sup> *Gen.* 19:26 'Respiciensque uxor eius post se, uersa est in statuam salis'. Even today, one of the pillars of salt, resulting from the erosion of Mount Jebel Usdum on the south western bank of the Dead Sea, is still known as 'Lot's wife'.

Inevitably, in *Ham.* the woman's transformation into a 'soluble rock' has its prototype in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and, in particular, in the story of Niobe.<sup>32</sup> Through several thematic similarities between the metamorphic accounts in *Ham.* and *Met.* 6, which are also strengthened by a few echoes of Ovid's language, Prudentius has succeeded in reproducing the atmosphere and essence of the Ovidian account, and in emulating his model by his lengthy and detailed biblical account. Both Lot's wife and Niobe were transformed into some kind of stone for having sinned against a deity, which is why Prudentius' account is reminiscent of the poetic account of myths that often look into the subject of aetiology (*Ham.* 748). Further, Prudentius refers to the solidification of the human body by 'deriguit' (743), which verb was commonly used by Ovid to portray metamorphoses and is found as such in the case of Niobe (6,309).<sup>33</sup> Like the latter, after the transformation, Lot's wife retains her posture and physical features in a statue composed of salt, and the very language Prudentius chose, as in 'omnia seruans' (744), is borrowed from Ovidian parallels for the preservation of previous characteristics.<sup>34</sup> The immobility of the female figure is stressed at the beginning of the hexameter by 'stat' (744) which verb Ovid used to portray the fixed eyes of Niobe. Like Ovid, Prudentius

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<sup>32</sup> Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 103, 4 who two centuries earlier likened the fate of Lot's wife to that of Niobe, 'ἡ γὰρ οὐχ ἡ Νιόβη τρόπον τινά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα μυστικώτερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀποφθέξωμαι, γυναικὸς τῆς Ἑβραίας δίκην...εἰς ἀναισθησίαν μετατρέπεσθε; λελιθωμένην ταύτην παρειλήφαμεν τὴν γυναῖκα διὰ τὸ Σοδόμων ἔραν.'

<sup>33</sup> *Met.* 5,181 ff. of Phineus, 'deriguit, saxoque oculorum induruit umor' (233), 'monumenta per aeuum' (227); *Met.* 14,753-8 Anaxarete was transformed into stone to stand as a warning to scornful women, 'deriguere oculi' (754).

<sup>34</sup> *Met.* 9,226-7 '[Lichas] nunc quoque in Euboico scopulus brevis eminet alto/ gurgite et humanae seruat uestigia formae'; *Met.* 11,405 of a wolf, 'corpus praeterque colorem/omnia seruauit...'

refers to the bending of the neck, though, while, in the case of Niobe, ‘nec flecti ceruix’ (308) stresses her immobility, in the case of Lot’s wife (747 f.), the moment she turned to look back is perpetuated as a reminder of her infidelity to God. The list of her characteristics, ‘et decus et cultum’ (746) may be influenced by the portrayal of Niobe’s beauty and jewellery in *Met.* 6,167-8.<sup>35</sup> Even the image of ‘saxum...liquabile’ (*Ham.* 743) may be influenced by Ovid’s portrayal of Niobe whose weeping image preserves her human grief, ‘liquitur, et lacrimas etiam nunc marmora manant’ (313).<sup>36</sup> Finally, just as the figure of Niobe stands in her native land (311), Lot’s wife remains as a monument not far from the ashes of the city in which she had lived, ‘atque inter patrias perstat durata favillas’ (768). But, whilst Niobe remains as a symbol of grief, the pillar of salt stands as a monument of ‘antiquae...noxae’ (748) and several times Lot’s wife is referred to as a sinner (742, 754).

However, whilst influenced by Ovid’s technique Prudentius does not lose sight of the point of his argument, which is in accordance with the Christian exegetic tradition, that, firstly, the will of Lot should be contrasted with that of his wife, and, secondly, her monument remains as a lasting reminder to the faithful. Therefore, her transformation into a ‘soluble’ pillar of salt retains the qualities Lot’s wife had in life, inconstancy and infidelity to God, further stressed by the double entendre in the use of ‘fragilis’, to describe both the stone (742-3) and the sinful woman with a weak character, ‘fragilis’

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<sup>35</sup> *Met.* 6,165-8: ‘Ecce uenit comitum Niobe celeberrima turba/ uestibus intexto Phrygiis spectabilis auro/ et, quantum ira sinit, formosa; mouensque decoro/ cum capite inmissos umerum per utrumque capillos.’

<sup>36</sup> For a somewhat rational explanation of the miracle, see *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* 1,11 (*Appendix ad Opera Sancti Augustini*, PL 35) ‘Sed dum hoc assumpsimus, quod nihil in Dei creatura contra naturam sit, sed insita natura semper in omnibus gubernetur qualiter, uxor Loth cum in salis statuam uertitur, humani corporis natura in hac mutatione gubernatur? Salis igitur naturam in humano corpore esse nullus ambigit, qui lacrymarum salsitudinem comprobauit...et non solum in lacrymis, sed etiam in phlegmate, et tussi expresso sputo pectoris sapitur...atque hac ex causa, cum uxorem Loth in statuam salis uertere uoluit, pars illa tenuissima salis quae carni inerat, totum corpus infecit.’

(756, 766).<sup>37</sup> But this portrayal of the weakness and inconstancy of feminine nature also goes back to the classical tradition<sup>38</sup> and here Prudentius seems to adopt an established pattern which helps him to establish the contrast between Lot and his wife and their contrasting choices between God and Sin. Lot's decision to obey God promotes Lot as 'sapiens' (738), whilst his wife is 'leuis uxor/ mobilitate animi' (739-40); 'infirmum fluidumque animum per lubrica soluens/ consilia' (755-6).

With the intention to stress the timeless edifying value of the monument, Prudentius includes the motif of the miraculous powers it has for its preservation. A similar element had already been used by the author of the *Sodoma*, who mentioned the healing of the damages done to the statue both by nature and men.<sup>39</sup> Much more successfully, in *Ham.* the miraculous nature of the account is enhanced by the portrayal of the wet pillar of salt, from which the liquid lost is constantly replenished, in spite of the cattle licking her salt (*Ham.* 749-53). The latter image adds a more realistic touch to the miracle and alludes to the style of the *Georg.* and, in particular, the passage that mentions the salt given to the sheep.<sup>40</sup> According to Prudentius' imagination, the pillar of salt appears to be likened to the lumps of rock salt that are given to sheep in order to increase the milk yield, which is also suggested by 'salsis' (*Ham.* 749) and 'saporum' (*Ham.* 751) as echoes of 'salsasque...herbas' and 'salis...saporem'.<sup>41</sup> Unless he was influenced solely by the

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<sup>37</sup> *Met.* 14,758 of Anaxarete, 'quod fuit in duro iam pridem pectore saxum'.

<sup>38</sup> Plaut. *Mil.* 185a 'ut ne quoquam de ingenio degrediatur muliebri', cf. *Ham.* 739-40 'muliebre.../ingenium'.

<sup>39</sup> A mention is made of the physiological functions of the female body that remain after the transformation.

<sup>40</sup> *Georg.* 3,394-7 'At cui lactis amor, cytisum lotosque frequentis/ ipse manu salsasque ferat praesepibus herbas:/ hinc et amant fluuios magis, et magis ubera tendunt/ et salis occultum referunt in lacte saporem.'

<sup>41</sup> I well remember seeing on my grandfather's farm in Bulgaria lumps of rock salt put out for the sheep. In Prudentius' imagination a pillar of salt is associated with objects of indefinite shape, grey in colour, and having a smooth, slippery surface. There is a scientific explanation for such behaviour of the rock salt. Since it is hygroscopic, in a humid atmosphere the pillar will pick up moisture and will look as if it is either

passage in Virgil, this image could arise from the account in *Genesis* of the Hebrews as nomads, who kept sheep and goats, or from the farming practices that he had seen in the rural areas of his native Spain.

The concluding part of the episode contrasts the utter destruction of Sodom, both its buildings and the inhabitants, who like Lot's wife failed to obey God's command, with the God-fearing Lot. For the picture of Sodom that according to the *OT* was representative of the worst of sins, Prudentius momentarily returns to the style of Juvenal with a direct quotation from *Sat.* 1 (*Ham.* 763).<sup>42</sup> This is combined with echoes of Virgil's vocabulary in the list '...et mores populi tabularia iura forumque' (760) which is most likely borrowed from *Georg.* 2,501-2 '...nec ferrea iura/ insanumque forum aut populi tabularia uidit', where these are shown also in an unfavourable light.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, the episode is brought to an end by returning to the doctrine of free will as a means of escape from sinning. In the style of rhetoric the poet sets out the contrasting choices as to God's warning not to turn back, and, consequently, the different fates of the two personages in the story (*Ham.* 765-75):

haec fugisse semel satis est. <sup>44</sup> non respicit ultra	765
Loth noster; fragilis sed coniunx respicit et quae	
fugerat inuerso mutabilis ore reuisit	
atque inter patrias perstat durata fauillas.	
en tibi signatum libertatis documentum	
quo uoluit nos scire deus quodcumque sequendum est	770
sub nostra dicione situm passimque remissum	

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weeping or dissolving, whereas neither is strictly true. When the relative humidity falls and the air becomes drier, the moisture on the surface will evaporate and the pillar will seem to stop losing moisture.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 215.

<sup>43</sup> Prudentius shows a particular liking for the end of *Georg.* 2; in *Symm.* 2,1020 and 697 he imitates *Georg.* 2, 490 and 497 respectively.

<sup>44</sup> For the construction, see *Aen.* 9,140 'sed periisse semel satis est...'

alterutram calcare uiam. duo cedere iussi  
 de Sodomis, alter se proripit, altera mussat.  
 ille gradum celerat<sup>45</sup> fugiens, contra ille renutat.  
 liber utrique animus, sed dispar utrique uoluntas  
 diuidit huc illuc rapiens sua quemque libido.<sup>46</sup> 775

In spite of the moral of the story that one has freedom of choice, in *Ham.* 773-5 the separation of Lot and his wife, the husband's salvation and the wife's symbolic death, allude to the story of Aeneas and Dido in *Aen.* 4.<sup>47</sup> Whereas the Virgilian echo in *Ham.* 775 illustrates the decision-making of two people, Aeneas himself is in two minds, 'atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc diuidit illuc' (*Aen.* 4,285), and because of his love for Dido, his hesitation as to whether or not to leave Carthage, is reminiscent of Lot's wife's emotions, attachment to her city, her hesitation and eventual decision to glance back and thus to remain for ever with that city (740). Whether or not Prudentius deliberately recalls Aeneas' hesitation in his portrayal of the woman's weakness, he uses the famous scene to give a new message, that righteousness in Christian terms results from one's free will and needs a constant and a strong mind. However, the last word in the passage, 'libido', is rather ambiguous, since it leaves open its interpretation as, either 'one's will' or 'one's sexual desire'. Thus, it conveys well the image of the two minds of Aeneas and gives some consideration of human emotions, and although Virgil's character showed hesitation in following the divine command, at the end he must be identified with Lot, who of his own free will obeyed God. Therefore, it seems that Prudentius alludes to the

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<sup>45</sup> *Aen.* 4,641 of Anna, '...illa gradum...celerabat...' , provided that the reading *celerabat* is accepted.

<sup>46</sup> *Ecl.* 2,65 '...trahit sua quemque uoluptas.'

<sup>47</sup> *Aen.* 2,702 ff. is another thematic parallel for the leaving of Sodom by Lot and his wife. Whilst Aeneas and his family escape from burning Troy, Creusa follows at a distance (711) and gets lost according to the divine plan (738-40; 777). In the *OT* story the 'coniunx' (766) stayed behind at her own will.

theme of the *Aen.* in order to present his Christian message in more familiar and dramatic terms. In this task of his he was helped by the inheritance from the other classical poets whose styles he imaginatively adopted to Christian ends.

## *CONCLUSION*

The examination of Prudentius' four hexameter poems shows this poet's ubiquitous and versatile use, both thematically and stylistically, of certain classical poets. This was demonstrated in the discussion of the poet's relationship with the Latin literary tradition, as represented by his favourite models; Lucretius, primarily for the style of argument and the use of analogy, Virgil, for the background in Roman mythology and the flavour of Latin expression and the poetic sound, and Juvenal, mostly for the scandalous side of human nature and life. The most prominent features of Prudentius' poetry are, firstly, the highly allusive manner in which a variety of poetic styles become adapted, and, secondly, the allegorical interpretation both of pagan and biblical themes. Whilst the Christian didacticism and purpose of these poems cannot be underestimated, the very choice of poetry for the presentation of his beliefs and arguments, is the perfect medium for Prudentius' engagement with the themes and techniques of his pagan predecessors. Despite the metrical forms used, the same cannot be claimed about the *Psych.* which is a new kind of epic that combines personification and spiritual allegory, the *Cath.* which is written in the tradition of Christian hymnody, and the *Perist.* which is poetry of its own kind. In his use of classical poetry Prudentius' purpose differs somewhat from those of the other early Christian poets, who aimed to separate its content from its form, so that they created an aesthetically appealing Christian poetry. Nor did Prudentius take the view of the Christian Fathers, Lactantius, Jerome and Augustine, who because of its content made only selective use of pagan poetry. This is the reason why, to some extent, Prudentius' poetry, and in particular the hexameter poems that are the subject of the thesis, stands in isolation from other contemporary Christian poetry. Therefore, it seems

that, with the Bible and the classical poets being his most certain sources, Prudentius' took up the teaching of Christian doctrine in verse form, with the intention of making original use of the classical literary tradition and thus claiming continuity with both its themes and techniques. When he shows a polemical attitude by correcting some of Lucretius' conclusions, by ridiculing the polytheistic myths and by giving a new twist to Juvenal's picture of Rome, the poet does not wish to be seen as the enemy of the classical past. For him, in the context of cultural changes, classical poetry was the true medium that facilitated the transformation of his identity and his hexameter poems might be accepted as the 'swan song' of the pre-Christian literary tradition.

## *Appendix on Prudentius' Metre and Language*

Prudentius showed himself to be a versatile and ambitious poet who easily adopted different styles. His versatility is found also in the use of metre, the best example of which is in the *Peristephanon*, where the poet demonstrated his ability to employ diverse and complex metres after Horace's example.<sup>1</sup> However, the same cannot be said about his hexameter verse, which lacks the precision and elegance of that of Virgil and Ovid, or even of the hexameters of his contemporary, Claudian. In the case of the two theological poems, *Apoth.* and *Ham.*, Prudentius' technique is closer to that of Lucretius and the Satirists, Horace and Juvenal. Like these poets, Prudentius intended to stress the importance of the subject matter over form, which provides a reasonable explanation for the rather clumsy rhythm of his hexameters, when compared to his more elegant lyric compositions.

### *Metre*

From an analysis of Prudentius' technique, it has been concluded that, with minimal repetition, he uses a great variety of metrical patterns, both Ovidian and Virgilian, DDSS being his favourite pattern, followed by DSDS, SDSS, DSSS, DDDS and DSDD.<sup>2</sup> It is also clear that he preferred to use dactylic over spondaic first foot, although in the *Apoth.* and *Ham.*, like Virgil he made moderate use of dactylic first feet, but in the *Symm.* poems, dactylic first feet are twice the number of spondaic. This relationship conforms with the stylistic features of the poems, the first group being Lucretian and Virgilian in

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<sup>1</sup> For his novel use of lyric metres in the *Praefatio*, see Chapter I, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> In Duckworth, "Five centuries of Latin Hexameter", *TAPhA* 98 (1967) 77-150, see p. 126 ff. and the tables on p. 131 and pp. 136-7, where the analysis is based on the *Ham.* and the *Psych.*

character, and the second, Ovidian.<sup>3</sup> Overall, Prudentius prefers a spondaic over a dactylic fourth foot, often with a word break after a spondaic fourth foot, which is a feature also of Lucretius' poetry.<sup>4</sup> An example of a single spondaic word before the fourth foot *diaeresis* is *Ham.* 22 '// *plenis uiribus unum*'. Compared to other contemporary poets, on average Prudentius used more spondees in the first four feet of his hexameters than Ausonius and Paulinus did.<sup>5</sup> A feature found in both Prudentius' and Claudian's hexameters is their use of longer words in the second half of the line; in most cases Prudentius uses four or five syllable words before a final spondee<sup>6</sup> or baccheus.<sup>7</sup> In particular, the rhythm created by including five syllable spondaic words before a final baccheus recalls Claudian's hexameters, cf. *Ham.* 683 'libertatemque negaret' and Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 2,149 'libertatemque comarum'.<sup>8</sup>

### *Caesura*

There is not much variety in Prudentius' use of *caesura*, which is mainly a regular masculine *caesura* in the third foot (or penthemimeral), often combined with the fourth foot *caesura*. He also uses a feminine *caesura* in a third foot, supported by a second and a fourth foot *caesura*, but with less frequency than in the poetry of Ausonius, Paulinus and

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<sup>3</sup> For Lucretius' preference for a dactylic first foot, see Bailey, Vol. I, p. 110 f.

<sup>4</sup> Some examples are *Apoth.* 336, *Ham.* 3 and 16, where a molossic word is used after the third foot break (cf. *Cat.* 64,1-2), and *Ham.* 535, where a single spondaic word is used. For Lucretius, see Bailey, pp. 112-13.

<sup>5</sup> Green (1971), Chapter VI 'Meter', p. 107 ff. analysed the hexametric techniques of Juvencus, Paulinus, Ausonius, Claudian and Prudentius, in view of their predecessors Virgil and Ovid. His observations of Prudentius' poetry are based on the first five hundred lines of the *Apoth.*, *Ham.*, *Psych.* and *Symm. 1*.

<sup>6</sup> *Apoth.* 27 'moderamine formet', 147 'obmutescere cantus', 321 'intellecta rigassent'; *Ham.* 692 'conlaudabilis ille', 730 'praescripserat ollis'.

<sup>7</sup> *Apoth.* 146 'obsordescat amaro'; *Ham.* 654 'expertemque nefandi'. For some statistics, see also Green (1971) pp. 111-13.

<sup>8</sup> For this technique, see also Cameron (1970) p. 290 and Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 3,79 'debellauisse bipenni; *Get.* 371 'libertatemque perosus' etc.

Claudian.<sup>9</sup> A particular case of the use of a feminine *caesura* occurs before *Deus* and its cases, e.g. *Apoth.* 786 ‘crede animam non esse// Deum’ (cf. 788 and 790). Occasionally, there is no word break in the third foot, and, instead, second and fourth foot *caesuras* are used, e.g. *Apoth.* 20 ‘quod quamuis// hebes intuitus// (cf. *Apoth.* 250 and *Symm.* 2,10).<sup>10</sup>

### *Elision*

Prudentius employs elision mostly in the fourth thesis in the line but with moderation, more often than Juvenecus did, but less than Paulinus and Ausonius.<sup>11</sup> Often the elided vowels are long, which in Latin poetry is not uncommon with adverbs and forms ending in  $\bar{i}$  and  $\bar{u}$ , as in *Apoth.* 469 ‘cum subit( $\bar{o}$ ) exclamat’ and *Apoth.* 532 ‘uidist( $\bar{i}$ ) angelicis’, and an elision of a long vowel or a diphthong can occur even before a short vowel, e.g. *Apoth.* 539 ‘Pompeianae  $\bar{a}$ cies’.

As it is not uncommon in Latin poetry, elision can occur at the masculine caesura, e.g. *Apoth.* 11 ‘ille Pater quem null(a) acies’ and *Symm.* 1,150 ‘cael( $\bar{i}$ ) imperium’, or immediately after the first syllable in the third foot, e.g. *Ham.* 511 ‘calidisqu(e) animam’.

### *Hiatus*

There are few cases of hiatus occurring at the caesuras, such as in the second foot, e.g. *Symm.* 2,159 ‘spemqu(e) in m $\bar{e}$ // omnem’, and in the third foot, e.g. *Symm.* 2,109

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<sup>9</sup> *Apoth.* 1 ‘plurima sunt sed pauca// loquar’, *Symm.* 2,38 etc. See also Green (1971) p. 115.

<sup>10</sup> This pattern is not uncommon in Virgil, e.g. *Aen.* 2,222 ‘clamos// simul horrendos// ad sidera’.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. *Apoth.* 792 ff. See Green (1971) p. 108-11 and Green (1999) p. xxiii that defines Ausonius’ elisions as smooth. Gruzelier (1992) p. xxviii, Claudian’s verse is almost free from elision which in *Rapt. Pros.* he uses once in every eighteen lines, compared with Virgil’s use of it in every other line or Ovid’s, once in every three to four lines.

‘muneris auctorem// ipso’.<sup>12</sup> There is a hiatus at the third foot *diaeresis* in *Ham.* 353 ‘peperit bona//omnia’.

An interesting case of hiatus is *Symm.* 2,227 ‘unus egō// elementa’,<sup>13</sup> and if *egō* is accepted, then a line of the hexameters inscribed on the base of Theodosius’ obelisk in Constantinople, can be adduced as a contemporary parallel (*CIL* iii 737 ca. 390 AD):

‘Difficilis quondam dominis parere serenis  
iussus et extinctis palmam portare tyrannis  
omnia Theodosio<sup>14</sup> cedunt subolique perenni  
ter denis sic uictus *egō* domitusque diebus  
iudice sub Proclo superas elatus ad auras.’

### *Bucolic diaeresis*

Prudentius uses the bucolic *diaeresis* frequently, e.g. *Ham.* 1 ‘quo te praecipitat rabies tua// perfide Cain’ (cf. *Apoth.* 13, 248, *Symm.* 2,14 and 625).

### *Endings*

In most cases, Prudentius follows the general principle of the Latin hexameter for obtaining a coincidence of ictus and accent in the fifth and sixth feet of the verse. He ends the lines with disyllabic or trisyllabic words, the fifth foot being almost always a dactyl. On the one hand, in his debt to archaic Latin poetry, Prudentius uses monosyllabic endings preceded by a word of more than one syllable<sup>15</sup>, whereby he achieves an effect

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<sup>12</sup> The hiatus in *Symm.* 2,109 is not certain, since the variant *auctores* exists.

<sup>13</sup> A possible conjecture of *Symm.* 2,227 is ‘unus eg(ō) haec//’, and in *Apoth.* 631 the regular prosody is used. However, other poets provide parallels for *egō*, see Green (1991) on Auson. *Praef.* 1,35 ‘cuius egō comes et quaestor et culmen honorum’.

<sup>14</sup> The metre requires the form *Theudosio*.

similar to that in the poetry of Ennius and Lucretius.<sup>16</sup> The most obvious examples are<sup>17</sup>: *Apoth.* 78 'Dei fons' and 395 'inriuous fons'<sup>18</sup>, *Apoth.* 185 generis uim' and 777 'animae uim'<sup>19</sup>, *Apoth.* 821 'Dei pars'<sup>20</sup> and *Symm.* 1, 274 'cyathos dis'<sup>21</sup>.

On the other hand, Prudentius is not sparing of polysyllabic endings, whilst at the same time striving to obtain a coincidence in the last feet. The *Apoth.* and *Ham.* abound in five syllable dactylic endings, the majority of which are purely Latin words<sup>22</sup>, such as *Apoth.* 155 'omnipotentis'<sup>23</sup>, 264 'principiorum'<sup>24</sup>, 495 'flauicomantum', 858 'articulatim', and 1077 'particulatim'<sup>25</sup>; *Ham.* 294 'uersicolorum', 404 'Idololatrix', and 819 'unicoloras'; *Symm.* 1, 147 'induperator'<sup>26</sup> and *Symm.* 2,1051 'centiplicatos'.<sup>27</sup>

Prudentius follows the practice, which was associated mostly with the Neoteric poets, of using polysyllabic Greek names at the end of the verse. However, he used names both of Hebraic or Greek origin<sup>28</sup>, such as *Apoth.* 18 '(et) Cythereis'<sup>29</sup>, 292 'Deucalionum', 316 '(in) Sodomitas' and 1011 'Simeonem'; *Ham.* 576 '(ut) Solomonis', 413 'Gergeseorum'

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<sup>15</sup> Here I do not deal with the endings, which in most cases for smoothness are preceded by another monosyllable or elide with another two syllable word, e.g. *Apoth.* 9 'praesto (e)st', 18 'fas sit', 122 'in me', *Ham.* 445 'quos iam' etc.

<sup>16</sup> For this technique in the poetry of Virgil, cf. Norden on *Aen.* 6, App. 9, p. 439.

<sup>17</sup> Ausonius' *Technopaegnion* is a poetic exercise, in which each line ends in a monosyllable, see Green (1991) p. 583 f. For *Apoth.* 884 'Dei quae' and 974 'agit quid', see *D.R.N.* 5,9 'eam quae'.

<sup>18</sup> *D.R.N.* 6,887 'calidus queat ut fieri fons'; *Ov. Ex Pont.* 4,2,47 'Aonius fons'; *Juv. Sat.* 10,119 'ingenii fons' and 12,41 'et egregius fons'; *Aus. Techn.* 10,2 'sacer fons'.

<sup>19</sup> *Enn. Ann.* 151 (Skutsch) 'Romani scalis: summa nituntur opum ui' imitated by Virgil in *Aen.* 12,552 'pro se quisque uiri summa nituntur opum ui'; *D.R.N.* 4,681 'canum uis' and *Virg. Aen.* 4,131.

<sup>20</sup> *Auson. Techn.* 7,5 'operis pars'.

<sup>21</sup> *Enn. Ann.* 190 (Sk) 'dono-ducite-doque-uolentibus cum magnis dis', the ending was imitated by Virgil in *Aen.* 3,12; *Auson. Techn.* 'Stygio dis'.

<sup>22</sup> *Virg. Aen.* 11,614 'quadrupedantum'; *Auson. Mosel.* 404 'Quintiliani'.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Apoth.* 174, *Symm.* 1,564, *Symm.* 2,104.

<sup>24</sup> Lucretius used it eighteen times at the end of the line, e.g. *D.R.N.* 1,484; 2, 573.

<sup>25</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,542.

<sup>26</sup> *Enn. Ann.* 78 (Sk) 'omnibus cura uiris uter esset induperator', see Skutsch, pp. 227-8. Cf. *Juv. Sat.* 10,138.

<sup>27</sup> Polysyllabic endings occur also in *Apoth.* 24, 86, 91, 128, 130, 166, 807, 815, 881, 936, 963, 988; *Ham.* 36, 309, 340, 343, 439, 425, 549, 601, 657, 745; *Symm.* 1,79. 238. 547. 625; *Symm.* 2, 39. 477. 705. 844.

<sup>28</sup> *Auson. Mosel.* 447 'Aganippen'.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 1, 166 'Cytheream'.

and 450 'Hieremias'; *Symm.* 1,549 'Nazareorum'; *Symm.* 2,562 'Mithridatem' and 917 'Cererisque'. Apart from proper names, there are examples of foreign polysyllabic words<sup>30</sup>, such as *Apoth.* 340 '(nunc) oleastro'; *Ham.* 234 '(flos) rhododaphnen', 267 '(aut) hyacinthi', 403 'gymnosophistas' and 839 '(in) paradisi'; *Symm.* 1,347 '(aut) orichalci' and *Symm.* 2,524 'citharoedi'.

Again in accordance with the practice of Lucretius, frequently both the one-word and two-word four syllable endings are preceded by a monosyllable, which protects them against a conflict between ictus and accent in the fifth foot. Consequently, as can be seen from some of the above-mentioned examples of proper names and foreign words, many of the four syllable words used by Prudentius are equivalent to five syllable words.<sup>31</sup> However, when this is not the case, it leads to a rather rough and clumsy ending, e.g. *Apoth.* 47 'uel mortales moderatum'<sup>32</sup>, 1048 'flebilitur tumulatur'; *Ham.* 768 'libertatis documentum'.<sup>33</sup> In several of these cases the inelegant rhythm is made more obtrusive by a masculine caesura after both the fourth and the fifth foot *principes*, e.g. *Apoth.* 959 '//quidquam// simulatum', 1011 '//Iudam// Simeonem'; *Ham.* 70 '//caueam// reuolutus', 565 '//genuit// patricidam' and 904 '//sordens// elementum'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For Virgil's use, as endings, of Greek proper names and words, see Norden, *Aeneid* 6, p. 438, e.g. *Aen.* 11,69 and *Georg.* 4,137 'hyacinthus'; *Aen.* 12,87 'orichalco'.

<sup>31</sup> Examples of the one-word forms are *Apoth.* 13 'et Deitatis' and *Ham.* 504 'ex elementis', and of the two-word forms, *Apoth.* 666 'et pede sicco' and *Ham.* 521 '//ut sacra nobis'. For Lucretius' practice, see Bailey, Vol. I, p. 116.

<sup>32</sup> *Enn. Ann.* 20 (Skutch) 'quam mortales perhibebant'.

<sup>33</sup> For such effect in the case of two-word quadrisyllabic endings, see *Apoth.* 583 'Christum bibit aluo'.

<sup>34</sup> *D.R.N.* 1,547 '//rebus// reparandis'.

Occasionally, Prudentius lengthens three or four syllable words by adding *-que* or *-ue*, *Apoth.* 737 'exiguissue'; *Symm.* 2, 319 'animusque', 429 'animusue' and 709 'imperiiue'.<sup>35</sup>

### *Spondeiazontes*

Prudentius uses a significant number of four syllable words with a spondaic fifth foot, always preceded by a dactylic fourth foot. The most notable feature is that, except for a foreign name, *Ham.* 422 'Euuaeorum', all these are purely Latin words: *Apoth.* 285 'incremento'<sup>36</sup>, 817 'interfusam', 864 'intellectum', 932 'incompactae' and 1038 'incompacto'; *Ham.* 266 'incompactum', 390 'interfusum', 622 'peccatores' and 722 'alternantem'; *Symm.* 1,43 'informauit'<sup>37</sup>, 468 'Constantinus', 603 'conscriptorum' and *Symm.* 2,364 'incompactos'. This would suggest that Prudentius was influenced mainly by Lucretius, although Catullus and, later, Ovid also used spondaic endings with purely Latin words.<sup>38</sup>

### *Prosody*

When in the third and fourth century Christian poets began to use biblical names, they would have been uncertain about the correct prosody, in particular of the Hebrew names,

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<sup>35</sup> For this technique, see *Enn. Ann.* 73 (Sk) 'augurioque', 284 'hominumque'; *D.R.N.* 5,1109 'perfugiumque', 1111 'ingenioque'; *Virg. Aen.* 6,11 'animumque', 10,505 'lacrimisque' and *Auson. Mosel.* 1229 'ambiguusque'.

<sup>36</sup> *Virg. Ecl.* 4,49 'incrementum'.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Symm.* 2,267.

<sup>38</sup> For the use of this technique by the Latin poets, see Bailey, Vol. I, pp. 115-17 and Norden, App. 9, pp. 443-6. For Latin words, see *Catull. Carm.* 64,15 'admirantes', 67 'adludabant', 91, 269, 274, 286 etc.; *Virg. Aen.* 2,68 'circumspexit'; 5,320 'interuallo' (cf. *D.R.N.* 2,295 'interuallis') and *Ov. Met.* 1,61 'matutinis'. *Ausonius* used several *spondeiazontes* in *Vers. Pasch.* 23 'amplectenti', 25 'Augustorum', 28 'dilargitus'; *Mosel.* 342 'piscinarum', 452 'disciplinae'.

due to their transcription from Greek into Latin.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the inconsistent prosody of the names from the Scriptures contributed to the licence with which the early Christian poets scanned these words in their metres. At a time when in the Latin versions of the *OT* and *NT* proper names had not yet become uniform, Prudentius' poetry is the best example of the flexibility in the metrical use of biblical names.<sup>40</sup> In the poems with which I am concerned, these are to be found mainly in the *Apoth.* and *Ham.*, where the prosody was dictated primarily by the needs of the hexameter. Since the biblical names are the most significant case of inconsistent or irregular prosody in Prudentius' poems, it is necessary to give a rather detailed list.

1. Examples of conformity with either Hebrew or Greek prosody:

Ābēssālōn *Ham.* 563, 577, 580, *LXX* Ἀβεσσαλώμ, *Vulg.* Absālōm (2 *Sam.* 3:3). The form used by Prudentius was preferred by other Christian authors, e.g. *Jer. Nom. Hebr.* 6, *Aug. In Psalm.* 3,1, but Prudentius seems to have been the first poet to use it in verse. For a later parallel, cf. *Drac. Satisf.* 163.

Āmorraeus *Ham.* 413, *LXX* Ἀμορραῖος, *Vulg.* Amorraeus (*Deut.* 1:4). Cf. *Mar. Vict. Aleth.* 3, 539 'gentis Amorraeae'; *Cypr. Gall. Gen.* 555.

Chănănēus<sup>41</sup> *Ham.* 409 (trissyllabic), *LXX* Χαναναῖοι, *Vulg.* Chananaeus.

<sup>39</sup> For Ausonius' licence in the use of proper names, e.g. *Caes.* 15 *Vespāsianus* and *Ordo* 35 *Mediōlanum*, see Green (1991) p. 574 *ad loc.*

<sup>40</sup> For Prudentius' prosody of biblical names, also see Lavarenne (1933), paras. 140 and 192.

<sup>41</sup> See Lavarenne, *fin.* para. 140. The synizesis in this case, as in the case of 'Mattheus', breaks the classical rule that the first vowel should be short, e.g. *Catul. Carm.* 64,133 'Theseu'; *Virg. Ecl.* 6,30 'Orphea'. For the prosody of the word only Prudentius is quoted as an example in *TLL Onomast.* s.v. 'Chanaan'.

Dāuīd *Apoth.* 418, 999, 1012; *Ham.* 563; cf. Dāuīticus *Ham.* 787, *LXX* Δαυίδ, *Vulg.* David. Cf. *Juven.* 1,121; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 32,6; Auson. *Ephem.* 3,84. For Dāvīd, cf. Commod. *Apol.* 269; Drac. *Laud. dei* 2,664. For Dāvīd, cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 24,599.

Eu(u)aei *Ham.* 422, *LXX* Εὐαίοι, *Vulg.* Hevaei (*Deut.* 7:1), which was usually confused with the Hethaei (*Genesis*). Prudentius provides the only example of the word in poetry.<sup>42</sup>

Hīērēmīas *Ham.* 450 (5-syllabic), *LXX* Ἱερεμίας, *Vulg.* Jeremias, but in Jer., Lact., Commod. the form is 'Hieremias'. Cf. *Juven.* 1,264 Hierēmīas (4-syllabic); Ambr. *Hymn.* 15 'Hic est Hiēremias sacratus matris in aluo'.

Hīsus (=Iēsus disyllabic) *Apoth.* 770, 935, Hīsum 222, Hīsu 417; *LXX* Ἰησοῦς, *Vulg.* Jēsus (*Mt.* 1:16)<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Juven.* 2,106; 4,596 (trisyllabic) Iēsūs; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 25, 151.

Iōhannīs (nom.) *Apoth.* 9, *Ham.* 911 (cf. Iōhannēs Perist. 5, 376), *LXX* Ἰωάννης, *Vulg.* Joannes (*Mt.* 4:21).<sup>44</sup> *Juven.* 1,26 Jōhannēs, but 2,362 Iōhannis (4-syllabic).

Iūda *Apoth.* 1011, *LXX* Ἰούδας, *Vulg.* Iudas (*Gen.* 29:35; *Mt.* 1:3). Cf. *Juven.* 4,511 Iūdas.<sup>45</sup>

Lēuī *Apoth.* 1011, *LXX* Λευεί, *Vulg.* Leui (*Gen.* 29:34).

Mārīa *Apoth.* 643, *LXX* Μαρία, *Vulg.* Maria. Cf. Sedul. *Pasch. Carm.* 2,49 Marīa, but 2, 30 Marīa (fin. vers.).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See *Forcell. Onomast.*, s.v. 'Heuaei'.

<sup>43</sup> For the other forms, see *Mt.* 1:1 (gen.), 1:21 (acc.), 14:12 (dat.) and 8:29 'Jesu' (voc.).

<sup>44</sup> *Forcell. Onomast.*, s. v. Johannes, 'ex diversa pronunc. littera η...Sic. Heins. ex *Puteano*, ut ultima corripitur; sed quinque probatissimi codd. habent Johannes, quae lectio...metro non repugnat'. Cf. *Inscr. Chr.* I 916.

<sup>45</sup> For the poetic reference to Juda, Simeon and Levi, Prudentius could have been influenced by the versification in *Gen.* 49:5-12.

<sup>46</sup> *Forcell. Onomast.*, s.v. Prosod. 'penultima anceps est'.

Nēbrōth *Ham.* 143, *LXX* Νεβρώδ, *Vulg.* Nemrod.

Sīlōa *Apoth.* 680, *LXX* Σιλώαμ, *Vulg.* Siloe (Is. 8:6; *Jn.* 9:7). Cf. *Sedul. Pasch. Carm.* 4, 259 Sīlōam.

Sīmēōn (Symeon) *Apoth.* 1011, *LXX* Συμεών, *Vulg.* Simeon (*Gen.* 29:33)

2. Examples of Prudentius' inconsistent or irregular prosody of biblical names:

Ābrāhām *Apoth.* 363, and Ābrām *Apoth.* 28, *LXX* Ἀβραάμ, *Vulg.* Abraham (*Gen.* 17:5).

Prudentius uses the gen. form Ābrāhae *Apoth.* 364, which is attested in the *Vulg.* (*Gen.* 19:29).<sup>47</sup> Cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 15, 61, but also 31, 583 Ābrāham (fin. vers.).

Ādām (fin. vers.) *Apoth.* 691, 926, 1007; *Ham.* 846, *Symm.* 2, 828, *LXX* Ἀδάμ, *Vulg.*

Adam (*Gen.* 2: 22).<sup>48</sup> For the rather rare gen. form Ādae *Apoth.* 911 and *Ham.* 697, cf.

Tert. *Anim.* 36; Jer. *In Psalm.* 14,4. For Ādam at a female caesura, cf. Auson. *Ephem.* 3,34 and *Vers. Pasch.* 14; in a pentameter, cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 25, 19; 31, 66 (fin. vers.).

Bāhāl *Apoth.* 325, *LXX* Βάαλ, *ITALA* Bahal (throughout). For Bāāl, cf. *Sed. Carm. Pasch.* 5,147.<sup>49</sup>

Bēlīā *Ham.* 520 or Bēlīāde *Ham.* 610, *LXX* Βελίαλ, *Vulg.* Belial (*Deut.* 13:13) It is not well-attested in poetry and Forcellini does not think that Prudentius' prosody is reliable, 'frustra est qui prosodiae leges a Prudentio exigit'.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> For more examples, see *TLL* s.v. 'Abraham', *prosodia*. For the prosody, evidence is found in the Hellenistic Jewish poets, Philo Iudaeus (Senior) who has Ἀβραάμ (āāā)(*S.H.* 681.2), but also Ἀβραάμοιο (āāā)(*S.H.* 686.2), and Theodotus who has Ἀβραάμ (āāā), both in the accusative (*S.H.* 761.1) and in the genitive forms (*S.H.* 762.2).

<sup>48</sup> Almost always, the Christian poets use it in this position, cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 23,308; *Sedul. Pasch. Carm.* 1,366.

<sup>49</sup> *TLL*, s.v. 'Baal', 'primam syllabam producunt Prud., Cypr. Gall. *Iud.* 127; secunda apud poetas longa est'. The form in *Ham.* 610 may owe something to the classical paronymic Bēlīdēs, e.g. Helv. Cinna, *fr.* 1,3 (Courtney), Virg. *Aen.* 2,82.

<sup>50</sup> *Forcell. Onomast.* s.v. 'Belial'. Cf. *TLL* s.v. 'Belia' where the only other example is *Carm. Epigr.* 1347 B. 25 Bēlīal (ca. 400 AD).

Cāīn *Ham.* 1, *LXX* Κάιν, *Vulg.* Cain (*Gen.* 4). Cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 17, 234. Whilst the last vowel remains long, the prosody of the first vowel changes. Cf. Cāīn Mar. Vict. *Aleth.* 2,208.

Emmānūēl *Apoth.* 604 and Emmānūēl *Cath.* 7, 180, *LXX* Ἐμμανουήλ, *Vulg.* Emmanuel. Cf. *Venant. Fort.* 8, 6, 8.<sup>51</sup>

Ĕseias *Apoth.* 595 (trissyllabic), but also *Perist.* 5, 524 Esaias (trissyllabic), *LXX* Ἠσαίας, *Vulg.* Isaias (*Is.* 1:1). Cf. Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 26,195 Ĕsaias. For Ĕsaias, cf. *Juven.* 1,313 (init. vers.); 2,767 (elision).

Gērāsēni *Apoth.* 414, *LXX* Γερασσηνῶν (*Mk.* 5:1) or Γεργεσηνῶν (*Lk.* 8:26), *Vulg.* Gerasa or Gergesa.<sup>52</sup> For Gērāsēni, cf. *Juven.* 2,43.

Gergēsēi *Ham.* 413, *LXX* Γεργεσαῖοι, *Vulg.* Gergesaei (*Gen.* 10:16). Cf. Cypr. Gall. *Jos.* 269 Gergēsi.<sup>53</sup>

Gōmorraeus *Ham.* 842, but also Gōmorreorum *Perist.* 5, 194, *LXX* Γόμορρα, *Vulg.* Gomorrha (*Gen.* 14:2) Cf. *De Sodoma* 163 Gōmōri.

Mattheus *Apoth.* 981 (disyllable), *LXX* Ματθαῖος, *Vulg.* Matthaëus (*Mt.* 10:3). For Matthaëus, cf. *Juven.* 2,96; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 19,81. But see *Venant. Fort.* 5,2,9 Mattēūs.

Mōyses *Ham.* 339, *Apoth.* 51 (gen.) (trissyllabic), Mōses *Cath.* 5, 31 and Moyses *Ditt.* 36 (disyllabic), *LXX* Μωϋσῆς, *Vulg.* Mōyses. For Mōyses, cf. *Sedul.* 3,285. For Moyses (or Moses) (disyllabic), cf. *Juv. Sat.* 14,102. For Mōses, cf. *Juven.*, Paul. Nol. etc.

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<sup>51</sup> *Forcell. Onomast.* s.v. 'Emmanuel', 'Ad syllabarum quantitatem quod attinet, in vocabulo Gr. sunt omnes longae; sic etiam in originario Hebr. praeter primam, ceterae longae; sed metri causa Latini aliquando secundam contrahunt ac tertiam'.

<sup>52</sup> For the forms, see *Jer. Onomast.* For the prosody, see *Forcell. Onomast.* s.v. 'Gerasa' 'uel secunda licenter producitur uel litt. 's' duplicatur'.

<sup>53</sup> For the confusion between the two place names, see *Forcell. Onomast.* s.v. 'Gergesaeus'.

Nāzārēus *Symm.* 1,549 (cf. *Ναζωραῖος Mt.* 2:23), but also Nāzārēnus *Cath.* 7,1 (cf. *Ναζαρηνός Mk.* 1:24), *Vulg.* Nazaraeus (*Mt.* 2:23).<sup>54</sup>

Sābāoth *Apoth.* 833, but also Sābāoth *Cath.* 4,7. The first case follows the Hebrew prosody. *LXX* *Σαββαώθ*, *Vulg.* Sabaoth (*Jer.* 11:20).

Sōlōmōn *Ham.* 576, 579 (*gen.*), *LXX* *Σωλωμών*, *Vulg.* Salomon. Cf. *Apoth.* 512 Sōlōmonia. For the Greek declension *acc.*, cf. *Juvenc.* 2,710 Solomōna.

#### *Prosody of Greek words.*<sup>55</sup>

As with the proper names, Prudentius often changes the prosody of some Greek words for metrical reasons. If his lengthening of accented short vowels may be justified, as in *chārisma Symm.* 2, 1046 (*χάρισμα*), *sophīa Symm.* 1,34 (*σοφία*), however, in the rest of the instances he changes the prosody only for metrical reasons, cf. *cātholicus*<sup>56</sup> *Praef.* 39 and *Apoth.* 2 (*καθολικός*), *ēnigmata*<sup>57</sup> *Apoth.* 331 (*αἰνίγματα*), *cyāneus*<sup>58</sup> *Psych.* 858 (*κύνεος*), *Iudāicus*<sup>59</sup> *Cath.* 12, 42 (*Ἰουδαϊκός*). For the shortening of long vowels, cf. *poēsis Symm.* 2, 52 (*ποίησις*), *idōlīum Apoth.* 186 (*εἰδωλεῖον*), *hēresis Praef.* 39 and *Ham.* 64 (*αἵρεσις*).

#### *Prosody of Latin words.*

There is much licence in Prudentius' scansion of Latin words. Here, I am concerned with the hexameter poems, although it seems that the more complicated the metre, the more

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<sup>54</sup> *Jer. Onomast.* s.v. *Nazareth*, 'unde et Dominus noster atque Salvator Nazaraeus vocatus est; sed et nos apud veteres quasi opprobrio Nazaraei dicebamus, quos nunc Christianos vocant'.

<sup>55</sup> For a full list, see Lavarenne, paras. 141-9.

<sup>56</sup> *TLL* s.v. 'producunt in uersu primam syllabam Damas. Prud. Sidon. Ven. Fort.' This licence is not uncommon in classical verse, e.g. *ἀθάνατος*.

<sup>57</sup> Correct prosody in *Cath.* 10,136. Cf. also *Juv. Sat.* 8,50 'aenigmata'.

<sup>58</sup> Correct prosody in *Symm.* 1,302.

irregular the prosody becomes. For some cases of irregular prosody a precedent is found in the earlier Latin poets<sup>60</sup>, but other cases were due to contemporaneous developments in the Latin language. Thus, Lavarenne argues that the new pronunciation, as well as the different orthography<sup>61</sup>, would have been important reasons for some of the changes.<sup>62</sup> In particular, Prudentius' prosody shows an increased tendency for lengthening of accented short vowels, cf. *Sardīnia Symm.* 2, 946 (cf. *Mart.* 4,60,6 *Sardīnia*).<sup>63</sup>

*Brevis in longo.*

Like Ennius and Virgil<sup>64</sup>, Prudentius lengthened short vowels in arsis, such as at the second foot caesura in *Ham.* 908 'peruigilīs ānimae', *Symm.* 2,527 'difficilīs// operis'; at the third foot caesura in *Ham.* 708 'hac pietate uagus// et', 901 'omnia luminibus// et', *Symm.* 1,395 'incassum arguerē// iam'; at the fourth foot caesura in *Apoth.* 800 'cūiūs// ĩmĩtatio', *Symm.* 1,345 'radios capitīs// ět'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Correct prosody in *Apoth.* 321 and 552. Cf. also *Juv. Sat.* 14,101.

<sup>60</sup> *Symm.* 1,583 'Vatīcanus', cf. *Juv. Sat.* 6,344.

<sup>61</sup> An important case is the choice between a single and double consonants, cf. 'Gerās(s)eni'.

<sup>62</sup> Lavarenne, paras. 150-90. Lavarenne is apologetic regarding Prudentius' prosodic licences and argues that, firstly, they are insignificant if the number of verses is considered and, secondly, modern scholars have been comparing his poetry with that of the Classical poets, which would not have been the case with his contemporaneous readers, whose education would have been of a lower level than that of the contemporaries of the Augustan poets.

<sup>63</sup> Amongst the examples Lavarenne includes *utrāque Apoth.* 320. The latter occurs in *Auson. Epigr.* 103,2 'odit utrāque' and see Green (1991) p. 268 on *Ad Patr.* 22. However, Lavarenne mistook 'utraque' (adv. 'in either case'), as in *Lucr.* 4,86 '...ex summo quoniam iaculantur utraque' for 'utraque' (neutr. pl. of 'uterque').

<sup>64</sup> Norden, Ch. 10, p. 450 f. For examples in Ausonius' pentameters, see *Protr. ad Nepot.* 46, 'conditor Iliadōs et', *Parent.* 6,10 and Green (1991) p. 311 *ad loc.*, and p. xxii.

<sup>65</sup> In *Symm.* 1,92 'iura resignassē// sursum', the lengthening is quite harsh, and therefore, perhaps, should be emended to 'resignando'.

Very often short vowels are lengthened before a combination of a consonant and a liquid or a nasal consonant, and particularly at caesura<sup>66</sup>, e.g. *Apoth.* 351. 396, *Ham.* 527 'longe prae'.

Although some times he uses *duō* correctly, e.g. *Ham.* 4. 11 and 21, at others Prudentius has no objection to lengthening the final vowel of *duō* before a word-break in the third foot, when followed by a single consonant or a combination of a mute and a liquid, cf. *Ham.* 13 'duō/ uariarum', 122 'duō/ fluxerunt'.<sup>67</sup>

(Epic ) *Correption.*

Not unlike other poets, he shortened the final long vowel of the ablative case of the Gerund, cf. *Apoth.* 166 *infundendō*, 253 *gignendō*, 1006 *nascendō* and *redeundō*.<sup>68</sup>

Among the other examples of correption of long vowels are *Apoth.* 212 *quadrupēs*<sup>69</sup> and *Gangēs* *Symm.* 2, 607, unlike Virg. *Georg.* 2, 136 *Gangēs*.

A short vowel is not lengthened before a double consonant, e.g. *Ham.* 188 'de fomitē zeli'.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Auson. *Ludus* 201 and Green (1991) p. 604 ad loc.

<sup>67</sup> Clausen, Virg. *Ecl.* 5,68 where perhaps *duō* is lengthened by 'statuam'. Virgil may not have liked two 's' in 'duos statuam'. However, a parallel for the lengthening of the final vowel is found in Auson. *Epist.* 17,18 'Europamque Asiamque duō uel maxima terrae/ membra'.

<sup>68</sup> *Juv. Sat.* 8,79 and Auson. *Protr. ad Nepot.* 54 'et melicos lyricosque modos profundō nouabis'. For other cases of correption, see Auson. *Praef.* 3,16 and Green (1991) p. 241 comm. ad loc.; *Caes.* 35 *mātricida*, *Prof.* 10,9 *intrōtulere*.

<sup>69</sup> Auson. *Griph.* 39 *bipēs*, *tripēs*; *Parent.* 27,4 *caeleripēs* (by analogy with 'praepes') and Green (1991) p. 326 ad loc.

<sup>70</sup> *D.R.N.* 2,805 'miscere zmaragdos'; 5,1382 'et zephyri'; Auson. *Prof.* 13,3 and Green (1991) p. 348 ad loc.

### *Cui.*

Most surprising is his use of *cūi* which normally is treated as a long monosyllable. It may be that it was used in this way in *Apoth.* 173 and *Symm.* 2,16, where it may be either a long monosyllable, or a pyrrhic.<sup>71</sup> It is used correctly in other forms, cf. *cuīque* *Ham.* 888 and *Symm.* 1,236; *cūius* *Apoth.* 6 and *Ham.* 534. But Prudentius also scanned it as a short monosyllable, cf. *cūi* *Cath.* 3,167; as a disyllable with two short vowels, cf. *cūi* *Apoth.* 812<sup>72</sup>; as an iambus<sup>73</sup>, cf. *cūi* *Symm.* 2,114, perhaps lengthened before the following ‘pr’, or with a long and a short vowel, cf. *cūiquē* *Symm.* 2,89 and *Ham.* 105.

### *Morphology.*

The most striking feature is his habit of using first and second declension forms for the compound adjectives ending in *-color*. In this way he declines ‘*uersicolorus*’<sup>74</sup>, cf. *Ham.* 819 ‘*animas...unicoloras*’ and *Symm.* 2,56 ‘*paries...uersicolorus*’, whilst also using the regular form ‘*uersicolor*’, cf. *Ham.* 294 ‘*aium...uersicolorum*’. Similarly, once he uses ‘*decolorus*’ to suit the trochaic metre (*Perist.* 1,113), although, in the remaining cases, the regular forms are used, cf. *Ham.* 186 ‘*[angelus] decolor*’, 497 ‘*non decolor Indus*’<sup>75</sup>, *Symm.* 1, 504 ‘*nec decolor usus*’.

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<sup>71</sup> *Juv. Sat.* 3,49 ‘*et cui feruens*’ and E. Courtney, *Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, London (1980) p. 163 *ad loc.*

<sup>72</sup> Thus scanned it is found in meters other than hexameters in Auson. *Parent.* 27,2 and *Ephem.* 1,15

<sup>73</sup> For this scansion of *cui*, see Ter. *Maur.* 15,33 and E. Courtney, *Fragmentary Latin poets*, Oxford (1993) p. 425. See also Auson. *Prof.* 4,6 and Green (1991) p. 242 *ad loc.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ham.* 819 ‘*de fontibus unicoloras*’.

<sup>75</sup> For the expression ‘*decolor Indus*’, see Prop. 4,3,10, Ov. *Ars.* 3,130.

*Christian Vocabulary.*<sup>76</sup>

In order to explain the Christian doctrines, Prudentius used Christian terminology or words with a specifically Christian connotation, but like the other Christian poets and to a great extent he also appropriated some of the vocabulary of the classical tradition:

- God: ‘Deus’<sup>77</sup> with an epithet in the meaning of ‘Dominus Deus’ (*Juvenc.* 1,24 ‘Dominumque Deumque’, which is translated from κύριον θεόν), ‘Pater’ (*Apoth.* 309), ‘Dominus’ (*Ham.* 266, *Symm.* 2,204), but also ‘numen’ (*Cath.*). Interesting is his use of ‘Deitas’ (*Apoth.* 13. 76 etc.) in the meaning of *diuinitas*, and as a translation of θεότης.<sup>78</sup> For the concept of God as the creator of the world, the benefactor and ruler of mankind, Prudentius used a wide variety of Latin words, e.g. ‘rex’ (*Apoth.* 152), ‘princeps’ (*Ham.* 150), ‘genitor’ (*Ham.* 378, cf. *Juvenc.* 1,390 ‘summi genitoris’), ‘auctor’ (*Ham.* 299, often used by Paulinus), ‘factor’ (*Apoth.* 667), ‘conditor’ (used less frequently than ‘auctor’), ‘opifex’ (*Ham.* 697), ‘sator’ (*Apoth.* 74; *Symm.* 2,190), ‘repertor’<sup>79</sup> (*Cath.* 4,9 ‘repertor orbis’, cf. *Juvenc.* 1,35 ‘terraeque repertor’). The epithets were borrowed from pagan poetry, e.g. ‘omnipotens’ (*Apoth.* 174), ‘omniparens’<sup>80</sup> (*Symm.* 2,477), ‘Tonans’<sup>81</sup> (*Ham.* 669, cf. *Ov. Met.* 1,170 also at the end of line), ‘perennis’<sup>82</sup> (*Praef. Ham.* 60).

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<sup>76</sup> See Lavarenne, paras. 970-1065. Also Green (1971) Chapter IV ‘The Religious language of Paulinus’, p. 61 ff.

<sup>77</sup> The voc. form *Dee* (*Ham.* 931) was modelled on *θée*.

<sup>78</sup> For *deitas*, see Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1,28; Hil. *In Matth.* 16,4 ‘theotetam quam deitatem Latini nuncupant’; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 7,1

<sup>79</sup> Virg. *Aen.* 7,772; 12,829 ‘hominum rerumque repertor’.

<sup>80</sup> *D.R.N.* 2,706; 5,259 and Virg. *Aen.* 6,595.

<sup>81</sup> In Latin poetry, it is used mostly as an epithet of Jupiter, e.g. Enn. *Ann.* 554 (Sk) ‘Iouis altitonantis’; Hor. *Od.* 3,51 ‘tonantem Iouem’ and Juv. *Sat.* 13,153.

<sup>82</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,804, *Ov. Met.* 15,585 etc.

- Christ: ‘magister’ (*Apoth.* 707, cf. *Commod. Instr.* 2,26,6 ‘reddite uos Christo similes...magistro’), ‘saluator generis Romulei’ *Praef. Symm.* 1, 80; ‘uerbigena’<sup>83</sup> (*Cath.* 3,2). A poetic word used frequently by Christian writers is ‘salutifer’<sup>84</sup> (*Cath.* 3,7). ‘Rediuius’ (*Cath.* 3,204) is used instead of the classical ‘recidiuus’ (cf. *Catul. Carm.* 17,3; but also *Juvenec.* 4,345 ‘Lazarus haec uitae *recidiua* in lumina surget’).
- Hell: ‘chaos’ (*Apoth.* 750, cf. *Auson. Ephem.* 3,15 ‘...et obscurae chaos insuperabile noctis’), ‘abyssus’ (*Apoth.* 781, cf. *Paul. Nol. Carm.* 19,651 *ābysis*) but also pagan terms were employed, ‘abdita *Tartara*’<sup>85</sup> (*Apoth.* 638), ‘Auernus’<sup>86</sup> (*Ham.* 826. 962), ‘*Stygio...Auerno*’ (*Ham.* 128) and ‘*Stygis imum*’ (*Apoth.* 228), ‘*Taenara tristia*’<sup>87</sup> (*Apoth.* 749) and ‘*Charybdis*’<sup>88</sup> (*Apoth.* 747).
- Satan: ‘daemon’<sup>89</sup> (*Ham.* 622) and Apollo (*Apoth.* 402).
- Christians: ‘*Christicolae*’<sup>90</sup> (*Apoth.* 485, *Symm.* 2,1002).
- The Scriptures: ‘*uolumina uatum*’ (*Apoth.* 219, cf. *Hor. Ep.* 2,1,26)
- Pagans and idolatry: ‘*gentes*’ (*Symm.* 2,901), ‘*gentilis*’<sup>91</sup> (*Symm.* 1,1), ‘*gens pagana*’ (*Praef. Symm.* 1,6), ‘*uana superstitio*’ (*Symm.* 1,198), ‘*idololatrix religio*’ (*Ham.* 404), ‘*gens infida*’ (*Apoth.* 550), ‘*idolium*’<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> For these compounds, see the section on word formations below.

<sup>84</sup> As an epithet of gods, see *Ov. Met.* 15,744 (Aesculapius); 15,632 (Delphi). Cf. *Auson. Ephem.* 3,27 ‘*nate patris summi nostroque salutifer aeuo*’.

<sup>85</sup> *D.R.N.* 3,42; 3,966 ‘*Tartara atra*’; 5,1126 ‘*Tartara taetra*’; *Ov. Met.* 1,113 ‘*tenebrosa in Tartara*’ and *Virg. Aen.* 6,543 ‘*ad impia Tartara*’.

<sup>86</sup> *D.R.N.* 6,738; *Ov. Am.* 3,9,27; *Virg. Georg.* 4,493 etc.

<sup>87</sup> For *Taenarius*, cf. *D.R.N.* 6,648 ‘*Taenariis sic faucibus aer*’; *Ov. Met.* 10,13 ‘*ad Styga Taenaria*’; *Virg. Georg.* 4,467 ‘*Taenarias...fauces*’. For the noun ‘*Taenara*’, cf. *Sen. Troad.* 402 and *Stat. Theb.* 2,32.

<sup>88</sup> *Catul. Carm.* 64,156; *Virg. Aen.* 3,420; *Hor. Od.* 1,27,19; *Ovid passim*.

<sup>89</sup> For the irregular prosody of *δαίμων*, see *Paul. Nol. Carm.* 14,24 ‘*daemonas exercet deuinctaque corpora soluit*’. In *Aus. Epigr.* 115,7 ‘*entheia daemone maenas*’, the word is used in its old meaning of divine spirit.

<sup>90</sup> For the adjective, see *Symm.* 1,481; *Paul. Nol. Carm.* 19,331; 25,33 ‘*Christicolam...urbem*’.

<sup>91</sup> For ‘*gentiles*’, cf. *Jer. In Psalm.* 41; *Aug. Retract.* 2,43.

<sup>92</sup> The word has the meaning of ‘*templum idolis scratum*’ (*Apoth.* 186), ‘*idololatria*’ (*Symm.* 1, 568) and ‘*idolum*’ (*Symm.* 1,610).

*Hapax legomena.*<sup>93</sup>

Some nouns and adjectives are formed by adding Prudentius' favourite endings, which are reminiscent of Lucretius' vocabulary<sup>94</sup>, e.g. *Apoth.* 692 *perflamen*, *Ham.* 303 *palpamen*<sup>95</sup>; *Ham.* 875 *traiector*<sup>96</sup>; *Ham.* 404 *Idōlolatrix*; *Ham.* 834 *discruciatu*s; *Apoth.* 208 *turbidulus*<sup>97</sup>; *Apoth.* 832 *sufflabilis* and *Symm.* 2,598 *occidualis*.

For metrical reasons, Prudentius used new adjectival forms of proper names, such as *Symm.* 1,228 'Lēdēius' for the regular form 'Lēdaeus', as in *Ov. Fast.* 1,706, and *Symm.* 1,118 'Nemēus' for the regular form 'Nemeaeus' (*Ov. Met.* 9,235).

Compound nouns ending in *-cola*<sup>98</sup> and *-gena*<sup>99</sup> contribute to the archaic and poetic tone of Prudentius' hexameters, e.g. *Ham.* 634 *nocticola*<sup>100</sup>, 982 *paradisicola* and 787 *Christigena*; and *Symm.* 2,710 *Christipotens*<sup>101</sup>. Compound adjectives, e.g. *Apoth.* 195 *caniformis*<sup>102</sup>, 381 *tripictus*, 495 *flauicomans*<sup>103</sup>, 721 *urbicremus*<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> In Lavarenne, *passim*, the hapax is marked by an asterisk. For the compound words, see paras. 1214-60.

<sup>94</sup> For Lucretius' favourite forms of nouns, see Bailey, vol. I, p. 134-6. For Lucretius' use of compound nouns, see op. cit. p. 133-4, e.g. 2,1081 'montiuagus', 2,1083 'squamiger'; 5,864 'leuisomnus'.

<sup>95</sup> *Virg. Aen.* 6, 246 'libamen'; *Auson. Mosel.* 32 'manamen', and Green (1991) p. 468 *ad loc.*

<sup>96</sup> *Auson. Ephem.* 3,9 'anticipator' (Christ); *Mosel.* 241 'scrutator', cf. *Luc. Phars.* 4,298.

<sup>97</sup> *Mart.* 10,20,2 'rusticulus'.

<sup>98</sup> *Luc. Accius Trag.* 237 'siluicola'; 'caelicola' in *Enn. Ann.* 445 (Sk), *Catul. Carm.* 64,386, *Virg. Aen.* 2,641, *Juv. Sat.* 13,42 etc; *Ov. Met.* 1,193 'monticola'; 5,479 'ruricola'; 10,96 'amnicola'; *Virg. Aen.* 'Appenninicola'.

<sup>99</sup> *Luc. Accius Trag.* 642 'Cadmogena'; 'Troiuigena' in *D.R.N.* 1,465, *Virg. Aen.* 3,359, *Juv. Sat.* 1,100; *D.R.N.* 5,1411 'terrigena' (cf. *Symm.* 1,189) and 1,477 'Graiugena'; *Virg. Aen.* 7,674 'nubigena', 7,773 'Phoebigena', 8,314 'indigena' (*Symm.* 2,501); *Ov. Met.* 3,531 'anguigena', 4,173 'Iunonigena'; 5,250 'aurigena', 14,381 'Ianigena', 14,449 faunigena; *Fast.* 3,865 'draconigena'; *Auson. Ecl.* 19,22 'Saturnigena' and the *hapax legomena* in *Mosel.* 45 'limigena' and 407 'aquilonigena'.

<sup>100</sup> This may be used by analogy with *nocticolor* (*Aul. Gell.* 19,7,6 quoted Laevius; *Auson. Techn.* 8,11).

<sup>101</sup> This is modelled on 'omnipotens', see 'armipotens' in *Stat. Silv.* 3,2,20 and *Auson. Ordo* 28.

<sup>102</sup> *Hor. Od.* 4,14,25 'sic tauriformis uoluitur Aufidus'.

<sup>103</sup> *Auson. Cupid. Cruc.* 11 'crocus auricomans'. The forms ending in *-comans* could be a variant of compounds in *-comus*, e.g. in prose *Petr.* 'flauicomus'; *Tert.* 'alticomus'; *Auson. Ep.* 13,49 'floricomus' and Green (1991) p. 629 *ad loc.* Thus 'altiuolans' (*Enn. Ann.* 81 'seruat genus altiuolantum'; *D.R.N.* 5,433) and Green (1991) p. 629 *ad loc.* Thus 'altiuolans' (*Enn. Ann.* 81 'seruat genus altiuolantum'; *D.R.N.* 5,433) is a poetic variant for 'altiuolus'; 'altitonans' (*D.R.N.* 5,749) for 'altitonus' etc.

<sup>104</sup> *D.R.N.* 2,353 'turicremas propter mactatus concidat aras', cf. *Ov. Ars* 3,393; *Virg. Aen.* 4,453 and *Luc. Phars.* 9,989

### Word formations.

Prudentius combined poetic vocabulary with the language of prosaic Christian writings.

He used 71 nouns ending in *-amen*<sup>105</sup> some cases of which were convenient to end the fifth foot of a hexameter, e.g. *Ham.* 505 *creamen*, *Apoth.* 844 *modulamen*<sup>106</sup>; 134 nouns ending in *-tor*, e.g. *Apoth.* 782 *dissertator*<sup>107</sup>; 32 nouns ending in *-trix*, e.g. *Apoth.* 511 *ultrix*<sup>108</sup>, 550 *negatrix*<sup>109</sup>; 167 nouns ending in *-tus*, e.g. *Apoth.* 420 *aduentus*, *Ham.* 319 *meatus*; diminutives of words, e.g. *Ham.* 595 *corpusculum*<sup>110</sup>

There is a great number of adjectives ending in *-abilis*<sup>111</sup>, e.g. *Apoth.* 276 *demutabilis*<sup>112</sup>, 813 *mensurabilis*<sup>113</sup>, *Ham.* 546 *agitabilis*<sup>114</sup>; adjective ending in *-lis*, e.g. *Apoth.* 982 *carnalis*<sup>115</sup>, *Symm.* 1,547 *pontificalis*<sup>116</sup>; ending in *-osus*<sup>117</sup>, e.g. *Apoth.* 208 *litigiosus*<sup>118</sup>, *Symm.* 2,153 *ambitiosus*; ending in *-eus*, e.g. *Apoth.* 66 *spineus*<sup>119</sup>, *Ham.* 958 *Tartareus*<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> Alternatively, Prudentius used nouns ending in *-mentum* normally found in prose, e.g. *Apoth.* 732 'alimentum', *Ham.* 122 'testamentum'.

<sup>106</sup> Damas. *Epigr.* 21 (63 F.); Ambr. *Hex.* 3,1,5; Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 6,24.

<sup>107</sup> The only other example is found in Claud. Mamert. (fin. 5<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>108</sup> Virg. *Aen.* 11,590.

<sup>109</sup> Tert. *Idol.* 23 'litterae negatrices'; 'dominatrix' in Tert. *Anim.* 22,2 and Auson. *Techn.* 6,6. In Auson. *Mosel.* 82 'habitatrix' is a *hapax*.

<sup>110</sup> Plaut. *Cas.* 843 and Tert. *Anim.* 10. For Lucretius' use of diminutives, see Bailey, vol. I, p. 138, e.g. 'querella' in *D.R.N.* 2,358 and Prud. *Symm.* 2,910; 'loquella' *D.R.N.* 1,39 and Prud. *Apoth.* 235 etc. See Auson. *Hered.* 2 'uillula'.

<sup>111</sup> Auson. *Epigr.* 11,7 'penetrabilis'; in *Grat. Act.* 79 (prose) he used the rare adjective 'transmeabilis'.

<sup>112</sup> Hil. *In Psalm.* 52,12.

<sup>113</sup> Vulg. *Ps.* 38:6 'ecce mensurabiles posuisti dies meos'. This could be used as evidence that Prudentius knew Jerome's translation of the *LXX*.

<sup>114</sup> Ov. *Met.* 1,75 'terra feras cepit, uolucres agitabilis aer'; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 7,50.

<sup>115</sup> Vulg. *1 Cor.* 3:1.

<sup>116</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 1,462; Auson. *Grat. Act.* 42.

<sup>117</sup> Auson. *Ep.* 20(b),9 used the rare adjective 'comosus', see Green (1991) p. 645 *ad loc.*

<sup>118</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 2,3,285; Ov. *Remed.* 670 'litigiosa fora'.

<sup>119</sup> Ov. *Met.* 2,789.

<sup>120</sup> Virg. *Aen.* 6,295; Ov. *Met.* 6,676; Luc. *Phars.* 6,712.

Lucretius may have influenced Prudentius for the use of forms of inceptive verbs ending in *-scere*<sup>121</sup>, e.g. *Apoth.* 64 *splendescere*<sup>122</sup>, 147 *obmutescere*.

Prudentius used adverbs with Lucretian terminations *-ter*, e.g. *Apoth.* 510 *carnaliter*, and *-tim*, e.g. *Apoth.* 858 *articulatim*, 1077 *particulatim*.<sup>123</sup>

For metrical reasons Prudentius used many compound words, e.g. *Ham.* 79 *aequiparabile*<sup>124</sup>, *Ham.* 450 and *Symm.* 2,509 *luctificus*<sup>125</sup>, 2,565 *laetificus*<sup>126</sup>, *Symm.* 2,1051 *centiplicatus*<sup>127</sup>, *Symm.* 2,844 *multiplicor*.<sup>128</sup>

### *Archaic forms.*

Several times Prudentius used the archaic passive infinitive which is a Lucretian feature, cf. *Apoth.* 7 *comprendier*, 474 *dispergier*, 649 *grassarier*, 905 *innectier*, *Ham.* 106 *uenerarier*, *Symm.* 1,423 *circumferrier*, 2,587 *subiungier*, used after the four foot caesura.

Like Lucretius, Virgil and the other poets, he used *olli* in *Apoth.* 305, *Ham.* 139; 544; *ollis* in *Ham.* 730 and *olla* *Epil.* 17. In *Symm.* 1,517; 2,6 etc. *mage* is used before a word beginning with a consonant, after the example of *D.R.N.* 4,81, Virg. *Aen.* 10,481, Ov. *Trist.* 2,479 etc. He used 'potis es' (*Apoth.* 182), 'potis est' (*Apoth.* 79, 80; *Ham.* 37, 534,

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<sup>121</sup> *D.R.N.* 1,103 'desciscere'; 1,185 'crescere'; 1,191 'grandescere'; 2,74 'florescere'; 3,595 'languescere'; 5,1014 'mollescere' etc.

<sup>122</sup> Virg. *Georg.* 1,46; Ov. *Met.* 10,117.

<sup>123</sup> See Bailey, p. 136-7, *D.R.N.* 3,542 'particulatim'.

<sup>124</sup> Plaut. *Curc.* 168. See also Auson. *Ep.* 10,20 'aequiparare', *Techn.* 13,14 'aequipar' and Green (1991) p. 592 *ad loc.*; generally for Ausonius' use of compound adjectives, see *op. cit.* p. 584.

<sup>125</sup> *Aen.* 7,324; Sen. *Phoen.* 132 'luctifica uerba', *Oed.* 3 'lumenque flamina triste luctifica gerens'; Val. *Flac.* 3,292. In Christian writings, Itala *Gen.* 49:12 'luctifici oculi eius Judae a uino'; Damas. *Epigr.* 20,4 'carmine luctifico decorat...suprema amici'. For nouns beginning in *-lucti*, see Ov. *Met.* 1,732 'luctisono mugitu'; Pers. *Sat.* 1,78 'cor luctificabile'.

<sup>126</sup> Enn. *Scaen.* 152; *D.R.N.* 1,193; Auson. *Techn.* 144; Stat. *Theb.* 8,261.

<sup>127</sup> *Juven.* 3,547 'centuplicata dehinc capiet uitamque perennem'; Jer. *Ep.* 66,7 'centuplicato fenore Christi promissa redduntur.'

<sup>128</sup> *Apul. Met.* 'multiplicato studio'.

669; *Symm.* 1,331; 2,982), like Lucretius (before the masculine caesura 1,452; 3,468. 1069 and 4,611).

The archaic gen. sg. for first declension nouns, e.g. *Apoth.* 702 'aquai', after the practice of Lucretius *passim* and Virg. *Aen.* 7, 464.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Bailey wrote the preface to the second edition in 1921, 1922 is the OUP publishing date. Cf. L. Holford-Strevens, "The Dates of C. Bailey's OCT of Lucretius", *CQ* N.S. 50.1 (2000) 306-7.

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