

FRIENDSHIP AND EROTICS IN THE LATE ANTIQUITY VERSE-EPISTLE: AUSONIUS TO PAULINUS REVISITED

Between 389 and 394, Ausonius, rhetor of Bordeaux, wrote a series of challenging verse-epistles to his former pupil Paulinus, future bishop of Nola and saint, at that time domiciled in Spain with his Spanish wife, Therasia. At a period crucial to the development of Christian discourse, in which Paulinus himself would play an important part, Ausonius mobilised a dazzling array of classical devices and reminiscences seemingly targeting Paulinus for ‘failure’ in friendship. Not surprisingly, therefore, this epistolary exchange, comprising three or possibly four extant verse-epistles from Ausonius¹ and two replying verse-epistles from Paulinus,² has been viewed traditionally as charting the demise of a friendship, a view which appears to persist up to the present.³ Apart from the rhetorical gambits found within these epistles, however, there is no concrete evidence of any such close personal relationship. Indeed, it may be noted that the surviving epistles previously addressed by Ausonius to Paulinus make more play with a teacher/pupil, quasi-paternal, relationship than with that of friendship.⁴ More importantly, it may be argued that it is precisely this type of (auto) biographical approach to the epistles which has tended to lead scholars to play down the strong presence of erotic language and

1) Ausonius, *Epistolae* 21–4, in: R. P. H. Green (ed.), *Decimi Magni Ausonii Opera*, Oxford 1999, 249–259.

2) Paulinus, *Carmina* 10 & 11, in: R. P. H. Green (ed.), *The Works of Ausonius*, Oxford 1991, Appendix B, 708–719.

3) Dräger, for example, talks in terms of a ‘friendship crisis’ (P. Dräger [ed.], *D. Magnus Ausonius, Mosella, Bissula, Briefwechsel mit Paulinus Nolanus*, Düsseldorf / Zürich 2002, 292).

4) Ausonius, *Epp.* 17–20, in: Green (as n. 1) 241–249. For example, *si erro, pater sum* (Ep. 17.34–35); *me consultum et quem filius debeat imitari dicas* (ibid. 44–45); *Pauline fili* (Ep. 19.2); *o patrio stringende complexu* (ibid. 15); *Pauline fili* (Ep. 20.3). Subsequently in Ep. 19 Ausonius styles himself *amicus*, but the context is that of a grandiose salutation which also encompasses the titles of *magister* and *parens* (Ep. 19b.23–27).

motifs in the Ausonian side of the correspondence. Even Witke, in spite of his appeal to the notion of poetic 'self-image', is careful to dissociate himself from any imputation of homosexuality.⁵

The aim of this article is to offer a more radical reappraisal of these Ausonian verse-epistles, based on their internal dynamics and drawing on the alternative critical approach of epistolarity. Evolved initially as a critical methodology relating to the study of the epistolary novel, the concept of epistolarity has gained ground as an essential tool for the study of 'literary letters' in general.⁶ As both Rosenmeyer⁷ (in relation to the use of the letter-form in Greek literature) and Kennedy⁸ (in relation to Ovid's *Heroides*) point out, the letter-writing mode carries with it an immediacy which seems to act as a guarantee of authenticity and sincerity. At the same time, the high degree of self-consciousness and self-reflexivity which tends to accompany such letters, both 'real' and 'non-real', points in the opposite direction, that of a greater or lesser degree of 'fictionalisation' which blurs the distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction.'⁹ In the light of this, it may be argued that friendship, like erotics, is merely one of the prisms through which more complex ideas of identity and allegiance can be viewed. Indeed, it will be suggested subsequently that the underlying charge against

5) "Though the literal reading is ridiculous, the poetic significance of the metaphor of the poet as lover is accessible . . . Alcuin of York was later to use more explicitly erotic language in pleading for the return of his wayward alcoholic monk Dodo" (C. Witke, *Numen Litterarum*. The Old and the New in Latin Poetry from Constantine to Gregory the Great, Leiden/Cologne 1971, 3–74, p. 35).

6) The classic work remains that of Altman (J. G. Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, Columbus 1982).

7) "But the epistolary mode encourages . . . readers and critics towards the misguided assumption that letters necessarily reveal a kind of 'pure' emotion, the depths of the writer's soul" (P. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*. The Letter in Greek Literature, Cambridge 2001, 3–4).

8) "Letters thus involve 'writing to the moment', and this can serve to associate them with spontaneity, sincerity and authenticity of emotion, an aspect often admired by readers of works in the tradition of epistolary heroinism and often seen also as discursively feminine" (D. F. Kennedy, *Epistolarity: the Heroides*, in: P. Hardie [ed.], *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, Cambridge 2002, 217–232, pp. 222–3).

9) "Epistolary technique always problematizes the boundaries between fiction and reality" (Rosenmeyer [as n. 7] 5); "every letter is also an artifact purporting to be historically authentic . . ." (ibid. 11).

10) See e.g. C. Conybeare, *Paulinus noster*, *Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Oxford/New York 2000, 62.

Paulinus is that of deserting a common cultural heritage in favour of what is presented as a more radical brand of Christianity.

The discussion which follows starts, accordingly, from the basis that the verse-epistles of both Ausonius and Paulinus are rooted in epistolarity, that is, that they construct a fictionalised relationship between writer and addressee. It will focus on Ausonius' side of the correspondence, as the self-proclaimed instigator of this phase of communication, and will seek to show that the sporadic erotic parallels noted by earlier commentators form part of a wider pattern which presents the verse-epistle as a site where *topoi* drawn from male friendship interact with the language of hetero/homo-erotics. In so doing, it can be seen as conflating two traditions: that of friendship-writing, encapsulated for late antiquity by the treatises of Cicero¹⁰ and practically enshrined in the letter-collections of writers such as Cicero, Seneca and Pliny, and that of the erotic letter, associated with deception and the feminine¹¹ and exemplified by the *Heroides* of Ovid. Such a conflation finds a precedent in Catullus 50, which, as has long been recognized, mingles the diction of erotic verse (*lusimus; delicatos; lepore; incensus; semimortua; incunde; ocelle*) with the reciprocity demanded by friendship (*reddens mutua; hoc ... tibi ... feci ... ex quo perspiceres; precesque nostras ... cave despuas*).¹² It can be seen as offering access to a double tradition of play: *amicitia iocosa*, the banter associated with friendship-writing,¹³ and the ludic playfulness characteristic of Latin poetry in general and of first-person poetry in particular.¹⁴

Ausonius' verse-epistles, however, may seem to extend the parameters of eroticised friendship further, offering an altogether more agonistic manipulation. In particular, it can be argued that the wide variety of genres on which he draws, including epic, elegy, lyric, pastoral and satire, produces a generic fluidity which in turn

11) See Rosenmeyer (as n. 7) 43–4; 344–45.

12) For a recent discussion, see E. Gunderson, Catullus, Pliny and Love-Letters, TAPhA 127 (1997) 201–31.

13) The term *amicitia iocosa* was coined in relation to a twelfth-century relationship (R. E. Pepin, *Amicitia iocosa*: Peter of Celle and John of Salisbury, *Florilegium* 5 [1983] 140–56). Its roots, however, may perhaps be traced back to Cicero's distinction between two types of epistolary style: *familiares et iocosum* and *severum et grave* (Cic. Epp. ad Fam. 2.4.1).

14) For further examples, see E. Oliensis, The erotics of *amicitia*: Readings in Tibullus, Propertius and Horace, in: J. P. Hallett and M. B. Skinner (eds.), *Roman Sexualities*, Princeton 1997, 151–71.

is accompanied by gender fluctuation, as writer and addressee are cast fleetingly in a range of roles and relationships through intertextual allusion. In this context, the concept of the “complex allusion”, defined by Hinds as “teasing play . . . between revelation and concealment”, may seem particularly apt.¹⁵ Here, the poles can be said to be represented by word for word appropriation on the one hand and the semantic cluster on the other, with a variety of gradations in between. In the face of problematic issues of writer-intentionality and reader-receptivity, Nugent’s discussion of Ausonius’ poetic world may offer some reassurance. As she points out, Ausonius’ works in general are characterized by their “much-remarked bookishness”, while his letters in particular evoke the “on-going play of witty conversation among a circle of litterati.”¹⁶ It may be argued that at one level the verse-epistles to Paulinus represent an attempt to draw him back into this world of erudite interchange. More subversively, the exploitation of erotics may be seen as launching an attack on Paulinus’ change of lifestyle through an evocation of the classic triangle familiar from Latin love-elegy, comprising older lover (Ausonius), younger beloved (Paulinus) and rival (Therasia).

Before entering into more detailed analysis it is necessary to signal various textual problems posed by these epistles. Green, whose text will be followed here, offers four verse-epistles by Ausonius relating to this stage, namely Epp. 21–4. Both the ordering of these letters and their number are the subject of ongoing scholarly debate. The order of Ep. 21 (*quarta tibi*) and Ep. 22 (*proxima quae*) reverses that used by earlier editors.¹⁷ The presentation of Epp. 23 and 24 (*discutimus, Pauline*) as two separate letters also goes against traditional practice.¹⁸ Ep. 23/24 is preserved through

15) S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, Cambridge 1998, 23.

16) S. G. Nugent, *Ausonius’ ‘Late-Antique’ Poetics and ‘Post-Modern’ Literary Theory*, in: A. J. Boyle (ed.), *The Imperial Muse. Ramus Essays on Roman Literature of the Empire: Flavian Epicist to Claudian*, Bendigo, Australia 1990, 236–60, p. 249.

17) K. Schenkl (Berlin 1883); R. Peiper (Leipzig 1886); A. Pastorino (Turin 1971); S. Prete (Leipzig 1978). Against Green’s ordering see e.g. D. E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola, Life, Letters and Poems*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1999, 68 n. 84.

18) See e.g. Conybeare (as n. 10) 151. Dräger’s edition gives three epistles and reverts to the traditional order, placing Ep. 22 before Ep. 21.

two distinct manuscript traditions, one of which (associated with the works of Paulinus of Nola) presents a shorter version but includes a block of seven lines absent from the other tradition. Green, following the hypothesis advanced by Pastorino,¹⁹ argues for two successive letters, the second of them a reworking in response to Paulinus' Carmen 11. He complicates the issue, however, by including in Ep. 23 a block of text imported (without manuscript authority) from Ep. 24. Without this, as he himself admits, the letter appears, uncharacteristically, to lack a coherent structure.²⁰ The question of possible influence of Paulinus' Carm. 10 and 11 on this group of verse-epistles is a complicated one and will not form part of the present discussion. Rather, in what follows, the epistles will be treated as self-contained poetic constructs. There will be no assumption of priority between Epp. 21 and 22. Ep. 23 will be viewed as forming a poetic whole with Ep. 24, which makes concrete a number of themes glimpsed only embryonically in the shorter version.

The interplay between erotics and friendship is evident from the epistolary reproach which provides the opening for Ep. 21 and Ep. 22:

*Quarta tibi haec notos detexit epistula questus,
Pauline, et blando residem sermone lacessit;
officium sed nulla pium mihi pagina reddit,
fausta salutigeris ascribens orsa libellis.*

(Ep. 21.1–4)

*Proxima quae nostrae fuerat querimonia chartae
credideram quod te, Pauline, inflectere posset
eliceretque tuam blanda obiurgatio vocem.*

(Ep. 22.1–3)

The evocation of *officium pium*, 'pious duty', can be linked with the demand for reciprocity in Cicero's *Laelius*.²¹ Frequency of

19) A. Pastorino, A proposito della Tradizione del Testo di Ausonio, *Maia NS* 14 (1962) 41–68, 212–43, pp. 223–4.

20) Green (as n. 2) 655.

21) *nihil est enim remuneratione benevolentiae, nihil vicissitudine studiorum officiorumque iucundius* (Cic. *Lael.* 49).

epistolary exchange is one of the obligations of friendship. Indeed, it can be argued that failure to respond to a letter is not only a breach of good manners, but an offence against friendship itself. In the context of the erotic letter, as exemplified by the *Heroides*, complaint (*questus*; *querimonia*) is commonly associated with the charge of seduction and abandonment.²² Friendship and erotics, however, do not necessarily work in the same direction. ‘Blandishments’ (*blando sermone*; *blanda obiurgatio*) are a powerful weapon in the hands of the lover.²³ According to the *Laelius*, on the other hand, ‘flattery’ between friends is unambiguously condemned.²⁴ In the *Laelius*, ‘objurgation’ of a friend is sanctioned, if it is done in a ‘friendly’ manner;²⁵ *iurgia*, ‘brawls’, figure as lovers’ quarrels.²⁶

One feature in particular may serve to point towards the *Heroides* as a possible model. Both of these verse-epistles begin by drawing attention to their status as letters (*epistula*, *chartae*). Such an introductory self-labelling technique is not a standard feature of Ausonius’ surviving verse-epistles, and is indeed absent from Ep. 23/24, which launches directly into the image of the ‘yoke’. It is, however, a technique deployed in the *Heroides*.²⁷ The influence of the *Heroides* may make itself felt in other areas also. Spentzou in her chapter ‘Landscapes of lost innocence’ points to the import-

22) E.g. Penelope to Ulysses, *non ego deserto iacuissem frigida lecto / non quereret tardos ire relictas dies* (Ov. Her. 1.7–8); Briseis to Achilles, *si mihi pauca queri de te dominoque viroque / fas est, de domino pauca viroque querar* (Her. 3.5–6); Oenone to Paris, *Pegasis Oenone, Phrygiis celeberrima silvis / laesa queror de te, si sinis, ipsa meo* (Her. 5.3–4).

23) *his ego blanditiis, si peccatura fuisset / flecterer* (Her. 17.91–2); ... *et tu, me miseram! blandus et una domus* (ibid. 182). Cf. *blanditiis vult esse locum Venus* (Tib. 1.4.71); *tu modo blanditias fac legat usque tuas* (Ov. Ars Am. 1.480).

24) *secerni autem blandus amicus a vero et internosci tam potest adhibita diligentia, quam omnia fucata et simulata a sinceris et veris* (Lael. 95); ... *sic habendum est nullam in amicitii pestem esse maiorem quam adulationem blanditiam assentationem* ... (ibid. 91).

25) *nam et monendi amici saepe sunt et obiurgandi, et haec accipienda amice, cum benevole fiunt* (Lael. 88).

26) *non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem / expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae* (Prop. 1.3.17–18); *sed tamen interdum tecum quoque iurgia nectat / et simulet lacrimas carnificemque vocet* (Ov. Amor. 2.2.35–6).

27) *haec tua Penelope lento tibi mittit, Ulixee / nil mihi rescribas tu tamen: ipse veni!* (Her. 1.1–2); *quam legis, a rapta Briseide littera venit / vix bene barbarica Graeca notata manu* (Her. 3.1–2); *perlege, quodcumque est – quid epistula lecta nocebit?* (Her. 4.3); *perlegis? an coniunx prohibet nova? perlege! non est / ista Mycenaea littera facta manu!* (Her. 5.1–2).

ance there of nostalgia for a vanished “Golden Age”,²⁸ a motif evoked implicitly in Epp. 21 and 22 and more explicitly in Ep. 23/24. Her characterisation of the *Heroides* as “(agonistic) tools of persuasion” is also highly pertinent to Ausonius, particularly in relation to Ep. 22, as will be seen subsequently.²⁹ At the same time, other poetic models may come into play, particularly in relation to Ep. 23/24. The metaphor of the ‘yoke’ may look towards both Statius and Theocritus, as will be discussed below. In what follows, each verse-epistle will be considered in turn, with a view to exploring its internal dynamics and to pinpointing the areas of fictionalisation with their relationship to erotics and friendship, gender and genre.

Ausonius: Ep. 21

Ep. 21 presents a complex and carefully structured composition, which turns essentially on the issue of communication. In concrete terms, this issue is grafted onto the epistolary reproach discussed above. At one level, therefore, it can be said to represent the self-reflexivity characteristic of epistolarity. Its ramifications, however, may stretch further. The epistle as a whole can be said to enshrine a concept of natural harmony in which the activity of poetry puts mankind in tune with the music of nature. Against this explicit concept of ‘naturalness’ is set by implication the ‘unnatural’ behaviour of Paulinus. Familiar from erotic contexts,³⁰ the charge of ‘unnaturalness’ levelled at breaches of good-faith can reach equally into the realm of friendship.³¹ The epistle interweaves elegiac and epic motifs to contrast past, present and future and to set the ‘reality’ of Paulinus’ sojourn in Spain against a geographically unspecified pastoral idyll on the one hand and an equally unlocated solitary abandonment on the other. It culminates

28) E. Spentzou, *Readers and Writers in Ovid’s Heroides*. Transgressions of Genre and Gender, Oxford 2003, 43–76.

29) *Ibid.* 3–4.

30) E. g. Cat. 64.154–7; Virg. Aen. 4.365–9; Ov. Met. 8.119–25.

31) See e.g. comments of Fordyce on Catullus 60, where the unspecified addressee could be either faithless friend or faithless beloved (C.J. Fordyce [ed.], *Catullus*, Oxford 1961, 234). The *Laelius* presents friendship as part of the natural order (Lael. 81).

in a double imprecation, of the land of Spain, and of the unnamed *impius* responsible for Paulinus' defection. The closure, however, can be said to reverse the direction, as negative imprecation is converted into positive 'prayer', that Paulinus be restored. In so doing, the verse-epistle may be said to exploit the performative powers associated with the notion of *carmen* in its most primitive sense of 'magic', 'spell-making', a notion made more explicit in Ep. 23/24.

Green postulates a three part division of Ep. 21 (1–31; 32–44; 45–74),³² Dräger a four part division (1–31; 32–35; 36–44; 45–74).³³ Any straightforward division is partially undermined by a series of internal echoes which serve to confirm the unity of the epistle as a whole. The unity of the first section, for example, is seemingly confirmed by ring-composition playing on Paulinus' 'inactivity', that is, his failure to maintain epistolary contact (*officium*, l. 3, *officiorum*, l. 30; *cessatio*, l. 6, *cessatio*, l. 29). At the same time, the demand for a *salve*, 'greeting', in lines 7–8 finds a verbal reprise in lines 32–33, where it is reinforced by the accompanying demand for a *vale*, 'farewell', while the accompanying question, *quis prohibet ...?* (l. 32) finds its echo in the subsequent *quis ... suavit?* (l. 62) which leads into the second imprecation. Crucial also to the unity of the epistle is the four-fold apostrophe of Paulinus (ll. 2, 28, 50, 60). At its heart lies an opposition between Paulinus' silence (*taciturnus*, l. 26; *taces*, l. 28; *tacuisse*, l. 30) and Ausonius' need to 'speak' (*non possum reticere*, l. 48), the latter cast in terms which recall the rejection of flattery found in the *Laelius* as signalled earlier:

*nec possum reticere, iugum quod libera numquam
fert pietas nec amat blandis postponere verum.*

(Ep. 21.48–49)

Further interplay between friendship and erotics can be seen in the continuation of the opening reproach which introduces the notions of 'scorn' and 'repulse':

*unde istam meruit non felix charta repulsam,
spernit tam longo cessatio quam tua fastu?*

(Ep. 21.5–6)

32) Green (as n. 2) 649.

33) Dräger (as n. 3) 207.

The *Laelius* warns against ‘spurning’ old friendships for new;³⁴ both *spernere* and *fastus* occur in contexts connoting erotic rejection.³⁵ *Repulsa* can likewise have erotic connotations.³⁶ The claim that even enemies receive and return greetings:

*hostis ab hoste tamen per barbara verba salutem
accipit et ‘salve’ mediis intervenit armis*

(Ep. 21.7–8)

draws directly on the *Heroides*.³⁷ In itself, the notion of ‘enmity’ ironically inverts the concept of *amicitia*. At the same time, the Ovidian context, that of Phaedra addressing Hippolytus, may point towards a satiric underlay, that Paulinus fears ‘betrayal’ at the hands of the writer, a theme made overt in Ep. 22. Ausonius’ depiction of his letter as ‘unlucky’, *non felix charta*, finds an echo in the wish that Paulinus entrust ‘favourable marks’, *felices notas*, to a letter:

*quis prohibet ‘salve’ atque ‘vale’ brevitate parata
scribere felicesque notas mandare libellis?*

(Ep. 21.32–33)

This may draw on the elegiac conceit that a love-letter sets out with favourable or unfavourable omens, for example, the pair of poems concerning the writing-tablets in Ovid’s *Amores*. There, the lover laments the return of *infelix littera*, denying the possibility of a meeting with his mistress.³⁸ As will be seen, the motif may be taken up later in relation to epistolary etiquette.

34) *atque hoc quidem videre licet, eos, qui antea commodis fuerint moribus, imperio potestate prosperis rebus immutari, sperni ab eis veteres amicitias, indulgeri novis* (Lael. 54).

35) *quid prodest quod me ipse animo non spernis, Amynta / si, dum tu secutaris apros, ego retia servo?* (Virg. Ecl. 3.74–5); ... *nec dulcis amores / sperne puer* ... (Hor. Carm. 1.9.15–16); *pone, precor, fastus et amanti iungere, nymphe* (Met. 14.762); *unde tuos primum repetam, mea Cynthia, fastus?* (Prop. 1.18.5).

36) *sed tamen haeret amor crescitque dolore repulsae* (Met. 3.395); ... *veneris(que) offensa repulsa* ... (Met. 14.42); ... *longae nulla repulsa morae* ... (Prop. 3.14.26). Cf. *saepe fruar domina, saepe repulsus eam* (Amor. 2.9b.46).

37) *inspicit acceptas hostis ab hoste notas* (Her. 4.6). See Green (as n. 2) 649.

38) *infelix hodie littera posse negat. / omina sunt aliquid* ... (Amor. 1.12.2–3).

The reprise of the reproach which concludes this section foregrounds a paradoxical association between ‘shame’ and ‘pleasure’:

*agnosco pudorem,
quod vitium fovet ipsa suum cessatio iugis,
dumque pudet tacuisse diu, placet officiorum
non servare vices, et amant longa otia culpam.*

(Ep. 21.28–31)

At first sight the *pudor* attributed to Paulinus is the embarrassment resulting from the abandonment of the *officia* pertaining to friendship. Its subsequent replacement by *culpa*, however, may add a deeper layer of meaning and point towards Virgilian associations. Both *pudor* (modesty, disgrace) and *culpa* (blame, guilt) play a prominent part in the presentation of Dido, where they take on overtones of (un)chastity and (un)faithfulness. Dido’s initial declaration of her resolution not to betray the dead Sychaeus, reinforced by the wish that she be struck down . . . *ante, Pudor, quam te violo*,³⁹ is followed shortly by the statement *solvitque pudorem*.⁴⁰ Her passion for Aeneas, revealed through the admission that she might have succumbed *huic uni . . . culpae*,⁴¹ paves the way for the notorious statement that she cloaks her *culpa* with the name of marriage.⁴² The underlying accusation, of dalliance in ‘Carthage’,⁴³ suggests that Paulinus has abandoned his true and lawful ‘love’ for a spurious marriage, a motif which finds a reprise in Ep. 23/24. At the end of the epistle, however, the direction is seemingly reversed, as Ausonius fleetingly adopts the voice of Dido in the concluding curse, precluding any straightforward one to one correspondence. Rather, it should perhaps be seen as one of several contradictory fictions through which the triangular relationship Ausonius / Paulinus / Therasia is presented in these verse-epistles.

According to Green, this section as a whole turns around the theme of ‘noise’.⁴⁴ In fact, it may rather turn on the issue of ‘re-

39) Aen. 4.27.

40) Ibid. 55.

41) Ibid. 19.

42) *coniugium vocat; hoc praetexit nomine culpam* (ibid. 172).

43) The lovers are said by Rumour to ‘cherish’, *fovere*, the winter in debauchery; Aeneas is accused by Mercury of wasting ‘idleness’, *otia*, in the Libyan lands.

44) Green (as n.2) 649.

sponsiveness', a point brought out by Dräger, who signals the repetition of the prefix *re-*.⁴⁵ The first part incorporates the pastoral idyll referred to earlier, as it moves from the 'shouting' of rocks, through the 'murmuring' of rivers, the 'susurration' of bee-grazed enclosures, via the 'musical modulation' of reed-infested banks and the 'trembling speech' of pine trees shaken by the wind, to the 'hiss' of serpents and the 'tiny substitute for voice' of breathing fish. The two lines which preface it, playing on the 'echoing' of human speech by caves and groves, can be said to import an element verging on pathetic fallacy and to introduce the notion of nature in tune with man:

*respondent et saxa homini, et percussus ab antris
sermo redit, redit et nemorum vocalis imago.*

(Ep. 21.9–10)

What follows, however, may import a discordant note as it enacts a shift into the man-made sounds of Dindymian songs, the 'striking' of cymbals, the 'stamping' of feet, the re-echoing of hollow drums, the 'shaking' of the rattles of Isis, the 'ringing' of the bronze of Dodona and the 'beating' of basins. The move from 'natural' to 'unnatural' is accompanied by a shift from soft seduction (*murmura / susurrat / modulatio musica / tremulum*) to the infliction of violence (*flictu / icta / agitant / ictae / verbere*) and the production of harsher sounds (*reboant / tumultus / tinnitus*).

The notion of disruption may be underscored by two contrasting Virgilian echoes, one from the *Eclogues*, the other from the *Aeneid*. The first,

Hyblaeis apibus saepes depasta susurrat

(Ep. 21.12)

recalls the first *Eclogue*,⁴⁶ where it comes from a context dealing with impending 'exile'. Like Meliboeus, it may appear, Paulinus

45) Dräger (as n. 3) 207.

46) *hinc tibi, quae semper, vicino ab limite saepes / Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti / saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro* (Ecl. 1.53–5). See Green (as n. 2) 649.

has been 'forced' to leave the pastoral paradise; like Tityrus, *fortunatus senex*, Ausonius is able to stay.⁴⁷ The second,

cymbala dant flictu sonitum (Ep. 21.20)

is associated with the arising of 'harsh battle',⁴⁸ and is followed there by a simile which threatens rain, hail, and storm.⁴⁹ In poetic terms, the coming of 'war' is associated with the ending of the Golden Age.⁵⁰ It may seem, accordingly, that the existence of this pastoral paradise is threatened by Paulinus' change of heart, a motif embroidered at length in Ep. 23/24.

The intrusion of mortality may find support from elsewhere. Ausonius' reference to *vocalis imago* seems to conflate Ovid's depiction of Echo, who pined away for love of Narcissus, as *vocalis nymphe*⁵¹ with the beating of rocks which causes fear in bees in Georgics 4.⁵² Echo will subsequently be invoked by name. The motif of the talkative pine:

cumque suis loquitur tremulum coma pinea ventis
(Ep. 21.14)

occurs in Virgil⁵³ and before him in Theocritus.⁵⁴ In Eclogue 8, it is associated with *pastorum amores*, 'pastoral loves', and with the activity of poetry. In Theocritus, it precedes the death for love of Daphnis, the poet-shepherd. At the other end of the spectrum, the phrase *reboant . . . tympana* (Ep. 21.21) is to be found in Catullus 63,

47) Roberts, discussing the use of Eclogue 1 in relation to Paulinus' Carmen 11, argues convincingly for a reverse appropriation of these roles by Paulinus (M. Roberts, Paulinus, *Poem 11, Vergil's First Eclogue and the Limits of Amicitia*, TAPhA 115 [1985] 271–82). He makes no mention, however, of its appearance in Ausonius.

48) . . . *tum scuta caevaeque / dant sonitum flictu galeae, pugna aspera surgit* (Aen. 9.666–7). See Green (as n. 2) 650.

49) Aen 9.668–11.

50) Cf. Virg. Georg. 1.505–9; Ecl. 4.31–6.

51) *vocalis nymphe, quae nec reticere loquenti / nec prior ipsa loqui didicit, resonabilis Echo* (Met. 3.357–8).

52) . . . *aut ubi concava pulsus / saxa sonent vocisque offensa resultat imago* (Georg. 4.49–50). See Green (as n. 2) 649.

53) *Maenalus argutumque nemus pinosque loquentes / semper habet* (Ecl. 8.22–23).

54) Theocr. Idyll. 1.1–2. See Green (as n. 2) 649.

where Attis cuts himself off from civilisation in order to follow Cybele.⁵⁵ Here, perhaps, it can be read as undercutting what has gone before and hinting that the exile of Paulinus is self-imposed rather than enforced. More damagingly, the allusion to Cybele, together with the reference to Isis, may represent the first of several hits against the part played by Therasia in Paulinus' new way of life.

Green characterises the second section (ll. 32–44) as turning on the theme of 'brevity'.⁵⁶ While brevity is certainly its dominant motif (*brevitate* / *brevitas* / *brevius* / *brevitate*), the guise in which it appears may play on contemporary notions of epistolary etiquette which, according to Conybeare, favoured conciseness over prolixity.⁵⁷ Here, however, the idea that 'brevity is courteous', *est etenim comis brevitatis* (Ep. 21.38), seems to take on rather the nature of a jibe. Any reply, Ausonius implies, is politer and more acceptable than none. At the same time, Ausonius may also introduce an erotic overlay which looks towards the acceptance or rejection of amorous 'advances'. The demand that Paulinus 'entrust' marks to 'a letter' (*mandare libellis*) is re-enforced by a disclaimer, that it need not 'burden the tablets' (*oneret . . . tabellas*) with multiplicitous speech. The examples which follow play on Laconic speech and Pythagorean discourse. The Spartans are said to have 'satisfied' the angry Philip of Macedon with the single word 'no',⁵⁸ Pythagoras to have quelled futile debate with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. The Ovidian lover, sending out his tablets, encourages the girl not to 'weary her fingers' with writing, but to mark them with the single word 'come'.⁵⁹ Propertius, too, ponders on the content of missing tablets in terms of whether a favourable or unfavourable message had been *mandata tabellis*.⁶⁰

Epistolary etiquette forms a prelude to the third section, turning as Green suggests, on a double imprecation. The first of these, directed against Spain:

55) *ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant* (Cat. 63.21). See Green (as n. 2) 650.

56) Green (as n. 2) 649.

57) Conybeare (as n. 10) 22–4.

58) As Green drily remarks, "This (refusal of admission to Sparta) may not have pleased him" (Green [as n. 2] 651).

59) *quid digitos opus est graphio lassare tenendo? / hoc habeat scriptum tota tabella: 'veni!'* (Amor. 1.11.23–4). In the course of this poem, as here, *tabellas* three times ends the line.

60) *forsitan haec illis fuerint mandata tabellis / irascor quoniam es, lente, moratus heri . . . aut dixit: 'venies hodie, cessabimus una . . .'* (Prop. 3.23.11–15).

imprecor ex merito quid non tibi, Hiberia tellus?
(Ep. 21.53)

may conflate two epic sources. While its formulation resembles the curse on Egypt found in Lucan's *De bello civili*,⁶¹ the substitution for *precor* of *imprecor* may also recall Dido's curse on Rome from the *Aeneid*.⁶² It is Dido's words which will be echoed in Ausonius' concluding prayer:

*haec precor, hanc vocem, Boeotia numina, Musae,
accipite et Latiis vatem revocate Camenis.*
(Ep. 21.73–74)⁶³

While the Dido allusion points to an equation of Paulinus with Aeneas, any straightforward equation of Spain with Italy is precluded by the context of the Lucan, which wishes drought, sterility and decay onto an enemy of Roman civilisation.⁶⁴ The latter may help to explain the seeming factual discrepancy in Ausonius' succeeding depiction of 'dry Lérida' with its 'cast-down ruins',⁶⁵ of which Green comments, "A's picture of its decline ... is perhaps exaggerated ...".⁶⁶ Rather than presenting a 'realistic' description of the present state of Spain, Ausonius is surely painting a vengeful picture of wished-for destruction. Ausonius' paradise faces destruction through the removal of the beloved: let Paulinus experience the same. The prayer which precedes this, that Spain become the object of external attack and the breeding-ground of internal sedition, may again conflate Lucan and Virgil.⁶⁷ Lucan offers a verbal

61) *quid tibi, saeva, precor pro tanto crimine, tellus?* (Luc. 8.827). See Green (as n. 2) 651.

62) *litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas / imprecor, arma armis; pugnent ipsique nepotesque* (Aen. 4.628–9).

63) *haec precor; hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo* (Aen. 4.621); *accipite haec ... / et nostras audite preces* (ibid. 611–2). See Green (as n. 2) 653.

64) *vertat aquas Nilus quo nascitur orbe retentus / et steriles egeant hibernis imbribus agri / totaque in Aethiopum putres solvaris harenas* (Luc. 8.828–30).

65) *... aut quae deiectis iuga per scruposa ruinis / arida torrentem Sicorim despectat Ilerda?* (Ep. 21.58–59).

66) Green (as n. 2) 652.

67) *te populent Poeni, te perfidus Hannibal urat / te belli sedem repetat Sertorius exul* (Ep. 21.54–5).

precedent,⁶⁸ but the technique of projecting historical ‘fact’ as prophecy is Virgilian. At the same time, the conflation of sources may be seen as paving the way for a feature which becomes more explicit in Ep. 23/24, that is, the representation of Spain as an anti-Rome.

The second curse, against an unnamed *impius*, is introduced through a rhetorical question:

*quis tamen iste tibi tam longa silentia suasit?
impius ut nullos hic vocem vertat in usus.*

(Ep. 21.62–3)

The identity of the *impius* is open to debate. Green implies, without ever quite naming her, that it should be identified with Paulinus’ wife, Therasia,⁶⁹ an interpretation seemingly influenced by the allusion to *Tanaquil tua* in Ep. 22. As will be seen, however, even the resonance of that attack may be less straightforward than it appears on the surface. Dräger, more cautiously, suggests this as a possible interpretation.⁷⁰ Witke, on the other hand, offers the solution of what he terms a “straw Paulinus”, that is, a figure standing in for but deflecting criticism from Paulinus himself.⁷¹ While the detail, as will be seen, fits in better with an attack on Paulinus, it seems possible that there is an element of deliberate ambiguity here. The introductory question can be seen to parallel the earlier, “Who prevents you from writing ‘greetings’ and ‘farewell’?” Again, the answer anticipated might appear to be either ‘some-one’ or ‘no-one.’ If Paulinus himself is regarded as the target, the apparent deflection may serve to soften the imprecation. Indeed, it can be argued that the deflection stems from and reflects the charge that Paulinus is not the Paulinus of old:

vertisti, Pauline, tuos, dulcissime, mores.

(Ep. 21.50)

68) *quique feros movit Sertorius exul Hiberos* (Luc. 2.549). See Green (as n. 2) 651.

69) “*quis* not *quid*; A. has his suspicions” (Green [as n. 2] 651); “... he gives the answer to his earlier question *quis prohibet?*” (ibid. 653); “Paulinus took exception to this [sc. *Tanaquil tua*] ..., the first mention of an individual after many hints” (ibid. 654).

70) Dräger (as n. 3) 211.

71) Witke (as n. 5) 23.

At the same time, an attack on the influence of a disguised Theresia might equally be construed as an attack on Paulinus' 'manhood', a feature which characterises Ep. 22.

The imprecation echoes but inverts the pastoral evocation of the first section, offering a reprise which is almost chiasitic:

*gaudia non illum vegetent, non dulcia vatam
carmina, non blandae modulatio flexa querellae;
non fera, non illum pecudes, non mulceat ales,
non quae pastorum nemoralibus abdita lucis
solatur nostras echo resecuta loquellas.*

(Ep. 21.64–68)

Dulcia carmina replaces *Dindyma cantica* (l. 16); *modulatio flexa* echoes *modulatio musica* (l. 13); *ales* replicates *ales* (l. 17). The implication, as Dräger suggests, is that Paulinus, through his new way of life, has cut himself off from the pleasures of music and poetry.⁷² At the same time, Ausonius may also be playing on the notion of the turning of tables by the scorned lover. The replacement of the earlier *vocalis imago* (l. 10) by the more explicit *echo* may point again towards Ovid's recounting of the story of Echo and Narcissus, where the nymph takes pity on the 'miserable boy' and gives back his dying 'alas'.⁷³ Paulinus' 'impiety' will rob him even of this consolation when he suffers the same fate of unrequited love.

The notion of 'reciprocity' may persist as the imprecation continues with a picture of mindless wandering in pathless places which culminates in the figure of Bellerophon:

*tristis, egens, deserta colat tacitusque pererret
Alpini convexa iugi, ceu dicitur olim
mentis inops coetus hominum et vestigia vitans
avia perlustrasse vagus loca Bellerophonotes.*

(Ep. 21.69–72)

72) Dräger (as n. 3) 296. On the use of 'echo' effects earlier in the epistle, see *ibid.* 208.

73) ... *quotiensque puer miserabilis 'eheu' / dixerat, haec resonis iterabat vocibus 'eheu'* (Met. 3.495–6).

It seems likely, as suggested by both Green⁷⁴ and Trout,⁷⁵ that this comparison represents an attack upon Paulinus' present way of life. The image of Bellerophon would subsequently be added to the pagan armoury as a means of satirising the misanthropic tendency of ascetic monks.⁷⁶ As part of the 'curse', however, it may also form part of a reciprocal reversal. As Paulinus has shunned the pastoral paradise, so let him be shunned by nature; as he has shunned Ausonius, so let him shun and be shunned by mankind. The *Laelius* employs the parallel of Timon of Athens to argue that even the most hardened misanthropist cannot refrain from seeking someone "in whose presence he may vomit forth the venom of his hatred".⁷⁷ At the same time, Ausonius may also have in mind the figure of the disappointed lover, who takes to the mountains and the deserted wastes.⁷⁸ In addition, there may be a final allusion to poetry. The proximate source of the allusion to Bellerophon is the *Tusculan Disputations*.⁷⁹ Behind this again lies the Homeric original, where it is prefaced by the statement that he is "hateful to all the gods".⁸⁰ Ausonius' concluding prayer may pit pagan deities against Christian. Paulinus has 'shunned' the power of the Muses. Unless they 'recall' their bard, he, in turn, may find himself *inops mentis*, lacking in inspiration and mental resource.

Ausonius: Ep. 22

A comparison of Ep. 22 with Ep. 21 reveals a number of differences. Ep. 22 is noticeably shorter (35 lines as opposed to 74). As with Ep. 21, the main issue is that of communication. Here, however,

74) Green (as n. 2) 652–3.

75) Trout (as n. 17) 71.

76) Y.-M. Duval, Recherches sur la Langue et la Littérature latines. Bellerophon et les Ascètes chrétiens: 'Melancholia' ou 'Otium?', *Caesarodunum* 3 (1968) 183–190, pp. 184–185.

77) ... *tamen is pati non possit, ut non anquirat aliquem, apud quem evomat virus acerbitatis suae* (Lael. 87).

78) Ecl. 10.52–4; Prop. 1.1.11–12; Met. 10.76–7. The prototype may be Acontius. See Rosenmeyer (as n. 7) 111–2.

79) *ut ait Homerus de Bellerophonte: 'qui miser in campis maerens errabat Aleis / ipse suum cor edens, hominum vestigia vitans'* (Cic. Tusc. 3.63). See Dräger (as n. 3) 212.

80) Iliad 6.200.

it is presented under a slightly different guise. The core of the verse-epistle seemingly preaches empowerment through letter-writing by a series of *exempla*, drawn principally from Ovid, which cast Ausonius in the role of *praeceptor amoris*. Unlike Ep. 21, which ends with a ‘public’ curse and prayer, Ausonius here exploits the paradox of letters as ‘private’ ciphers, ‘silent’ until given a voice, meaningless until deciphered by the addressee (*tacitis telis*, l. 15; *tacituro pomo*, l. 17; *notas inaspicias*, l. 22; *non respondentes formas*, l. 26). This tack facilitates a focus on ‘secrecy’ and the introduction of an overtly satirical note, through allusions which appear to cast Paulinus rather than Ausonius in a female and / or subservient role. The satire, centring on the notion of subjugation, is rooted in a framework which imputes to Paulinus fear of some *proditor* or *quaesitor* and which culminates in the recommendation that Therasia, *Tanaquil tua*, be kept in ignorance. Even the epistle’s closing demand for reciprocity is made in markedly unequal terms, which may seem to violate the Ciceronian demand for ‘parity’ in friendship.⁸¹

As with Ep. 21, verbal signposting plays an important part in the structure of this verse-epistle. Lines 1–3 introduce Ausonius’ complaint, lines 4–5 Paulinus’ silence, leading to a double question, *non licet? anne pudet?* (l. 6), which can be paralleled with the *agnosco pudorem / quis prohibet?* of Ep. 21.⁸² The central block is introduced through a form of internal ring-composition which highlights the motifs of fear (*timor*, l. 8; *timetur*, l. 11; *times*, l. 30; *vereris*, l. 30) and treachery (*proditor*, l. 10; *prodi*, l. 30). These motifs are linked into a further linguistic nexus built around the notions of shame (*pudet*, l. 6; *pudibunda*, l. 16) and secrecy (*occulta*, l. 12; *teguntur*, l. 12; *textit*, l. 19; *celandi*, l. 28; *clandestinas*, l. 29). At the same time, paronomasia highlights an opposition between power / powerlessness, silence / speech: ‘woven threads’ (*licia texta*, l. 14) bring to light what authority has attempted to conceal (*non licet*, l. 6; *licentia*, l. 13; *teguntur*, l. 12; *textit*, l. 19). Within this block, the three *exempla* taken from Ovid are followed by a double injunction (*incide*, l. 21; *imitare*, l. 23), delivered under the guise of Ovidian ‘instruction’.

81) *sed maximum est in amicitia superiorem parem esse inferiori* (Lael. 69); *quam ob rem, ut ei, qui superiores sunt, submittere se debent in amicitia, sic quodam modo inferiores extollere* (ibid. 72).

82) Ep. 21.28,32.

The motif of ‘shame’ is introduced initially in a context which on the surface exploits male/male relations of friendship, filial piety and patronage:

... *anne pudet, si quis tibi iure paterno*
vivat amicus adhuc, manesque obnoxius heres?
 (Ep. 22.6–7)

The explanation offered here by Green, that Paulinus ‘fears’ to be seen as a ‘legacy-hunter’, a standard topos of satire, fits with the satirical thrust of the epistle as a whole.⁸³ The resonances, however, may be as much metaphorical as literal. At the end of the epistle Ausonius will remind Paulinus of his role as *praeceptor* and *largitor honorum*, teacher and patron. Taken in conjunction with the ambiguity inherent in *obnoxius*, ‘liable to punishment’ or ‘dependent’, ‘servile’, it may seem to hint that Paulinus resents his inferiority, his position as successor to Ausonius’ poetic glory and political prestige. In similar fashion, the claim that Ausonius still ‘lives as a friend’ may both renew the accusation that Paulinus is derogating the duties of friendship and look towards future hopes of immortality. It is Ausonius rather than Paulinus who will win the title of faithful friend through his verse-epistles. At the same time, the satirical implications of ‘inheritance’ may extend further. In Ep. 24, Paulinus’ breach of ‘good faith’ will be contrasted with the yoke imposed upon ‘pious heirs’ by their respective fathers,⁸⁴ while the expression *obnoxius heres* might be thought to conceal an attack on Paulinus’ marriage to a wealthy ‘heiress’.⁸⁵

Friendship becomes entwined with erotics in the development of the motif of ‘fear’ which follows. Its sarcastic introduction, *ignavos agitet talis timor ...* (Ep. 22.8), ‘let such fear disturb the cowardly’, may appear to play on the traditional formulation ‘Fortune helps the brave’, proverbially applied to lovers.⁸⁶ This paves the way for the notion of ‘betrayal’:

83) Green (as n. 2) 653. Cf. Dräger (as n. 3) 205.

84) Ep. 24.8–11.

85) Cf. e.g. Dräger’s “reiche Erbin” (Dräger [as n. 3] 288.)

86) *fortis fortuna adiuvat* (Terence, Phorm. 203). Cf. *ignavis precibus Fortuna repugnat* (Met. 8.73); *fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus* (Tib. 1.2.16).

... *vel si tibi proditor instat
aut quaesitoris gravior censura timetur,
occurre ingenio, quo saepe occulta teguntur.*

(Ep. 22.10–11)

While it is possible, as Green suggests, that the reference here to some ‘traitor’ or ‘inquisitor’ constitutes an allusion to the circumstances under which Paulinus had left southern Gaul,⁸⁷ at a figurative level the terminology appears to echo the quasi-legal use of *non licet*. Building on the preceding accusation that Paulinus persists *in lege tacendi* (Ep. 22.5), it may look rather towards the figure of the *index*, ‘informer’, which appears in Ovidian contexts relating to sexual infidelity.⁸⁸ The ‘charge’ which Paulinus will be said to fear is that of *nostra amicitia*, ‘friendship with me’. In addition, the suggestion that Paulinus have recourse to *ingenium* to elude discovery points heavily in the direction of Ovid. *Ingenium*, coupled with *sollertia*, is the term applied by Ovid to the deceit of Philomela, the first of the *exempla* to follow.⁸⁹

Friendship and erotics, however, do not necessarily work in the same direction. Rather, particularly in the context of satire, they can be used against each other to set up an internal tension. The mock-didactic block which follows, ironically offering Paulinus instruction in the art of exchanging secret correspondence, can be seen to look subversively in two directions. In itself, the stress on secrecy would appear to contravene the ethos of ‘openness’ demanded by friendship.⁹⁰ Secrecy finds its place, however, in the

87) According to Green, Paulinus had faced a murder charge after the death of his brother (Green [as n. 2] 654). The evidence for this depends upon the interpretation of Paulinus’ *Carm.* 21.416–20. This indicates that the brother in question died violently and that Paulinus’ property came under threat of confiscation and public auction. It is not clear, however, how precisely the two events were related. See e. g. Conybeare (as n. 10) 4.

88) ... *bene si celabitur index / notitiae suberit semper amica tuae* (*Ars Am.* 1.397–8); *quod si stulta negas, index ante acta fatebor / et veniam culpa proditor ipse meae* (*Amor.* 2.8.25–6). Cf. the depiction of the raven as *non exorabilis index* (*Met.* 2.546). Dräger, rejecting Green’s suggestion, argues that Ausonius has in mind either Therasia herself or, following Pastorino, ‘treacherous slaves’, Dräger (as n. 3) 205.

89) ... *grande doloris / ingenium est, miserisque venit sollertia rebus* (*Met.* 6.574–5).

90) *quid dulcius quam habere quicum omnia audeas sic loqui ut tecum?* (*Lael.* 22); ... *ne quid fictum sit neve simulatum* [sc. *in amicitia*] (*ibid.* 65).

elegiac topos of deceiving a jealous spouse or lover.⁹¹ It is Ovid who sets himself up in the *Ars Amatoria* as *praeceptor amoris*, and Ovid who supplies the reader there with detailed instructions on the use of writing to deceive a ‘crafty husband’, *vafer maritus*, or ‘vigilant guardian’, *vigil custos*, in a passage which will subsequently find a direct echo. The three *exempla* which follow here, of the raped and mutilated Philomela (ll. 13–15), the ‘innocent’ virgin Cydippe (ll. 16–17), and the servant of Midas charged to keep the secret of his ass’ ears (ll. 18–20), all reveal an Ovidian link. The prominent placing of the unnamed *Threicii (regis)* seems to echo the *Metamorphoses*, which similarly begins its narrative with the words *Threicius Tereus*.⁹² Cydippe is said to have ‘entrusted’ her love to an apple. *Commisit* parallels the preceding *mandavit* (of Philomela’s tapestry) and the succeeding *credidit* (of the barber’s betrayal), suggesting that Ausonius is conflating the motif of her receipt of the message-apple, deriving from Callimachus, with her letter-response as offered by the *Heroides*. The barber whispers the secret into *depressis scrobibus*, a ‘sunken trench’, in seeming imitation of the phrase *scrobibus ... opertis* as used in Ovid’s recounting of the tale.⁹³

All three Ovidian contexts offer further satiric possibilities through associated notions of ‘shame’, ‘modesty’, and ‘secrecy’. As with Ep. 21, however, there is no straightforward one to one correspondence. In the case of Philomela, shame is associated with the victim of lust. Procne is said there to have unveiled *ora ... pudibunda*, the ‘shameful face’ of her sister,⁹⁴ and to have wished to mutilate the organs which took away her *pudor*.⁹⁵ The need for secrecy is enforced upon her, but the desire for secrecy belongs initially to Tereus, who wishes to hide the shameful secret which threatens his previously high reputation.⁹⁶ The mutilation is said to have resulted in the apparent removal of *facti index*,⁹⁷ the web itself presented as *indiciū sceleris*.⁹⁸ The pair of letters in *Heroides*

91) Tib. 1.2.15–24; Amor. 1.4.15–28.

92) Met. 6.424.

93) Met. 11.189. See Green (as n. 2) 654.

94) Met. 6.604.

95) Ibid. 616–7.

96) *clarum ... nomen* (Met. 6.425); *claro ... tyranno* (ibid. 436).

97) Ibid. 574.

98) Ibid. 578.

repeatedly evoke Cydippe's 'modesty', proved through the act of blushing.⁹⁹ While Ausonius dubs her *pudibunda virgo*, he highlights her failure to blush, *nec erubuit tacituro conscia pomo* (Ep. 22.17), recalling perhaps Catullus 65, where the girl, 'betrayed' by the love-gift which rolls from her lap in the presence of her mother, is suffused with a 'conscious blush', *consciis rubor*.¹⁰⁰ This Cydippe, accordingly, may be less 'innocent' than she might appear on the surface. In the case of the third story, secrecy is enforced upon the barber, but *turpis pudor*, the base mark of 'shame', attaches to Midas.¹⁰¹ Ausonius imports erotic connotations even into this last, as *fidissima tellus* plays the role of 'confidante' and betrayal comes through an 'eavesdropper', the 'breathed-into reed', *inspirata harundo* (Ep. 22.19–20). At the same time, the cause of Midas' punishment, his rejection of the civilised music of Apollo in favour of the barbarous piping of Pan, may also be linked with the attack on Paulinus' desertion of the pastoral paradise found in Ep. 21.

The stratagems which follow can be seen to offer an ironic juxtaposition of female and male, erotics and friendship. The first, that of 'incising letters with milk' to be subsequently revealed by the application of ash, is borrowed, as mentioned previously, from an Ovidian context which instructs the female in adultery.¹⁰² In relation to the situation of Paulinus, the effect may be to cast him in the light of locked-in wife or mistress. Ausonius will subsequently proclaim his power to 'unlock', *reserare*, the secret words of the ancients (l. 29); the opening reproach lamented the failure of his previous letter to 'draw forth', *elicere*, Paulinus' voice. At the same time, the use here of *prodere* for 'revealing', picking up the earlier *proditor*, may make a telling point. In relation at least to the keeping of guilty secrets, as regards Tereus and Midas, the *exempla* may work rather as counter-*exempla*. If the analogy with Catullus is accepted, the same is true of Cydippe. In contrast, the second

99) *quid pudor ante subit? nam, sicut in aede Dianae / suspicor ingenuas erubuisse genas* (Her. 20.5–6); *nomine coniugii dicto confusa pudore / sensi me totis erubuisse genis* (Her. 21.111–2); *iam pudet, et timeo, quamvis mihi conscia non sim / offensos videar ne meruisse deos* (ibid. 47–8). Cf. also the transference of the motif to Hymenaeus (ibid. 167–8).

100) Cat. 65.24.

101) Met. 11.180.

102) Ars Am. 3.627–8.

stragem, the use of Spartan cipher-rods, seemingly offers a more manly and appropriate means. Again, however, there may be a sting in the tail. Ausonius here further exploits the paradox between ‘speech’ and ‘silence’. It is only when the writing-material is *solutus*, ‘loosed’, from the message-stick that the message is ‘scrambled’. *Solvere*, however, can signify both ‘opening’ a letter¹⁰³ and ‘unlocking’ the tongue.¹⁰⁴ The emphasis placed here on the compatibility of the ‘cipher-rods’, *tereti ligno* (l. 24), *consimilis ligni* (l. 27), points towards friendship. Messages which pass between friends have been encoded at one end and must be decoded at the other. This, however, can be said to depend upon ‘likeness’ of minds, a prerequisite for friendship.¹⁰⁵ Only if Paulinus regains his ‘proper’ mind-set will he be able to communicate with his friend in security.

The epistle culminates in the figure of Tanaquil, *Tanaquil tua nesciat istud* (Ep. 22.31). The identification with Therasia finds confirmation in several directions. Like the Etruscan Tanaquil, *peregrina mulier*,¹⁰⁶ Therasia is ‘foreign’; like her, she is aristocratic. Tanaquil’s ambition makes her the cause, as Green points out, of her husband’s departure from his birthplace.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, her concern with ‘celestial prodigies’, a factor noted generally by commentators, offers an ideal scapegoat for Paulinus’ change of *mores*. It is less clear, however, as often implied, that she is the principal target.¹⁰⁸ The thrust of the verse-epistle as a whole suggests that the reference offers a further means of effeminising Paulinus, a point implied by Dräger’s comment that Tanaquil is proverbial for ‘a wife ruling her husband’.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the allusion may target Paulinus in another direction. While Tanaquil is a maker of kings, Livy’s account also characterises her husband, Tarquinius Priscus,

103) *ecquid ubi e Ponto nova venit epistula, palles / et tibi sollicita solvit ur illa manu?* (Ov. Trist. 5.2.1–2).

104) *dum linguam ad iurgia solvit ...* (Met. 3.261).

105) *disparis enim mores disparia studia sequuntur, quorum dissimilitudo dissociat amicitias* (Lael. 74).

106) Liv. 1.47. 6.

107) Green (as n. 2) 654.

108) E. g. “No doubt, following a common human trait, Ausonius blames a nearby person for what had happened” (Witke [as n. 5] 20); “In the poem’s closing lines, however, Ausonius issues a far more serious challenge ... casting Therasia as the source of his social dereliction” (Trout [as n. 17] 69).

109) Dräger (as n. 3) 206.

as driven by ambition, *cupidine maxime ac spe magni honoris*.¹¹⁰ ‘Kingship’ has already been emphasised in the context of shameful secrecy, in relation to both Tereus, *Threicii regis*, and Midas’ *vitium regale* (l. 18). One further, more damaging, association may remain. *Tanaquil tua* occurs also in Juvenal’s sixth Satire,¹¹¹ where, as Witke points out, it characterizes the evil wife, “bent on her husband’s downfall, and the death of her sister, mother-in-law and other relatives”.¹¹² If, as seems likely, Juvenal is there conflating the ambitious Tanaquil with the murderous Tullia, the overspill onto Paulinus may conflate the ambitious Tarquinius Priscus with the tyrannical and ‘wife’-murdering Tarquinius Superbus.¹¹³

Ausonius: Ep. 23/24

Ep. 23/24 presents the most complex and elaborate of this group of verse-epistles. Whereas in Epp. 21 and 22 the issue of communication is represented through the requirements of epistolary etiquette, translated into the demand for a reply, in Ep. 23/24 it is introduced more obliquely and formulated in terms which play on an oscillation between physical and spiritual absence. The epistle turns on the charge that Paulinus is shattering the ‘yoke’, a multi-valent term which, as will be seen, encompasses friendship, erotics and even ‘marriage’. Both the compass of the epistle and its range of manipulative devices is much broader. The latter include the catalogue-form, west versus east, countryside versus city, praises of Italy, the return of the Golden Age and the notion of cosmic upheaval. Paulinus’ ‘private’ defection is set against a wider ‘public’ backdrop, which pinpoints the threat (to cosmic order), the agent (Nemesis) and the consequences (natural and cultural disharmony). The epistle culminates in the envisioned ‘return’ of Paulinus, presented in terms which point towards the traditional ceremony of *adventus*, ‘(triumphal) arrival’ invested with over-

110) Liv. 1.34. 1.

111) *consulit ictericae lento de funere matris / ante tamen de te Tanaquil tua, quando sororem / efferat et patruos ...* (Juv. 6.565–7).

112) Witke (as n. 5) 20.

113) This may find confirmation in Paulinus’ riposte, that he has no Tanaquil as wife but Lucretia, that is, he is no ambitious tyrant but an overthrower of tyranny (PN, Carm. 10.191–2, in: Green [as n. 2] 713).

tones of 'kingship' and 'divinity', motifs, it will be argued here, trailed earlier in the epistle and perhaps in the sequence as a whole.

As suggested earlier, Ep. 23, as it stands in Green, reveals the basic skeleton of this epistle. In particular three main semantic patternings can be seen to emerge. The first, as Green suggests, plays on the image of the 'yoke' (*iugum*, l. 1; *iunctis*, l. 2; *iugalem*, l. 9; *disiungere*, l. 19). In conjunction with this is a subsidiary nexus which highlights the notion of 'unity' (*concordia*, l. 3; *consorte*, l. 7; *compago*, l. 15). The second section is dominated by the notion of 'faith' (*fides*, ll. 16, 24; *fiducia*, l. 32; *fidere*, l. 38). The third section, by contrast, is unified by syntax, which moves from a double imperative (*accurre*, l. 39; *appropera*, l. 41) through a rapid verbal fire of third-person presents (*adest*, l. 44; *linquit*, l. 44, *subit*, l. 46; *ingreditur*, l. 47; *labitur*, l. 47; *obvertitur*, l. 48; *praevertit*, l. 50; *pulsat*, l. 51). The shift is underpinned by the anaphora of *iam*, found in virtually each clause and culminating in the doublet *iam iam* (l. 51). The same patternings appear in Ep. 24 with the addition of four further key-terms, namely *culpa* (ll. 7, 19, 95), *aevum* (ll. 11, 33, 39), *cura* (ll. 12, 70, 111) and *populus* (ll. 30, 83, 122).

The metaphor of the 'yoke' is laid at the opening of the epistle:

*Discutimus, Pauline, iugum, quod certa fovebat
temperies, leve quod positu et tolerabile iunctis
tractabat paribus concordia mitis habenis.*

(Ep. 23.1–3 = Ep. 24.1–3)¹¹⁴

In Ep. 24 it is given increased prominence by the subsequent formulation,

tam placidum, tam mite iugum ... (Ep. 24.8)

The resonances of this metaphor can be seen as crucial for any reading of the epistle as a whole. Witke renders it straightforwardly as the 'yoke of friendship'.¹¹⁵ While this finds some justification in the catalogue which follows, there may be other possibilities.

114) Ep. 24 has two differences: *nota* for *certa*; *venerabile* for *tolerabile*. Both variants can perhaps be linked with the increased emphasis elsewhere on the 'public' ramifications of the act of 'shattering'.

115) Witke (as n. 5) 36.

Dräger continues to refer to the ‘friendship yoke’, but links the metaphor primarily with the imagery of fetters and chains as found in love-elegy.¹¹⁶ In fact, the metaphor may seem to blur the distinction between friendship and erotics through the ‘bond’ of friendship familiar from friendship-writing.¹¹⁷ Such a blurring can also be seen in the twelfth Idyll of Theocritus, which offers a number of points of contact with this epistle.¹¹⁸ The speaker there, celebrating the return of a ‘beloved youth’ after a brief absence, envisages the possibility of future immortality, ‘they loved one another under an equal yoke’,¹¹⁹ perhaps represented here by *paribus habenis*, subsequently glossed as “loved and loving in return”.¹²⁰ The notion of ‘return’ conjurs up the reciprocity which is integral to friendship. The idyll as a whole, however, is cast in the language of homoeroticism. Significantly, such a reciprocated relationship is envisioned there as a return to the Golden Age.¹²¹

More subversive still is another potential model, which brings in the notion of ‘marriage’ and seems again to target the Ausonius / Paulinus / Therasia triangle. In *Silvae* 3.5, persuading his wife to leave Rome for Naples, Statius recalls how Venus ‘joined’ her to him,¹²² and employs the image of bridle and reins to profess himself a willing and ‘docile’ recipient of the marriage-yoke:

... tua frena libens docilisque recepi,
et semel insertas non mutaturus habenas
usque premo ...¹²³

116) Dräger (as n.3) 233, 247. As he suggests there, the image of the ‘yoke’ is particularly visible in Horace, where it often seems to have negative overtones: for example, *sic visum Veneri, cui placet impares / formas atque animos sub iuga aënea / saevo mittere cum ioco* (Hor. Carm. 1.33.10–12); *nondum subacta ferre iugum valet / cervice* (ibid. 2.5.1–2).

117) ... *benevolentiae coniunctionem* ... (Lael. 23); ... *quasi propinquitate coniunctos atque natura* (ibid. 50); ... *amabilissimum nodum amicitiae* ... (ibid. 51). Cf. *vincla concordiae* (Cic. Fin. 2.117).

118) Green (as n.2) 656.

119) Theocr. Idyll. 12.15.

120) Ibid. 16.

121) Ibid. 15–16.

122) ... *quam mihi sorte Venus iunctam florentibus annis / servat et in senium* ... (Stat. Silv. 3.5.23–4); cf. *ingales* (ibid. 69).

123) Silv. 3.5.26–8. Ausonius will similarly employ the notion of ‘docility’ in relation to the chariot team of Mars.

As with the *Idyll* of Theocritus, this *sermo*, ‘metrical address’,¹²⁴ offers several points of thematic contact with Ausonius’ verse-epistle: an opposition between the ‘leisure’ of the countryside and the unrest of the city,¹²⁵ praise of (southern) Italy for its temperate climate,¹²⁶ and an opening profession of belief in the addressee’s ‘good faith’ accompanied by a dismissal of the ‘Rhamnusia’ (Nemesis).¹²⁷

The violence inherent in the use of *discutere* to present the ‘shattering’ of the yoke, a claim subsequently repeated and laid unambiguously at the door of Paulinus, is emphasised by the language of ‘nurturing’ and ‘harmony’, *fovere*, *temperies*, *concordia mitis*, against which it is set. This terminology may carry philosophical overtones pointing towards a disruption of cosmic harmony, elevating a ‘private’ drama into a ‘public’ catastrophe. *Temperies*, glossed by Green as “matching of minds”,¹²⁸ may rather conform to its more usual sense of ‘temperateness’, that is, some kind of harmonious balance between extremes.¹²⁹ As such, it is often linked with philosophy and even cosmology, for example in relation to the equation of the human life-cycle with that of nature,¹³⁰ to the conditions necessary for the creation of life¹³¹ and to the five zones of Eratosthenes.¹³² Ausonius will subsequently

124) See *Silv.* 3.praef. and comments of Hardie (A. Hardie, *Stattius and the Silvae*. Poets, patrons and *epideixis* in the Graeco-Roman world, Liverpool 1983, 192).

125) *pax secunda locis et desidis otia vitae / et numquam turbata quies somnique peracti* (*Silv.* 3.5.85–6); cf. . . . *otia que inter / vitiferi exercent colles* (*Ep.* 24.83).

126) *quas* [sc. *sedes*] *et mollis hiems et frigida temperat aestas* (*Silv.* 3.5.83).

127) *non metuo ne laesa fides aut pectore in isto / alter amor; nullis in te datur ire sagittis / – audiat infesto licet hoc Rhamnusia vultu* (*ibid.* 3–5); cf. . . . *vindex Rhamnusia* . . . (*Ep.* 24.44).

128) Green (as n. 2) 656.

129) Green’s rendition is backed by a reference to Paulinus’ use of the expression *temperies mentis*. The passage in question, however, may itself point rather to a balance between childish *simplicitas* and elderly *gravitas* (*PN*, *Carm.* 28.174–9). See also Dräger (as n. 3) 233.

130) *excipit autumnus, posito fervore iuventa / maturus mitisque inter iuvenemque senemque / temperie medius, sparsus quoque tempora canis* (*Met.* 15.209–11).

131) *quippe ubi temperiem sumpsere umorque calorque / concipiunt, et ab his oriuntur cuncta duobus / cumque sit ignis aquae pugna, vapor umidus omnes / res creat, et discors concordia fetibus apta est* (*Met.* 1.430–3).

132) *quarum* [sc. *plagarum*] *quae media est, non est habitabilis aestus; / nix tegit alta duas; totidem inter utramque locavit / temperiemque dedit mixta cum frigore flamma* (*ibid.* 49–51).

set Paulinus' youth against his own age and the temperateness of Bordeaux against the more extreme climate of Spain. In turn, *concordia* may recall the philosophical doctrine of 'harmony of opposites', as in Ovid's paradoxical *discors concordia*.¹³³ *Fovere* similarly finds philosophical applications in Lucretius which link it with birth and growth.¹³⁴ The motif of cosmic disruption is made concrete through three mythological *exempla* found in the extended Ep. 24:

*hoc tam mite iugum docili cervice subirent
Martis equi stabuloque feri Diomedis abacti
et qui mutatis ignoti Solis habenis
fulmineum Phaethonta Pado mersere iugales.*

(Ep. 24.15–18)

In Homer, the horses of Ares are associated with 'Terror' and 'Fear',¹³⁵ while the flesh-eating mares of Diomede are graphically portrayed in the *Metamorphoses* as "fat with human blood".¹³⁶ It is Ovid, too, who offers an extended account of Phaethon's disastrous chariot-ride, with its threatened return to 'ancient chaos'.¹³⁷

The formulation of the complaint of 'desertion' furthers the notion of 'upheaval'. In spite of slight differences between Ep. 23 and Ep. 24, the central point is the same, that one partner cannot do the work of two:

*discutitur, Pauline, tamen, nec culpa duorum
ista, sed unius tantum tua; namque ego semper
contenta cervice feram. consorte laborum
destituor, nec tam promptum gestata duobus
unum deficiente pari perferre sodalem.*

(Ep. 24.19–23 = Ep. 23.6–9)¹³⁸

133) Ibid. 433.

134) E. g. Lucr. 1.807–8; *ibid.* 1032–4.

135) *Iliad* 15.119–20.

136) Met. 9.194.

137) *si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli, / in chaos antiquum confundimur!* (Met. 2.298–9).

138) In Ep. 23, the first two lines are condensed: *discutimus, sed tu tamen reus; ast ego semper ...*

In itself, the phrase *contenta cervice* is capable of ambiguity, connoting either contentment or straining effort. Its positioning in the line, however, as Dräger notes, points towards the *Georgics*.¹³⁹ The context there, highlighting the failure of agriculture and civilisation after the death of livestock from plague, may impart a further irony. Just previously, Virgil has depicted the ploughman unyoking the bullock grieving for its partner's death, paralleled here by Ausonius' depiction of himself as deprived *consorte laborum*, of his 'partner in work'.¹⁴⁰ Paulinus' 'death', however, is metaphorical rather than literal, and seemingly self-imposed. At the same time, Ausonius' language may again conflate friendship and erotics. The suggestion that one *sodalis*, 'friend', has 'defaulted', may recall the claim in the *Laelius* that 'defaulting' from virtue can lead to the failure of friendship.¹⁴¹ *Consors*, on the other hand, like *iugalis* which appears for *sodalis* in Ep. 23,¹⁴² can indicate marriage partner as well as work partner.

As the protest is developed, ambiguity may persist:

*non animus viresque labant, sed iniqua ferendo
condicio est oneri, cum munus utrumque relicto
ingruit acceduntque alienae pondera librae.*

(Ep. 23.10–12 = Ep. 24.24–26)

The reference to *munus* would seem to indicate, as Green suggests, that Ausonius is complaining of his inability to perform both sets of 'duties' pertaining to friendship.¹⁴³ It is less certain, however, as he also claims, that the metaphor of the yoke remains unchanged.¹⁴⁴ His suggestion that *libra* here should be taken as 'weight' rather than 'balance' would produce a virtual doublet, "... when both duties fall upon the one who is left and the weights of another's weight are added", with Ausonius simply repeating the claim that he has been left to carry the full weight of the obliga-

139) *contenta cervice trahunt stridentia plaustra* (Georg. 3.536). See Dräger (as n. 3) 234–5.

140) ... *it tristis arator / maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvenum / atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra* (Georg. 3.517–9).

141) *difficile est amicitiam manere, si a virtute defeceris* (Lael. 37).

142) *deficiente alio solum perferre iugalem* (Ep. 23.9).

143) Green (as n. 2) 656.

144) *Ibid.*

tions. In fact, this may obscure a shift in sense from *onus* to *munus* to *pondera*. The latter can also carry the technical sense of weights used in a scale. At the same time *alienus* can connote the stronger sense of ‘alien’, ‘stranger’.¹⁴⁵ It seems possible that Ausonius is here taking advantage of a double ambiguity, the fact that the Greek term ζυγόν as found in Theocritus’ ‘equal yoke’, can also connote ‘balance’, and the grammatical ambivalence of *librae* as genitive or dative. If the latter reading is adopted the phrase could be read as an accusation that Paulinus is adding his ‘weights’ to the scale of a ‘stranger’. In other words, marriage with the foreign Therasia has led him to withdraw his support from his former yoke-partner, thus rendering the survival of the relationship impossible. The *Laelius* claims that friendship arises more naturally with *cives* and *propinqui* than with *peregrini* and *alieni*.¹⁴⁶ Subsequently Ausonius will complain of Paulinus that he is “placing his trust in”, perhaps even pledging his faith to, “foreign friends” (*peregrinis fidere amicis*, Ep. 23.38 = Ep. 24.110).

The catalogue of friendship occurs in both Ep. 23 and Ep. 24, but in a slightly different form. The pairings of Nisus and Euryalus, Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Phintias are common to both, while that of Theseus and Pirithous appears only in Ep. 23, and that of Scipio and Laelius only in Ep. 24. Although the effect in each case is slightly different, the nuances may remain closer than Green suggests,¹⁴⁷ foregrounding the issue of immortality and in the case of Ep. 24 linking it with the Golden Age. In Ep. 23, the catalogue follows on from a block which sets Ausonius’ fidelity against Paulinus’ lack of good faith:

*obruar usque tamen, veteris ne desit amici
me durante fides memorique ut fixa sub aevo
restituant profugum solacia cassa sodalem.*

(Ep. 23.16–18)

145) Conybeare suggests that the weights of an “alien scale”, presumably that of Paulinus’ more radical brand of Christianity, are being piled on Ausonius. While this takes account of the stress on *alienus*, it seems not prepared for by what has gone before (Conybeare [as n. 10] 156).

146) Lael. 19.

147) Green (as n. 2) 655.

Ausonius' declaration of his own willingness to endure (*obruar usque tamen; me durante*) is tied into a further hypothetical endurance (*veteris ne desit amici fides*). The latter expression is again grammatically ambivalent: it can be rendered as either 'faith in' or 'faith of' an old friend. Either way, its 'reality' is undercut, both by the transmutation of *vetus amicus* into *profugus sodalis*, 'runaway companion', and by the implicit recognition that any hopes of his return are no more than *solacia cassa*, 'vain consolations'. The phrase *memori . . . fixa sub aevo*, 'fixed in mindful eternity', points towards Virgil's promised immortalisation of Nisus and Euryalus:

*fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo.*¹⁴⁸

A partnership cannot survive in the absence of one partner, nor a memory of faithful friendship, the consolation offered in death, be transmitted to posterity if one partner 'deserts'. At the same time, a reminiscence of the Virgilian intervention, seemingly bestowing approval on a private 'relationship' which has compromised a public mission, can be seen to further the (homo)erotic overtones of this epistle.¹⁴⁹

The catalogue is introduced by an accusation of impiety which recalls the attack on *impius* found in Ep. 21:

*impie, Pirithoo disiungere Thesea posses
Euryalemque suo socium discernere Niso;
te suadente fugam Pylades liquisset Oresten
nec custodisset Siculus vadimonia Damon.*

(Ep. 23.19–22)

There, it was argued, the attack was a form of deflected curse, spilling over onto both Paulinus and Therasia. The verbal similarity of these lines with a passage in Martial, attacking a malicious trou-

148) Aen. 9.446–7. Dräger's rendition makes this explicit, "impressed deep on the memory of posterity" (Dräger [as n. 3] 125). Green acknowledges the allusion, yet translates "imprinted upon my aged memory" (Green [as n. 2] 656).

149) Cf. "This dying-together is in effect the epic's most consummated marriage" (E. Oliensis, *Sons and Lovers: Sexuality and Gender in Virgil's Poetry*, in: C. Martindale [ed.], *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Cambridge 1997, 294–311, p. 310).

ble-maker, may suggest that the same ambiguity persists here.¹⁵⁰ Such *exempla* used in a straightforwardly positive fashion are common in friendship-writing. For example, that of Pylades and Orestes occurs in the *Laelius*,¹⁵¹ while that of Damon and Phintias appears elsewhere in Cicero's writings.¹⁵² As with the pairing of Nisus and Euryalus, however, the introduction here of Theseus and Pirithous may again introduce an erotic overlay, as demonstrated by its homoerotic and deheroicising treatment in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵³ Moreover, the catalogue form in itself is open to manipulation. Similar catalogues are found in a variety of Ovidian contexts, for example, in the *Tristia* to illustrate the adage that friendship is only proved in times of difficulty,¹⁵⁴ or that loyalty provokes admiration rather than anger even in enemies.¹⁵⁵ More overtly subversive is its use in the *Ars Amatoria* where each pairing is twisted to produce a potential erotic triangle and to illustrate the decadence of present-day 'friendship'.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, the catalogue form is also used to immortalise pairs of 'lovers' in love-elegy.¹⁵⁷

In Ep. 24 the catalogue is framed by lines which switch the emphasis from 'private' to 'public'. At the same time the notion of immortalisation may take on overtones of deification which herald the *adventus* to come:

*quantum oblectamen populi, quae vota bonorum
sperato fraudata bono! gratantia cuncti
verba loquebantur, iam nomina nostra parabant
inserere antiquis aevi melioris amicis.*

(Ep. 24.30–33)

150) *te fingente nefas Pyladen odisset Orestes, / Thesea Pirithoi destituisset amor* (Mart. Epig. 7.24.3–4). As Dräger points out, Martial's third pair is Amphinomus and Anapius rather than Damon and Phintias as Green suggests (Dräger [as n. 3] 235).

151) Lael. 24.

152) Cic. Off. 3.45; Tusc. 5.63.

153) *cui* [sc. *Pirithoo*] *'procul' Aegides 'o me mihi carior' inquit / 'pars animae consistit meae!'* ... (Met. 8.405–6).

154) Trist. 1.5.19–24.

155) Trist. 1.9.27–34.

156) Ars Am. 1.743–752.

157) See e. g. catalogue in Propertius (Prop. 2.34B.87–94). Cf. ... *nos, Delia, amoris / exemplum cana simul uterque coma* (Tib. 1.6.85–6); *sic Nemesis longum, sic Delia nomen habebunt, / altera cura recens, altera primus amor* (Amor. 3.9.31–32).

The verbal play between *bonorum* and *bono*, ‘good men’ and ‘blessing’, may point towards a potential for ambivalence in *vota*, ‘wishes’, ‘prayers’. This is picked up subsequently as Nemesis is presented as the punisher of human presumption, *grande ... verbum* and *nimiis ... votis* (Ep. 24.43–44). *Oblectamen* may recall the *variae oblectamina vitae* of *Silvae* 3. 5.¹⁵⁸ Just as Naples and its environs are praised there for their mixture of nature and culture, so will Bordeaux be depicted later in this epistle.¹⁵⁹ The continuing absence of Paulinus, however, will be presented as the cause of seasonal disruption and infertility.¹⁶⁰ As Witke notes,¹⁶¹ the resonances of this are both public and private. They conflate the death of Daphnis,¹⁶² subsequently deified and invoked with the prayer *sis bonus o felixque tuis!*,¹⁶³ with the absence or presence of ‘personal’ beloveds elsewhere in the *Eclogues*.¹⁶⁴ Within this frame, the frustrated hope of a renewed Golden Age also becomes more explicit through the reference to *melius aevum*. Subsequently Ausonius will claim *pares fuimus ... dispere in aevo*, ‘we were equal in (an) unequal age’ (Ep. 24.39), playing, it would seem, both on the disparity of age (about 40 years) and on the decadence of the present generation.

The catalogue itself employs what may be viewed as a syntactical trick:

*cedebat Pylades, Phrygii quoque gloria Nisi
iam minor et promissa obiens vadimonia Damon.*
(Ep. 24.34–35)

As threatened in Ep. 23, Pylades is ‘unyoked’ from Orestes, Nisus from Euryalus and Damon from Phintias, thus leaving bereft the member of the partnership particularly noted for faithfulness. The example which takes pride of place here is that of Scipio and Laelius:

158) *Silv.* 3.5.95.

159) *Ep.* 24.82–90.

160) *Ep.* 24.91–94.

161) Witke (as n. 5) 33–35 *passim*.

162) *Ecl.* 5.34–39.

163) *Ecl.* 5.65.

164) Of the departure of Alexis, *omnia nunc ridet; at si formosus Alexis / montibus his abeat, videas et flumina sicca* (*Ecl.* 7.55–6); of the return of Phyllis, *Phyllidis adventu nostrae nemus omne virebit, / Iuppiter et laeto descendet plurimus imbri* (*ibid.* 59–60). Cf. also the presentation of Alexis in *Ecl.* 2.

*nos documenta magis felicia, qualia magnus
Scipio longaeuque dedit sapientia Laeli.*

(Ep. 24.36–37)

As well as replacing the dubious pairing of Theseus and Pirithous, this can be seen to perform a self-reflexive function which draws on both the *Laelius* and Horace's *Satires*. In the *Laelius*, Laelius himself is made to express the hope that their friendship will be immortalised, thus joining the "scarcely three or four pairs of friends named from all ages".¹⁶⁵ The Horatian echo can in itself be seen as 'proof' that this immortalisation has taken place.¹⁶⁶ In relation to Ausonius and Paulinus, however, the (re-)establishment of *melius aevum*, here fleetingly located within the Roman Republic, seems more problematic. Both in the *Laelius*¹⁶⁷ and in the Horace¹⁶⁸ Scipio is noted primarily for his *virtus*. According to the *Laelius*, *virtus* is the essential basis of friendship.¹⁶⁹ Paulinus, however, can be said to have defaulted from virtue by his rejection of *fides*.

The historical *exemplum* of Alexander the Great which follows is more overtly negative. Significantly, it is again built around the notion of the yoke:

*ocius illa iungi fatalis solvere lora
Pellaeum potuisse ducem reor, abdita opertis
principiis et utroque caput celantia nodo.*

(Ep. 24.40–42)

The play on the notion of hidden ends, *abdita opertis principiis*, and a double-knot, *utroque caput celantia nodo*, suggests an underlying metaphorical application on the lines of the cipher-rods in Ep. 22. The *Laelius* talks of *amabilissimus nodus amicitiae*, 'the most lovely / loveable knot of friendship'.¹⁷⁰ The Gordian knot, as

165) ... (*quod*) *ex omnibus saeculis vix tria aut quattuor nominantur paria amicorum, quo in genere sperare videor Scipionis et Laeli amicitiam notam posteritati fore* (Lael. 15).

166) ... *virtus Scipiadae et mitis sapientia Laeli* (Hor. Sat. 2.1.72). See Green (as n. 2) 660; Dräger (as n. 3) 236.

167) Lael. 11.

168) The Horatian context turns on the concept that Lucilius spared only *Virtuti atque eius amicis*, 'Virtue and its friends' (Hor. Sat. 2.1.70).

169) *virtus, inquam ... et conciliat amicitias et conservat* (Lael. 100).

170) Lael. 51.

Ausonius signals to another addressee in a different context, could not be 'loosed', only brutally severed by Alexander,¹⁷¹ who figures in Roman satire as a type of unlimited ambition.¹⁷² It may seem, accordingly, that Ausonius is hinting at an alternative equation, this time between Alexander and Paulinus, targeted as responsible for 'shattering the yoke'. Here again, the Spanish Therasia may offer a secondary target through a potential equation with Nemesis, presented as the enemy of western culture:

*Paulinum Ausoniumque, viros quos sacra Quirini
purpura et auratus trabeae velavit amictus,
non decet insidiis peregrinae cedere divae.*

(Ep. 24.56–58)

As with the allusion to *Tanaquil tua* in Ep. 22, Paulinus himself seems to be caught both ways, charged with effeminate weakness in 'yielding' to the 'deceits' of a 'foreign goddess' and / or with the masculine brutality of a conquering Alexander.

The following section, again found only in Ep. 24, foregrounds the issue of communication in language which oscillates between the literal and the figurative, and which may transfer the notion of separation from the physical to the spiritual, with ramifications for the notion of 'return' with which the epistle concludes. Central to this is word-play which picks up the motif of the yoke, *iuga* (of the Pyrenees, l. 61; of Bordeaux, l. 82), *iungens* (of the 'care' which joins distances by communication, l. 70) and *iungit* (of the links between cities in southern Gaul, l. 71, cf. *conserit*, l. 74).¹⁷³ The section plays, too, on what can be termed a kind of metaphorical topography, as a fictionalised Spain is set against a fictionalised Aquitaine. Taken in conjunction with Ep. 21, Spain emerges as a country of climatic and cultural extremes. Aquitaine, on the other hand, seen here through the lens of 'praises of Italy', is presented as the centre of temperateness and balance. The implications may reach further, suggesting that Paulinus' decampment to Spain is being presented as symbolic of a 'desertion' of his cul-

171) ... *Alexandri Macedonis pervicaciam supergressus, qui fatalis iugi lora cum solvere non posset abscidit* ... (Aus. Biss. Praef. 11–13).

172) E.g. Juv. 4.10.168–72; 5.14.311–14.

173) See Dräger (as n. 3) 233.

tural identity, and pointing towards a final sense of the yoke as a shared cultural heritage which is being abandoned.

The threat from Nemesis, an 'eastern monstrosity', is set against damage emanating from the 'west':

*quid queror Eoique insector crimina monstri?
occidui me ripa Tagi, me Punica laedit
Barcino ...*

(Ep. 24.59–61)

Whereas Ep. 21 locates Paulinus in the inland and mountainous triangle of Catalayud, Calahorra and Lérida, here Paulinus is placed in the very different triangle of Saragossa, *Caesarea Augusta*, Tarragona, *Tyrrhenica Tarraco*, and Barcelona, *Punica Barcino*. If Ep. 21 looks towards savagery and barbarism, Ep. 24 may rather hint at debauchery and tyranny. The river Tagus is commonly characterised by the adjective *aurifer*, 'gold-bearing'.¹⁷⁴ *Punica Barcino*, 'Punic Barcelona', seems, as Green suggests, to represent more than just a 'learned epithet'.¹⁷⁵ Punic 'perfidy', as noted in another context by Dräger, was proverbial.¹⁷⁶ Subsequently Ausonius will insinuate dalliance in 'Carthage', recalling the accusation of *longa otia* in Ep. 21, and hinting that Paulinus has abandoned his true 'spouse' in favour of a foreign liaison. In turn, the characterisation of Tarragona as *Tyrrhenica* may also be more than a learned epithet. 'Etruscan' seems to point back towards the *Tanaquil tua* reference of Ep. 22, forming a double attack on Paulinus and Therasia through associations of ambition and violence. The fact that these locations have ready access to river and sea,¹⁷⁷ reinforced by the reference to *ostriferus pontus* (Ep. 24.81), may also be relevant for the 'yoking' play to follow, suggesting that Paulinus' 'isolation' can be attributed to mental rather than physical factors.

Within this section, the relocation of Paulinus is presented in terms which emphasise both 'distance' and 'otherness':

174) Amor. 1.15.34; Mart. Epig. 10.96. 3. Cf. also Met. 2.251; Luc. 7.755.

175) Green (as n. 2) 661.

176) Dräger (as n. 3) 211, who cites Livy, *perfidia plus quam Punica* (Liv. 21.4.9). Cf. Ausonius, Ep. 4.42, where *Poenae fides* (bad faith) is opposed to *Graeca fides* ('cash down') and Green's note (as n. 2) 612.

177) The point is made indirectly in one of Paulinus' replies (PN, Carm. 10.231–238, in: Green [as n. 2] 714).

*quemque suo longe dirimat provincia tractu
trans montes solemque alium, trans flumina et urbes
et quod terrarum caelique extenditur ...*

(Ep. 24.63–65)

The reference to ‘another sun’ seems to be modelled on the *Georgics*.¹⁷⁸ The context there opposes the simple and moral life of the country-dweller to those who “rejoice steeped in the blood of brothers”, and who endure voluntary exile “under another sun”.¹⁷⁹ Again, accordingly, Ausonius may seem to be presenting Paulinus’ departure under the guise of murderous ambition. At the same time, the seemingly pleonastic coupling of ‘land’ and ‘sky’ may suggest that Ausonius is drawing on the cosmological concept of the division of earth and heaven into five parallel zones, three of them uninhabitable by reason of extreme heat or extreme cold, a doctrine exploited elsewhere in the *Georgics*.¹⁸⁰ Here it would imply that Paulinus has abandoned the temperate and habitable zone for the far ends of the earth.¹⁸¹ In turn, this may help to set up the ‘praises of Italy’ motif, transferred here to Aquitaine. As employed by Virgil¹⁸² and Propertius,¹⁸³ this works essentially by contrast, setting the glories of Italy, characterised by a harmonious mixture of nature and culture, against the marvels and monstrosities of more exotic climes. Aquitaine will be praised both for its natural fertility and for its cultivation.

Within this comes a passage which can be read as turning on the issue of communication:

*quod si intervalli spatium tolerabile limes
poneret exiguus, quamvis longa omnia credant
qui simul esse volunt, faceret tamen ipsa propinquos
cura locos, mediis iungens distantia verbis.*

(Ep. 24.67–70)

178) See Green (as n. 2) 661.

179) ... *gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum / exilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant / atque alio patriam quaerunt sub sole iacentem* (Georg. 2.510–12).

180) Georg. 1.231–9. Cf. Met. 1.45–51. The doctrine derives from Eratosthenes.

181) Ep. 24 refers to *iuga ninguida*, Ep. 21 to *arida Ilerda* but *torrens Sicoris*.

182) Georg. 2.136–175.

183) Prop. 3.22.1–18. This explicitly contrasts Italy with both ‘west’ and ‘east’.

At first sight, Ausonius seems to be bemoaning the physical distance between them, with the consequence, as Green suggests, that communication is difficult and unreliable.¹⁸⁴ There may, however, be a more metaphorical interpretation, turning on the use of *cura*, ‘care’, and *mediis verbis*, ‘intermediary words’. Earlier, ‘care’ has been evoked in connection with the yoke, which is said to have remained:

... *dum laeta fides nec cura laborat*
officii servare vices ...

(Ep. 24.12–13)

Officii vices points towards the reciprocity demanded by friendship in general, and to the exchange of correspondence in particular.¹⁸⁵ In Ep. 23 it is the yoke itself which is described as *tolerabile*, ‘bearable’. Here, Ausonius may seem to be suggesting that ‘physical’ absence could be rendered bearable by ‘spiritual’ presence, as mediated by a letter. Paulinus, however, has failed to maintain *limes exiguus*, a ‘small path’, ‘little channel’, of communication. In other words, as suggested earlier, the barrier may be presented here as spiritual rather than physical, a failure of volition rather than of ability.

The ambiguity between literal and figurative may persist in what follows. Ausonius exploits the language of ‘yoking’ to present two further triangular groupings of towns, this time in southern Gaul: Saintes, Bordeaux and Agen in the west; Arles, Vienne and Narbonne in the east. Separated in reality by the barrier of the Massif Central, they are potentially connected here through a projected link with the roughly equidistant town of Toulouse (Ep. 24.71–75). As the issue is brought back to Paulinus, the preceding *mediis verbis* may find an echo in the notion of *vicinis moenibus*, ‘neighbouring walls’:

hoc mihi si spatium vicinis moenibus esset,
tunc ego te ut nostris aptum complecterer ulnis
afflaretque tuas aures nostrae aura loquellae.

(Ep. 24.76–78)

184) Green (as n. 2) 661. Dräger’s reference to ‘the help of travellers’ seems to point the same way (Dräger [as n. 3] 238).

185) On the letter as an *officium*, see Conybeare (as n. 10) 24.

Here, as elsewhere, the language may fuse friendship with erotics. 'Propinquity' and 'neighbourliness' are invoked in the *Laelius* as creating a natural bond, but one which is pronounced inferior to that of friendship,¹⁸⁶ said elsewhere to be capable of transcending physical absence, even the ultimate absence of death.¹⁸⁷ In the case of Ausonius and Paulinus, however, that condition is presented as unfulfilled. The frustrated embrace, *complecterer ulnis*, may offer an ironic echo of the re-union in death of Orpheus and Eurydice as found in Ovid, *invenit Eurydicen cupidisque amplectitur ulnis*.¹⁸⁸ At the same time, the notion that the 'breeze' of Ausonius' words would be 'breathing upon' Paulinus' ears, heightened by the play on *aura / aures*, may seem to conflate a reminiscence of the abandoned Ariadne, giving her complaints to the senseless winds,¹⁸⁹ with the ears of Aeneas, deaf to Dido's pleas.¹⁹⁰ Viewed in this light, the preceding depiction of Spain may itself take on a further, metaphorical, dimension as a projection of Paulinus' present mind-set.

Against it is set an idealised picture of Bordeaux, built up as a poetic construct around a cluster of classical borrowings.¹⁹¹ Aquitaine replaces Italy as the paradigm of balance and order, characterised by mildness of climate, fertile exuberance and culture in harmony with nature.¹⁹² This pastoral paradise, however, is threatened by the 'absence', physical and / or spiritual, of Paulinus, *te sine sed nullus grata vice provenit annus ...* (Ep. 24.91). The Horatian context of *carpe diem* upon which this draws¹⁹³ offers a reminder that death comes to 'pauper' and 'king' alike, and warns that it will put an end to 'love'.¹⁹⁴ The 'prayer' which follows is cast in terms which recall the contradictory fictions found in Ep. 21:

186) Lael. 9–20.

187) *Quocirca et absentes adsunt et egentes abundant et imbecilli valent et, quod difficilius dictu est, mortui vivunt* (ibid. 23).

188) Met. 11.63.

189) *sed quid ego ignaris nequiquam conquerar auris ...* (Cat. 64.164).

190) *fata obstant, placidasque viri deus obstruit aures* (Aen. 4.440).

191) See especially Witke (as n. 5) 30–34.

192) Ep. 24.82–90.

193) Hor. Carm. 1.4.1. See Green (as n. 2) 663.

194) *nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet inventus / nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt* (Hor. Carm. 1.4.19–20).

...
*ne sparsam raptamque domum lacerataque centum
 per dominos veteris Paulini regna fleamus
 teque vagum toto, quam longa Hispania, tractu
 immemorem veterum peregrinis fidere amicis.*

(Ep. 24.107–110 = Ep. 23.35–38)

The allusion to ancestral ‘kingdoms’, *veteris Paulini regna*, points towards the dispossessed Meliboeus of the first Eclogue.¹⁹⁵ The fiction of enforced exile is, however, undercut by a second Virgilian echo, this time of the *Aeneid*. The picture of Paulinus wandering ‘the length of Spain’, *quam longa Hispania*, ‘unmindful’, *immemor*, of old friends, seems to look towards Aeneas’ voluntary dalliance with Dido, ‘the length of winter’, ‘unmindful’ of his kingdom.¹⁹⁶ Whereas in Ep. 21, Ausonius briefly equates himself with Dido, here the Dido role may seem to be allocated to Therasia. More provocatively, Ausonius may seem to be identifying himself with the legitimate ‘spouse’ waiting in Aquitaine, Paulinus’ legitimate kingdom.

The climax of the epistle is provided by the motif of *reditus amantis*, the presence of which was first noted by Alfonsi.¹⁹⁷ As handled by both Tibullus and Ovid, this motif involves an element of ‘deification’, of an erotic and personal kind.¹⁹⁸ Ausonius’ treatment invests it with elements which seem to look also to the ‘public’ arena. As noted earlier, this section is marked out by a rapid fire of verbs in the present tense. The structure suggests that Ausonius is imitating the formal ceremony of *adventus*, the traditional rite of welcome for a ruler, with its associated overtones of divinity.¹⁹⁹ Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* seems to depict such a ceremony in its account of the arrival in Rome of the foreign deity Aesculapius,²⁰⁰

195) *en unquam patrios longo post tempore fines / pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen / post aliquot, mea regna videns, mirabor aristas?* (Ecl. 1.67–9). See Witke (as n.5) 34; Dräger (as n.3) 242.

196) *nunc hiemem inter se luxu, quam longa fovere / regnorum immemores ...* (Aen. 4.193–4). See Green (as n.2) 658.

197) L. Alfonsi, *Ausoniana*, *Aevum* 37 (1963) 117.

198) In Tibullus, it is applied to the returning lover, as if ‘sent from heaven’, *caelo missus* (Tib. 1.3.90), in Ovid, to the beloved, *nostros ... deos* (Amor. 2.11.44).

199) On its origins and significance in late antiquity, see S. G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley/Los Angeles / London 1981, 17–61.

200) Met. 15.699–731.

a passage which draws attention both to the motif of *adventus*²⁰¹ and to the concept of *deus praesens*.²⁰² The passage presents a string of third-person verbal forms,²⁰³ and, as here, lays emphasis on the waiting crowds.²⁰⁴ In Ausonius, however, the latter is combined with an allusion to the ‘threshold’ which may recall the elegiac motif of the ‘excluded lover’, thus elevating private above public:

*ingressusque sui celebrata per ostia portus
totum occursantis populi praevertitur agmen,
et sua praeteriens iam iam tua limina pulsat!*
(Ep. 24.121–123)²⁰⁵

At the same time, the present tenses produce a mimetic urgency which becomes quasi-performative, as if the very formulation of the anticipated ‘message’ can be seen as bringing about the longed-for result. Closure, however, is undermined by the culminating echo of Virgil’s eighth Eclogue:²⁰⁶

credimus, an qui amant ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?
(Ep. 24.124 = Ep. 23.52)

Deprived of its Virgilian conclusion, which seemingly confirms the fulfilment of the love-sick *pharmaceutria*’s desire,²⁰⁷ it stands revealed as an illusion which finds a parallel in the *solacia cassa*, ‘vain consolations’, of Ep. 23.

201) Ibid. 671.

202) ‘*deus en, deus est!*’ (ibid. 677). On the concept of *deus praesens*, see MacCormack (as n. 199) 22–33.

203) *tenuit; fertur; linquit; fugit; legit; evincit; petit; sulcat; posuit; venit* (Met. 15.699–731 *passim*).

204) *huc omnis populi passim matrumque patrumque / obvia turba ruit ...* (ibid. 729–730).

205) Ep. 23 presents a slightly different reading of the middle line, *praevertit cunctos ut te amplectatur amicos* (23.50). The effect, however, may be the same, with erotics placed above friendship.

206) Ecl. 8.109.

207) *parcite, ab urbe venit, iam parcite, carmina, Daphnis* (ibid. 110).

Conclusion

Viewed in the light of epistolarity, this group of verse-epistles may seem to emerge as a subtle tissue of delicately woven and finely nuanced allusion. As such, they can be seen to stand at the opposite end of the spectrum from, although not totally unrelated to, the practice of the cento as demonstrated in Ausonius' own *Cento Nuptialis*. In the epistles, context is all important for developing and building up hidden themes and sub-texts. Author intentionality, as mentioned earlier, is intimately linked to reader receptivity. If Ausonius' profession as *rhetor* can be assumed to have equipped him with a wide range of classical literature on which to draw, Paulinus' position as former pupil can equally be assumed to have given him the resources with which to decode the result. The issue of receptivity, however, may go deeper. In a sense, the responsibility for interpretation is thrown back on the 'reader', who can choose what to take from it and what to ignore. Indeed, it can be argued that the writer can fall back on the *caveat* that the 'reader' is wholly responsible for what he/she finds, in this case, that if Paulinus finds material which is offensive, he himself has the responsibility for having imported an interpretation which was not there. At the same time, it is possible to envisage widening circles of readers, among them Ausonius' literate friends, and the judgement of posterity, to take the place of Paulinus if the latter chooses not to 'understand' or fails to respond 'appropriately'.

Into this comes the notion of the letter-form as 'bridge' or 'barrier'.²⁰⁸ The addressee can choose to join in the 'game' and to respond in kind, or to block or 'misunderstand' the overtures. Viewed in this way, Ausonius' blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction and between friendship and erotics reads as an invitation to re-establish a particular kind of creative and intellectual relationship which has its roots in a shared cultural and literary tradition. As suggested at the beginning, 'friendship' may emerge as only one of the prisms, alongside erotics and quasi-marriage, through which this relationship is put. Behind the dazzling display of classical erudition and rhetorical manipulation may lie a deeper concern, with political and social ramifications, for a common heritage subject to external and internal pressure. Emblematic of this

²⁰⁸ Altman (as n. 6) 186 and *passim*.

may be the reference in Ep. 21 to Paulinus' 'burial' of his consular honours, the *trabea*, 'robe of state', and *Latia curulis*, 'curule chair', in Spain,²⁰⁹ echoed in Ep. 24 by a reminder of their shared 'sacred purple and gold'.²¹⁰ If Spain in these epistles represents the anti-Rome, Aquitaine, through the transferred theme of 'praises of Italy', can be said to emerge as Rome's natural inheritor.

In conclusion, then, these verse-epistles emerge as complex and highly 'artificial' constructs, in the most literal sense of the word. Their dual affiliation, to prose epistolarity on the one hand and to erotic verse on the other, manifests itself through an elaborate notion of 'play', which systematically exploits semantic ambiguity and inter-textual allusion. Rather than creating a single consistent narrative they can be seen to offer a multiplicity of contradictory fictions. Through this fictionalisation, with its ramifications which extend into the realms of space (Gaul versus Spain) and time (the renewal of the Golden Age) and which embrace physical and spiritual, private and public, the epistolary relationship itself is put through a range of distorting prisms which encompasses both friendship and erotics, gender and genre. In terms of re-establishing the relationship with Paulinus, they seem to represent a failure. Indeed, they may only have served to harden his attitude. As a literary achievement, however, they mark a high point in late antique writing.

Reading

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209) *hic trabeam, Pauline, tuam Latiamque curulem / constituis patriosque istic sepelibus honores?* (Ep. 21.60–61).

210) *... viros quos sacra Quirini/purpura et auratus trabeae velavit amictus* (Ep. 24.56–57).