Geography and space in the poetry of Prudentius

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Classics
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the themes of geography and space in the poetry of the late antique Latin poet Prudentius (348-c.405 CE). The first chapter discusses the geography of reading, and suggests that Prudentius’ *Peristephanon* provides a means for the reader to experience the sites of the cults of the martyrs by reading about them rather than by having to travel to see them. It is also argued that the varying orders of the poems of the *Peristephanon* in the manuscript tradition can be explained by the differing interests of early readers, and that the arrangement extant in one group of manuscripts can be seen to be the result of organising the poems to fit a geographical itinerary. The second chapter investigates the intertextual aspect of literary journeys, and argues that late antique descriptions of journeys are as much indebted to the literary tradition as they are to “lived” experience on the part of the narrator. This chapter focuses in particular on Ausonius' *Mosella*, and the third, ninth, and eleventh hymns of Prudentius' *Peristephanon*. The third chapter discusses the representation of the city in the works of Prudentius, and shows how Prudentius’ approach to the civic nature of martyrdom in the *Peristephanon* must be related to the contemporary Christian perception that earthly civic obligations are not fundamentally incompatible with participation in the heavenly city of the afterlife. The fourth chapter examines the representation of pastoral spaces in the *Liber Cathemerinon* and the discussion of farming and religion in the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*. 
The final chapter addresses Prudentius' descriptions of works of art and architecture, particularly churches, and argues that Prudentius exhibits a marked preference for the word over the image as a means of conveying knowledge. A brief conclusion suggests that Prudentius’ representation of physical and imaginary spaces is always governed by a belief in the primacy of the written word, and by a fundamentally bookish approach to the world.
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Abbreviations

**CCSL**  
*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*

**CSEL**  
*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

**L&S**  

**OLD**  

**PHI**  

**PG**  

**PL**  

**TLL**  

Ancient authors are abbreviated according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, with the exception of Prudentius, whose works are abbreviated as follows:

**Apo.**  
*Apotheosis*

**Cath.**  
*Liber Cathemerinon*

**CS**  
*Contra Orationem Symmachi*

**Ditt.**  
*Dittochaeon/Tituli Historiarum*

**Epil.**  
*Epilogus*

**Ham.**  
*Hamartigenia*

**Pe.**  
*Liber Peristephanon*

**Praef.**  
*Praefatio*

**Psych.**  
*Psychomachia*

Quotations of Prudentius are taken from the text of Cunningham (1966), except where indicated otherwise.
Introduction

This is the first full-length study devoted solely to the literary representation of geography and space in the poetry of Prudentius. While increasing focus has been paid to this topic in late antique literature more broadly in recent years, Prudentius' poetry, so deeply concerned with questions of empire, cult-spaces, and identity, deserves special attention. Indeed, the prominence of such themes has not gone unnoticed: an older type of scholarship, concerned with reconstructing historical facts about the poets of antiquity, expended considerable effort on the question of where exactly in Spain Prudentius hailed from, and what cities he may have governed (praef. 16-17). Similarly, the desire to ascertain details about the poet has led many scholars to see three of the hymns of the Peristephanon (9, 11, and 12) as referring to a pilgrimage undertaken by the poet himself: consequently, questions about his possible route and the date of said pilgrimage exercised a number of critics over the course of the twentieth century.

Moreover, the detailed descriptions of physical places in a number of the poet's works have led some to attempt to reconcile Prudentius' *ekphraseis* with the archaeological record, while the emphasis on the importance of space for the veneration of martyrs, in particular, has been shown to be characteristic of late antique attitudes towards the cult of the saints. In this introduction I

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1 See Lana (1962) 1-60; Puech (1888) 39-65.
2 E.g. Weyman (1923); Lana (1962) 24-32.
3 See most recently Iwaszkiewicz-Wronikowska (2010). See also Gnilka (2005); Mateos Cruz (1999), and cf. Palmer (1989) 268-269. San Bernardino (1996) attempts to argue for Prudentius' credibility in his reporting of archaeological sites based on inferences made about the poet's public career.
4 Roberts (1993).
shall briefly summarise some recent trends in scholarship on Prudentius and on geography in antiquity, before giving an outline of the topics to be covered in this dissertation.

**Recent research on Prudentius**

In 1993, A. A. R. Bastiaensen wrote a brief survey of Prudentian scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century. The major issues he identified as having preoccupied scholars of Prudentius were, primarily, textual and theological ones, and in both cases were concerned with issues of unity. Was Prudentius' output really a single poem? Did the "double recension" reflect revision of the text by the author, or by a later editor keen to correct Prudentius' more unorthodox theological statements? Literary studies are effectively relegated to the footnotes, aside from a section discussing "Prudentius' originality" (i.e. his imitation of earlier poets), and are on occasion dismissed rather hastily and contemptuously.

Two decades on, the field looks remarkably different. Though textual issues continue to preoccupy scholars, the tremendous burst of scholarly production directed towards the criticism of late Latin poetry *qua* literature has had its impact on Prudentius. Michael Roberts' landmark monograph on the *Peristephanon* appeared in the same year as Bastiaensen's survey: taking a cue from Peter Brown's *The Cult of the Saints*, Roberts approached the *Liber Peristephanon* from the point of view of the cult of the martyrs, though always putting the literary achievement of the poet to the forefront. Roberts' monograph has been followed by a number of articles on various

\[5\] Bastiaensen (1993).


\[7\] Klingner (1930); Pelosi (1940); Salvatore (1958) 119-166.

\[8\] Roberts (1993); Brown (1981).
aspects of the *Peristephanon:* indeed, it has been this collection and the *Psychomachia* that have been the best studied over the past two decades, though recently there has been a resurgence of interest in the *Hamartigenia.* Still lacking, unfortunately, is a modern critical edition, though a number of commentaries have appeared that go some way towards addressing this issue.

Prudentius' poetry exhibits a number of themes that have attracted the attention of classical scholars over the past two decades: two that have stood out in particular are "the body" and "ekphrasis" (or to be more precise, descriptions of works of art). Literary studies engaging with Prudentius' theology are also becoming more common, a reflection perhaps of the increased interest in the works of the Church Fathers as literature. Studies of Prudentius' engagement with earlier authors are less common than might be expected: aside from the exceptionally

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9 Particularly stimulating are the studies of Burrus (1995); Petruccione (1995); Viscardi (1997); Roberts (2001); Florio (2002).

10 Mastrangelo (1997); Charlet (2003); Mastrangelo (2008); Grebe (2009).

11 Malamud (2002); Dykes (2011).

12 The essays collected in Gnilka (2000a) are the closest we have to an authoritative study on the text of Prudentius. Recent commentaries have taken on selections from the *Peristephanon* (Fux (2003)); *Cathemerinon 3* (Becker (2006)); and the first book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachi* (Brown (2003)).


14 See especially the essays by Christian Kaesser: (2002) and (2010), as well as many of the other essays in the collection Zimmerl-Panagl & Weber (2010). The use of the term *ekphrasis* to mean strictly a description of a work of art has now predominated even amongst classicists, despite the fact that the term as it is used by ancient rhetoricians has a much broader sense: for a brief history of the restricted use, see Webb (1999).

15 See especially Mastrangelo (2008); Hammad (2010); Dykes (2011). I have been unable to see Atanassova (2001) or González Salinero (2010).
thorough monograph of Lühken (2002) and the shorter but stimulating book by Heinz (2007), there are only a few articles addressing this aspect of the poet.16

The dramatic increase in the number of publications (particularly in the English-speaking world) relating to Prudentius is heartening, and indicative of a more widespread appreciation of late antique literature as something worth studying in itself. Yet there is much that still needs to be done: more commentaries are badly needed, as well as more sustained and detailed studies of Prudentius' relationship to authors besides the usual trio of Vergil, Horace, and Ausonius.17 This dissertation offers an investigation of another relatively understudied area of Prudentius' oeuvre: his descriptions of geography and space. It is true that Prudentius' use of the metaphor of the "two roads" (Ham. 789-801) to describe the choice between good and evil has been examined in some detail,18 but otherwise there is relatively little scholarship on the representation of landscape and space in Prudentius.19 This is surprising not least because studies of geography in late antique literature have become more prominent of late.

**Geography in late antiquity**

Studies of travel, geography, and space in late antiquity are by no means new, and the beginnings of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land in particular have attracted the interest of scholars.20

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16 See Kubiak (1998); Partoens (2000); Partoens (2003); Witke (2004); Schwind (2006). The dust-jacket of Mastrangelo (2008) claims that the book uses "the most current theories of allusion and intertextuality in Latin poetry", but the book is in practice more concerned with questions of typology than *imitatio*.

17 Notable is the study by Dykes (2011) of Prudentius' use of Lucretius in the *Hamartigenia*, especially pp. 216-219, 234-241.

18 In particular by Evenepoel (2002) and Dykes (2011).

19 Other notable exceptions are Fontaine (1970) and Roberts (1993). Mans (1988) is concerned exclusively with "narrative space" as it is defined by Zoran (1984), rather than with the depiction of physical or imagined space.

More recently, however, with the increase in interest in technical literature in the ancient world in general, there has been a considerable upsurge in research on geographical texts, *itineraria*, and cosmographies. In recent years there has been a particular rise in interest in the study of “literary geography” and the depiction of literary journeys. Much of this has focused either on technical literature (geographers and ethnographic excursions in historiographic works) or on the writings of authors like Rutilius Namatianus, although Felix Racine's recent dissertation covers an admirable range of sources, and emphasises the fact that a great deal of geographical knowledge was acquired from *literary* texts, something I shall discuss in Chapter Two.

At the same time, there has been a rise in studies on the representation of sacred space and religious space, building on the fundamental works by Jonathan Z. Smith, in religious studies, and cultural geographers such as James S. Duncan, while also responding to the heavily geographical approach to Mediterranean history taken by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in their landmark 2000 monograph, *The Corrupting Sea*. Smith's demonstration that the concept of fixed sacred spaces only really entered Christian thought in the fourth century has been developed by Sabine MacCormack and R. A. Markus, and has informed a number of more recent studies demonstrating the power dynamics at play in the construction of sacred spaces. Particularly influential in this context are the works of Dennis Trout on Paulinus of Nola and Damasus, and the recent work by Steffen Diefenbach on the promotion of a martyr-centred form

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21 Cf. e.g. Inglebert (2001); Salway (2007); Ellis & Kidner (2004)
23 See especially Smith (1987) and Duncan (1990); Horden & Purcell (2000), and see also Horden & Purcell (2006). Particularly significant works on sacred space in late antiquity include Ando (2001); Clark (1996); Whitmarsh (2010); Andrade (2010).
24 MacCormack (1990); Markus (1994).
of collective identity at Rome in the Constantinian and post-Constantinian period. While such cultural approaches tend to emphasise the agency of powerful individuals in relation to the construction of sacred spaces, Horden and Purcell are more concerned with the longevity of local identity, and "the embedding of cult in the microregional landscape".

A number of recent studies have focused in particular on the relationship between travel and space and the cult of the saints. Thus Ann-Marie Yasin examines the use of art and archaeology to construct sacred spaces around the cult of the saints, while Lisa Bitel has studied in more general terms the use of the cults of Brigit and Genovefa to construct sacred landscapes in the early middle ages. Similarly, a variety of monographs and edited volumes have in recent years concerned themselves with the topic of pilgrimage in late antiquity. Particularly stimulating are those studies that emphasise the sacrality of buildings and monuments in relation to pilgrimage, some of which I draw on in my fifth chapter.

Very few of these studies, however, have concerned themselves with Prudentius. Soler’s lengthy 2005 monograph on travel in late antique literature cites the poet only in passing, while historical and religious studies tend to use the Peristephanon fairly uncritically as a source for information about the cult of the saints. It is fair to say that no work since Roberts (1993) has


26 Yasin (2009); Bitel (2009).

27 See the collection of Elsner & Rutherford (2005), and particularly the chapter by Galli (2005). Cf. also the volume edited by Frankfurter (1998) on late antique Egypt.

28 Aside from Yasin (2009), I have found Hahn (1997) and Boin (2010) particularly useful. Although they are not directly related to the topic of this dissertation, I have also profited from a number of recent studies of idealised cities or "cultural capitals" in Late Antiquity: see especially Kadelis (2009) and Wenzel (2010), and, more generally, Jacobs (2011).
attempted to address the *literary* nature of Prudentius’ descriptions of travel, space, and geography.\(^29\) Hence the motivation to undertake this study.

**Outline of this dissertation**

In the first chapter, I discuss the geography of reading. I begin by examining the Roman tendency to acquire knowledge by reading rather than by doing, and suggest that Prudentius’ *Peristephanon* functions as an attempt to provide a means for the reader to experience the sites of the cults of the martyrs by reading about them rather than by having to travel to see them. I then discuss the metaphor of the Book of Nature, arguing that Prudentius is influenced by contemporary ideas about the world as a text and that he constructs his *Peristephanon* as a literary world into which the reader is immersed like a traveller. I finally argue that the varying orders of the poems in the *Peristephanon* in the manuscript tradition can be explained by the differing interests of early readers, and show how the arrangement extant in one group of manuscripts can be seen to be the result of organising the poems to fit an itinerary beginning in northern Spain and circling the Mediterranean before returning to Spain.

In Chapter Two, I shift my focus to the text, and to the intertextual aspect of literary journeys. I argue that late antique descriptions of journeys are as much indebted to the literary tradition as they are to “lived” experience on the part of the narrator. Thus I show how Ausonius makes use of Vergil’s *Aeneid* and Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* at the beginning of the *Mosella* to convey his emotions on returning to the Moselle valley from Germania. I then go on to show how Prudentius achieves something similar in the case of the hymns to Eulalia, Hippolytus, and Cassian, in the *Peristephanon*, in each of which he uses the *Aeneid* as a source-text to liken the

\(^{29}\) Soler (2005b) does, it is true, discuss *Peristephanon* 9, 11, and 12, but only as a possible source of *Kontrastimitation* for Rutilius Namatianus.
journey of Eulalia and the pilgrim in Pe. 9 and 11 to Aeneas’ epic journey. My purpose in this chapter is to show how “travel literature” is always highly “literary”.

In the third chapter, I discuss the representation of the city in the works of Prudentius. Beginning with a survey of early Christian ideas about the city, I show how Prudentius’ approach to the civic nature of martyrdom in the Peristephanon must be related to the contemporary Christian perception that earthly civic obligations are not fundamentally incompatible with participation in the heavenly city of the afterlife, though there are some tensions nonetheless. I argue that the beginnings and endings of the hymns of the Peristephanon are particularly concerned with the relationship between martyr and city, using a close reading of a number of opening passages to show how Prudentius emphasises an intimate link between the presence of the martyr’s remains and a city’s prowess, and arguing that many of the concluding passages emphasise the communal aspect of the celebration of that martyr.

In Chapter Four, I move to Prudentius’ description of rural spaces. I discuss the relationship between Latin pastoral and Christian ideas of the Good Shepherd in early Christian thought, focusing in particular on the importance of the Fourth Eclogue as a possibly Messianic text. I study in particular the De Mortibus Boum of Endelechius (who was most likely a contemporary of Prudentius) in which Christ is represented as somebody who intervenes in the pastoral landscape to protect the flocks of the faithful. I then show how Prudentius’ idea of divine intervention is considerably different from that depicted by Endelechius, and that in fact, in the Contra Orationem Symmachii, Prudentius claims that the purpose of Christian faith is not an expectation of deliverance from earthly woes, but rather to provide solace to the faithful during the times of those woes. I then go on to discuss Prudentius’ descriptions of Paradise in the Liber
Cathemerinon, and argue that these imagined descriptions serve a similar purpose: to comfort the true believer in his hour of need.

In the fifth and final chapter, I turn my attention to Prudentius’ descriptions of constructed spaces: works of art and architecture, and particularly churches set up in commemoration of the martyrs. I argue that Prudentius expresses considerable unease about the appropriateness of the visual arts at such sites as a reliable means of conveying information about the cult of the saints, and that he attempts to control the ambiguity of images in Pe. 9 and 11 by giving a verbal description of the martyrdoms of Cassian and Hippolytus. I then move on to discuss Prudentius’ accounts of the churches set up in honour of Eulalia, Hippolytus, and Peter and Paul, and argue that by means of alluding to earlier descriptions of highly ornate palaces and buildings, Prudentius is subtly calling into question the appropriateness of such elaborate structures in a religion that prizes humility and that cherishes the poor.

I conclude by briefly reviewing the chapters, before suggesting that in all cases, Prudentius’ representation of physical and imaginary spaces is governed by a conviction of the primacy of the written word, and by a fundamentally bookish approach to the world.
Chapter One: Reading as a journey

In this opening chapter, I shall take a reader's approach to the *Peristephanon*. I should like to argue that the collection presents a textual map through which the reader can travel. However, as I shall outline in the first section, problems relating to the ordering of poems within the *Peristephanon* and questions about the publication history of the collection complicate attempts to read the collection as it now stands as a unified whole. As a result, I shall base my discussion on differing orderings of the poems in various manuscript traditions, arguing that these orders reflect the responses of early readers\(^1\) of the poems (including, perhaps, Prudentius himself, since an author is always his own first reader)\(^2\), and that the fact that at least some of these orderings can be seen to have geographical significance suggests that early readers were impelled to see the *Peristephanon* as a fundamentally geographical collection, perhaps even a spatial counterpart to the temporal arrangement of the *Liber Cathemerinon*, the collection of hymns intended to be sung at specific hours of the day or on particular days of the year.

In the first section, I shall sketch briefly various problems relating to the transmission of the *Liber Peristephanon*. I am deeply skeptical of attempts to posit specific dates of publication for individual poems or for the collection as a whole, and I hope to make it clear that most of these attempts ultimately rely on rather unpersuasive arguments. In section 1.2, I discuss the Roman

\(^1\) I should perhaps make it clear what I mean by "early readers": I am not speaking here of an "actual" reader, but rather of a "model" reader implicit in the text, of the kind discussed by Conte (1994) xviii-xx, 133-138. I shall suggest in section 1.4 that the various methods of ordering the *Peristephanon* reflect the interests of early readers, thus enabling us to construct early editors from the text. See further Hinds (1998) 47-51. On the "interactivity" of reading, see Jackson (2001) 81-100, esp. 82 (on writers of marginalia).

\(^2\) Cf. Ricoeur (1991) esp. 87-88; on Horace as his own first reader, see Feeney (2009); for Latin authors more generally, Hinds (1998) 46-47, 123-144.
preference for reading about things rather than actually doing them, and suggest that Prudentius'
Peristephanon provides a continuation of this tradition, by enabling readers to participate in the
cult of the saints without travelling, and thus to partake in the 'therapy of distance'. In section 1.3,
I discuss the metaphor of the Book of Nature and the concept of "reading" the world that is
particularly promoted by Augustine. Building on this image, as well as related ideas in Lucretius,
I argue that Prudentius presents his text as a microcosm of the world, particularly in
Peristephanon 1. In section 1.4, I move on to a discussion of the poems of the Peristephanon as
reflecting a geographical itinerary. I begin with a discussion of the "travelling reader" in earlier
literature, particularly Hellenistic literature, before returning to the textual tradition of
Prudentius, arguing that the ordering of the Peristephanon in one strand of the tradition reflects a
conscious attempt to organise the poems of the Peristephanon as stages in a pilgrimage.

1.1 The transmission of the Peristephanon: a brief
survey

The textual tradition of the works of Prudentius is perhaps one of the most complicated of any
ancient author. Over three hundred manuscripts containing some or all of his poems are extant,
ranging in date from the early sixth century to the fifteenth century. Particular attention has been
paid to the two earliest manuscripts, A, the Puteanus (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Latinus
8084), dating from the early sixth century; and B, the Ambrosianus (Milan, Biblioteca
Ambrosiana D 36 sup.), dating from the late sixth or early seventh century. Neither manuscript
contains all of Prudentius' poems. The Puteanus contains the Cathemerinon, Apotheosis,
Hamartigenia, Psychomachia, and Peristephanon 1-5.142. The earlier portion of the
Ambrosianus contains parts of Cathemerinon 7-12 and most of the Peristephanon (sections of

3 See Bergman (1910) for a comprehensive discussion of the manuscripts of Prudentius.
Pe. 10, 3, and 5 are missing, as are all of Pe. 8, 11, 12, and 13), as well as the Apotheosis, the end of the Hamartigenia, the Psychomachia, the Contra Orationem Symmachi (only up to 2.84). These two early manuscripts formed the basis for Johannes Bergman's edition of 1926.4

A major problem in the transmission of the works of Prudentius is the fact that for a number of passages there are two readings to be found, which cannot be attributed to scribal error.5 These variant readings are to be found as early as the Puteanus and the Ambrosianus, and it remains an open question as to whether they should be attributed to authorial revision or to early interpolation. The most notable case occurs at Cath. 10.9-16, where a full eight lines are preserved in two markedly different versions. The version preserved in the Puteanus is generally considered to be the poet's first rendering of the lines, while the later version is believed to be a revision that is more in keeping with orthodox Nicene theology.6 Cunningham argued at length for Prudentian authorship of both versions, and printed both in his edition (as lines 9a-16a and 9b-16b).7 However, Christian Gnilka rejected the existence of a second authorial version, and has posited widespread early interpolation in the text of Prudentius, predating even the Puteanus.8 Gnilka's proposed alterations, if accepted in toto, would remove some two hundred and fifty lines of Prudentius as interpolations - that is, roughly 2% of the text as it now stands.9

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4 Bergman (1926); see the reviews by Meyer (1932) and Klingner (1930).
5 For a full list, see Pelosi (1940).
6 Klingner (1930) 41-43.
7 The argument is most clearly laid out at Cunningham (1968).
8 Gnilka (2000a), on Cath. 10 see especially 1.63-67.
9 For these figures see the review of Gnilka by Coşkun (2001).
Detailed discussion of textual issues is outside the scope of this dissertation. However, it is clear that from an early stage the manuscript tradition is complicated, either by the existence of multiple versions of the same poems by Prudentius, or by interpolation on the part of early editors.\(^\text{10}\) Approaches to the early textual tradition is complicated by what Prudentius himself says about his works in the *Praefatio*. This introductory poem does not appear in the *Puteanus*, and is considered to be a late work, written after the bulk of Prudentius' poems. It is one of the few poems of Prudentius that can be securely dated, to 404/405, on the basis of Prudentius' reference to his age (he is in his fifty-seventh year, *Praef.* 1-3), and to the fact that he was born in the consulship of Salia (*Praef.* 24), which occurred in the year 348. The poem is highly programmatic and personal, describing Prudentius' late conversion from the trappings of secular success as a high-flyer in the civil service, to a second career as a Christian poet. Prudentius makes reference to his poetic work in the fifteenth and sixteenth stanzas of the poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hymnis continuet dies} \\
\text{nec nox ulla uacet quin dominum canat;} \\
\text{pugnet contra hereses, catholicam discutiat fidem,} \\
\text{concucet sacra gentium,} \\
\text{labem, Roma, tuis inferat idolis,} \\
\text{carmen martyribus deuoueat, laudet apostolos.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(*Praef.* 37-42)

These lines have been the subject of much debate by those eager to establish the relative dating of Prudentius' works. The lines are said by some to anticipate the poems to be found within the collected edition for which this poem was intended to serve as prologue.\(^\text{11}\) Hence it is argued that

\(^{10}\) The latter has traditionally been rejected on the grounds that the *Puteanus* was copied a mere century after Prudentius wrote, supposedly insufficient time to permit interpolation (see e.g. van Assendelft (1976) 199).

\(^{11}\) The closest parallel to this sort of outline is the *ille ego* proem to the *Aeneid*, recorded by Servius in the introduction to his commentary. On the authenticity of the proem, see Austin (1968); Hansen (1972); Horsfall (1995) 25, and see Putnam (2010) for its relationship to the Vergilian literary career.
lines 37-38 refer to the Cathemerinon; 39 describes the Apotheosis and the Hamartigenia (and possibly also the Psychomachia); 40-41 alludes to the Contra Orationem Symmachi (or, alternatively, 40 to the Contra Orationem Symmachi and 41 to Peristephanon 10); and 42 indicates the Peristephanon. There is no mention made of the Dittochaeon, which is consequently assumed not to have been included in the omnibus edition. More problematic is the Psychomachia. If it is mentioned in these lines, it is only hinted at fleetingly. But such an oblique reference would be out of keeping with the more explicit mentions of the other poems. Hence, it has been argued that the Praefatio was composed to accompany a collected edition, issued in 404/405, which predated the composition of the Psychomachia and the Dittochaeon.\(^\text{12}\)

Some would go further in their interpretation of the Praefatio. Steidle and Ludwig both argued for Prudentius as the creator of a carefully-organised, symmetrical work: the "omnibus edition" would both open and close with a lyric collection, the Cathemerinon and Peristephanon, respectively. Similarly, the Apotheosis and Hamartigenia would be balanced by the two books of the Contra Orationem Symmachi, while in the centre of the collection there would be the Psychomachia.\(^\text{13}\) The epic Psychomachia would thus be framed on either side by two didactic poems and one collection of lyric hymns. However, this conception presumes that the Psychomachia would be the centrepiece of the collection, which is difficult to justify given the fact that the poem may not even be alluded to in the Praefatio, or if it is, it is mentioned very obliquely, which would hardly be fitting for the jewel of the collection.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\) See further Shanzer (1989a) 348-350, who summarises the scholarly literature on this question.

\(^{13}\) Steidle (1971); Ludwig (1977).

\(^{14}\) Cf. Bastiaensen (1993) 110-111
Conversely, however, it has been argued convincingly by Brožek that the opposite is true, and that the *Puteanum* actually consists of an attempt to organise Prudentius’ poems based on the outline given in the *Praefatio*.\(^\text{15}\) Brožek bases his argument on his assertion that Gennadius, who wrote about Prudentius in the late fifth century (i.e. before the *Puteanum*), lists the poems based on the order in which he found them in a volume. This order, then, would put the *Dittochaeon* first, followed by the *Hexaemeron* (which is no longer extant), then the *Apotheosis, Psychomachia, Hamartigenia, Peristephanon, Cathemerinon, Contra Symmachum*, and perhaps the *Praefatio* and *Epilogus* (not mentioned by Gennadius).\(^\text{16}\)

Moreover, individual poems and collections tend to move around within the manuscript tradition: so, for example, the manuscript E, a ninth-century codex now at Leiden University, has the *Peristephanon* sandwiched between *Cathemerinon* 1-10 and *Cathemerinon* 11-12, rather than at the very end (before the *Dittochaeon* and *Epilogus*). This would seem to suggest that, even if there was a collected edition issued by Prudentius during his lifetime, it cannot necessarily be seen as the archetype of the tradition.

Internally, the *Peristephanon* is particularly problematic. There is no consistent ordering of the poems within the manuscript tradition, unlike in the *Cathemerinon*.\(^\text{17}\) I shall have more to say about the ordering of the *Peristephanon* in section 1.4, where I argue that the various orderings of the poems in the collection reflect the divergent interests of early readers. Here, however, I

\(^{15}\) Bergman (1908); Brožek (1970).


\(^{17}\) Cf. Palmer (1989) 87-88
should like to discuss in particular one recent attempt to reconstruct an initial publication of seven hymns within the *Peristephanon*.

Pierre-Yves Fux's 2003 commentary on the *Peristephanon* is entitled *Les sept passions de Prudence*, indicating from the outset that these poems are to be taken as a unit. Fux sets out to argue that *Pe*. 2, 5, 9, and 11-14 are the earliest of the poems within the *Peristephanon*, and that they were originally published as a set, in the order 2, 13, 9, 12, 11, 14, and 5.¹⁸ Fux is eager to argue for a carefully constructed collection on the analogy of the *Cathemerinon* and Prudentius' poems as a whole,¹⁹ and he thus presents his hypothetical initial edition as a symmetry comparable to the sort of symmetry Steidle and Ludwig would argue exists in Prudentius' poems as a whole: thus, *Pe*. 2 and 5, both in iambic dimeter, bookend the collection, while the centrepiece consists of the three "pilgrimage poems", with the Roman poem, to Peter and Paul, at the centre. *Pe*. 13 and 14 are considered parallel because "Tous deux célèbrent [sic] plus qu’un martyr: respectivement un docteur de l'Église et une vierge."²⁰ While one can admittedly see *Pe*. 9, 11, and 12 as a unit (see further Chapter Two), and while the positioning of two poems of the same metre at the beginning and end of a collection can be paralleled both in the *Cathemerinon* and in Horace, *Odes* 1-3, it must be said that the link between *Pe*. 13 and 14 is not very strong. Moreover, Fux does not make a convincing case for these seven poems being considerably earlier than the other seven poems in the collection. Most of his arguments are based on internal evidence. In particular, in the case of phrases which recur in more than one poem, Fux attempts

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¹⁹ Cf. Fux (2003) 86: "Les poèmes de Prudence... sont organisés selon un jeu de symétries et de liens thématiques et formels"

to establish that one use of the phrase is more appropriate and hence earlier, while another usage is less appropriate and hence derivative. Such arguments can be useful, but ultimately rest on questions of taste, and are not sufficient, by themselves, for establishing a relative chronology.

Two of Fux's other arguments can be categorically rejected. First, he claims that these seven poems are the only ones which contain the word *Passio* in their titles. But *Pe.* 2 is referred to as a *hymnus* in the *Puteanus,* while *Pe.* 11 is technically "*ad Valerianum de passione Hippolyti.*" In any case, it is not even clear that the titles themselves were composed by Prudentius, as Palmer notes, though Fux is fairly confident of this ("S'ils sont antiques, ces titres remontent probablement à l'auteur").

Second, Fux argues that *Pe.* 14 indicates no knowledge on the poet's part of Damasus' hymn to Agnes, while *Pe.* 3 does. Assuming that Prudentius would have seen Damasus' epigram inscribed at Rome, Fux claims that *Pe.* 3 was written after Prudentius' visit to Rome, and *Pe.* 14 before. But Ann-Marie Palmer has shown convincingly that *Pe.* 14 does imitate Damasus. Moreover, it is by no means clear that Prudentius would not have had access to the epigrams of Damasus outside of Rome. If Prudentius did not read the epigrams until he went to Rome, then *Pe.* 14 was composed after this trip. If he had access to the epigrams in Spain, *Pe.* 3 and *Pe.* 14

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22 Palmer (1989) 76.
could have been written before a visit to Rome. In either case, the argument for the anteriority of 
*Pe.* 14 to *Pe.* 3 cannot stand.

Thus, Fux’s argument for an initial publication of seven poems is ultimately unconvincing. I
am unable to offer an alternative account of how the poems came to be compiled in the first
instance, but given the considerable variation in order to be found in the manuscript tradition, it
is clear that the tradition does not rely on a canonical ordering in an authorial archetype.

1.2 Technical handbooks, armchair pilgrims, and
ethnography

Members of the Roman elite learned by reading, not by doing. Brian Campbell has shown how
military manuals, for the most part, were written by men with little or no practical experience of
warfare, despite their protestations of knowledge *ab usu* (fitting nicely with the parodic didactic
stance of Ovid at *Ars Amatoria* 1.29, *usus hoc opus mouet*) – and asks how these books could
possibly have been of use to actual military commanders in the field.27 It is clear, indeed, that at
least some Romans objected to such methods of learning, if Marius’ speech in Sallust’s *Bellum
Iugurthinum* is anything to go by:

\[
\text{atque ego scio, Quirites, qui, postquam consules facti sunt, et acta maiorum et}\\
\text{Graecorum militaria praecepta legere coeperint: praeposteri homines, nam gerere}\\
\text{quam fieri tempore posterius, re atque usu prius est. conparate nunc, Quirit}\\
\text{es, cum}\\
\text{illorum superbia me hominem nouom. quae illi audire aut legere solent, eorum}\\
\text{partem uidi, alia egomet gessi; quae illi litteris, ea ego militando didici. nunc uos}\\
\text{existumate, facta an dicta pluris sint.}\\
\text{(Sall., *Iug.* 85.12-14)}
\]

Campbell emphasises the point that, as Marius makes clear, these books are not textbooks, but
rather collections of *exempla.* It is nonetheless clear that reading such books was considered

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27 Campbell (1987) esp. 18-19. As he notes, Frontinus and Arrian were the only two writers of military handbooks
with first-hand experience.
appropriate training for young Romans. As Dench puts it, "members of the elite gain knowledge and experience not through first-hand experience but through reading books".28 Dench proceeds from this to a discussion of Roman ethnographic texts, arguing that these are presented as being of fundamental importance for Roman military leaders - more important, even, than first-hand experience of the peoples described therein.29 This interest in ethnography and in describing peoples extends beyond prose works and technical handbooks to poetry, as has been shown in detail by Richard Thomas.30 The acquisition of knowledge, particularly through reading, becomes a means of self-fashioning, and, as Felix Racine has shown, even in the late antique period there is a tendency to privilege geographical knowledge acquired from canonical literary works from the classical and Hellenistic periods.31

Like the Roman military handbooks, the Peristephanon is highly exemplary, providing moralising instruction in verse by focusing on the deeds of the martyrs.32 I suggest that the ethnographic tendency of both the military handbooks and of earlier Latin verse is echoed in the Peristephanon, and particularly in its descriptions of cities, something I shall discuss in further detail in Chapter Three. Here, however, I should like to discuss very briefly how the hymns of the Peristephanon function as ethnographic texts. I shall take as an example Peristephanon 2, particularly appropriate given that Prudentius claims in the poem never to have visited Rome,

29 Dench (2005) 72-75.
30 Thomas (1982).
31 Racine (2009) 6-20, esp. 6-7.
32 This is particularly true of those martyrs who are members of the clergy, cf. Roberts (1993) 109-129 on Cyprian in Pe. 13. On the exemplarity of saints in late antiquity, see in general Brown (1983). Exemplarity in the Cathemerinon is the subject of Basson (1985), an MA dissertation in Afrikaans, which I have been unable to see.
despite being able to give a description of the city. In this poem, Prudentius opens with an emphasis on the city's antiquity:

antiqua fanorum pares,
iam Roma Christo dedita,
Laurentio uictrix duce
ritum triumphas barbarum.
(Pe. 2.1-4)

It is also worth noting that the city's ancient prowess is further emphasised by reference to exemplary heroes from the Republican period: Cossus, Camillus, and Caesar (2.14) are held up as pagan counterparts to the more recent glory of Lawrence. As Dench notes, Roman "autoethnography" tended to focus in particular on Roman history, and particularly its early history: ethnography is not merely descriptive but also historical.33

Yet alongside this inheritance from the classical tradition, Prudentius' Peristephanon must be seen in the context of early Christian ideas about the shrines of the martyrs. As Peter Brown has shown, the concept of sacred space is central to the cult of the saints in late antiquity. Brown discusses Dupront's concept of the "therapy of distance", arguing that pilgrimage to a sacred space functions as a means of enacting devotion, fulfilling the desire felt by many early Christians to visit sacred spaces for themselves.34 The deep emotion associated with the desire to see the shrines of the martyrs is made clear by Prudentius at the end of the hymn to Lawrence:

o ter quaterque et septies
beatus urbis incola
qui te ac tuorum comminus
sedem celebrat ossuum,

cui propter aduolui licet,
qui fletibus spargit locum,

In this passage, Prudentius puts considerable emphasis on the importance of proximity to the martyr's shrine - proclaiming the good fortune of those who live in Rome, close to the remains of Lawrence *(comminus, propter).* Also noteworthy is Prudentius' description of the imagined emotional reactions of the faithful to Lawrence's resting place: in the second stanza quoted above *(Pe. 2.533-536)*, Prudentius notes how Romans fall to the ground and shed tears, a reaction Prudentius describes himself as having in the hymn to Cassian, as I discuss in Chapter Two. Moreover, in the following two stanzas, Prudentius emphasises the considerable distance between himself and Lawrence, noting that they are divided by two mountain ranges, and remarks that he has scarcely heard report of the saints of Rome *(uix fama, Pe. 2.541).*

Yet as Brown further notes, the complex networks established by bishops and other holy men resulted in the transference of relics from their original sites, enabling those who were far

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35 The lines *O ter quaterque et septies / beatus* contain a clear allusion to Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.94, "*o terque quaterque beati.*"

36 See also Roberts (1993) 134-5, who compares the two passages.
removed from the shrine of a particular martyr to experience the *praesentia* of the saint (while also, it is worth remembering, serving as a means of self-promotion for the religious officials involved).[^37] I should like to suggest that Prudentius' accounts of the martyrs, and in particular his descriptions of their veneration and their cult-sites, serve a function similar to the transference of relics,[^38] by enabling those who read or hear his poems to go on a pilgrimage by proxy.[^39] It is very clear from Prudentius' comments at the end of *Pe.* 11 that he expects his account of the martyrdom and veneration of Hippolytus, together with his vivid description of the martyr's tomb, to result in the adoption of the cult of Hippolytus by Valerian (the poem's addressee) in Spain:

> inter sollemnes Cypriani uel Chelidoni
> Eulaliaeque dies currat et iste tibi.
> sic te pro populo, cuius tibi credita uita est,
> orantem Christus audiat omnipotens
> (*Pe.* 11.237-240)

Prudentius encourages Valerian to venerate Hippolytus as he does Cyprian (of Carthage), Chelidonius (of Calagurris), and Eulalia (of Mérida). Wherever Valerian may have been from, it is clear that his liturgical calendar included the veneration of martyrs from a variety of locations. I suggest that by including considerable detail about Hippolytus' martyrdom and the site of his tomb, Prudentius enables Valerian to experience the celebrations on the feast of the martyr without actually being physically present himself.

To return to *Peristephanon 2*, then, I should like to re-examine lines 537-40:

[^38]: Prudentius himself warns against the portioning out of the martyr's body as a means of sharing relics: cf. *Pe.* 6.133-141.
[^39]: Palmer (1989) 95 raises the possibility that Prudentius' poems provide "a sort of 'arm chair pilgrimage' as a substitute for the strenuous reality."
nos Vasco Hiberus diuidit
binis remotos Alpibus
trans Cottianorum iuga
trans et Pyrenas ninguidos.

As I mentioned above, Prudentius here laments the distance that separates him from Lawrence. And yet, this distance has to a certain extent been overcome by the vivid description of Lawrence’s death and martyrdom that has unrolled over the past five hundred lines or so. A mere four lines are given over to the vast distances between Spain and Rome - the distance between the two is collapsed by Lawrence's *fama* - specifically, the *fama* that is preserved in Prudentius' poem.\(^{40}\)

A clearer exposition of how a martyr's renown can overcome physical boundaries is to be found in *Peristephanon* 13, the *Passio Cypriani*. Prudentius opens by claiming Cyprian as a universal martyr:

\[
Punica terra tuit quo splendeat omne quidquid usquam est, 
inde domo Cyprianum, sed decus orbis et magistrum. 
est proprius patriae matyr, sed amore et ore noster. 
incubat in Libya sanguis, sed ubique lingua pollet... 
dum liber ullus erit, dum scrinia sacra litterarum, 
te leget omnis amans Christum, tua, Cypriane, discet. 
(Pe. 13.1-4, 7-8)
\]

Here Prudentius argues that, while Cyprian's remains sanctify the region around his tomb, the saint belongs to the world as a whole, because of the widespread diffusion of his writings.\(^{41}\) The written word enables this martyr to overcome the traditional constraints of the physical world. Prudentius' description is comparable to that of such classical authors as Horace at *Odes* 3.30, or Ovid at the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*:

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\(^{40}\) See also the description of *fama* at Pe. 1.11: *fama nam terras in omnes percucurrit proditrix*.

exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens
possit diruere aut innumerabilis
annorum series et fuga temporum.
non omnis moriar multaque pars mei
uitabit Libitinam: usque ego postera
crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium
scandet cum tacita uirgine pontifex:
dicar
(Hor., Carm. 3.30.1-10)

iamque opus exegi, quod nec Louis ira nec ignis
cum uolet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aeu;
parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
asta ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum;
quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,
(si quid habent ueri uatum praesagia) uium.
(Ov., Met. 15.871-879)

Both Ovid and Horace emphasise the physical immortality of their works, claiming that they will
survive as long as, or longer than, the great physical monuments that dot the Roman landscape.
Thus Horace considers his poetry *aere perennius*, which will last as long as Rome itself does
*(dum Capitolium scandet...pontifex)*. Similarly, Ovid speaks of "erecting" a work, *exegi*, in what
must be an allusion to Horace's own *sphragis*, which will never be subject to the ruin of time.
Horace and Ovid both emphasise the supremacy of poetry over physical markers, as, according
to them, it is more long-lasting. While Horace and Ovid claim that they will be read as long as
Rome stands, Prudentius limits the extent of Cyprian's fame by emphasising the materiality of
writing: *dum liber ullus erit, dum scrinia sacra litterarum, te leget omnis amans Christum.*

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Indeed, Prudentius elsewhere frequently laments the perishability of the written word. Yet by focusing on reading, by emphasising that Cyprian shall be read as long as books exist, rather than by any comparative appeal to physical monuments, Prudentius not only points to the importance of the book and the written word for Christian literature, but also indicates his own way of imagining the world: the textual space in which Cyprian's fame exists is, ultimately, superior to the physical world, in which Cyprian is bounded by the tomb in which he rests. In other words, the written word, linked as it is with the kingdom of heaven, becomes divine and eternal, while the physical world is reduced to the merely transitory. Through his writings, Cyprian's fame spreads across the known world:

\textit{desine flere bonum tantum, tenet ille regna caeli
disserit eloquitur tractat docet instruit profetat.}
\textit{nec minus inuolitat terris nec ab hoc recedit orbe.
nec Libyae populos tantum regit, exit usque in ortum
solis et usque obitum. Gallos fouet, inbuit Britannos
praesidet Hesperiae, Christum serit ultimis Hiberis.}
\textit{(Pe. 13.99-104)}

Thus writing provides a means of overcoming physical boundaries: Cyprian's fame extends \textit{usque in ortum solis et usque obitum}, and can console those far removed from the site of his burial (\textit{Gallos fouet}).

1.3 Nature is a language: the world as text

The parallelisms set up between physical and textual space can also be seen in the metaphor of the "book of nature": the idea that the world is itself a text that can be read. Curtius challenged the prevailing assumption that this metaphor first gained currency in the Renaissance, noting that

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43 See especially Pe. 10.1117-1118, also Pe. 1.73-81, 11.9-10, and cf. Fux (2003) on Pe. 9.19.
it is to be found in authors such as Alan of Lille (PL 210 Col. 579A) and Bernardus Silvestris. Yet even Curtius does not trace the metaphor as far back as he might, as it is clear that similar ideas about how to perceive and "read" the universe were prevalent in late antiquity. Augustine, in particular, makes use of the metaphor on several occasions, most notably in the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*:

> at si universam creaturam ita prius aspiceres, ut auctori Deo tribueres, quasi legens magnum quendam librum naturac rerum; atque ita si quid ibi te offenderet, causam te tanquam hominem latere posse potius crederes, quam in operibus Del quidquam reprehendere auderes. (Aug, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 32.20)

Augustine likens the world to "a big book", *magnus liber*, which is perfect in its construction. Any apparent imperfection to be found in it, Augustine claims, is due to the fallibility of its human reader. Elsewhere, Augustine suggests that this "book of nature" is required reading as a supplement to book-learning (*Sermones* 68.6), and this feeds back into Augustine's insistence on the importance of geographical knowledge as a means of learning about the world.

Augustine is by no means the only late antique author to draw a parallel between the world and a book, as can be seen from the remarks of Gregory of Nazianzenus on Basil of Caesarea's *Hexaemeron*:

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45 For Augustine and the Book of Nature see especially Groh (2005) and Drecoll (2005), though the reader is warned that the former, in particular, is rendered less useful by its erroneous citation of sources. See also Cetl (1988) (in Czech, with a summary in German). For Origen as a forerunner of the idea of the metaphor, see Benjamins (2005).

46 Similar ideas about the impossibility of perfect language and observation after the Fall are to be found in the *Hamartigenia*, as Dykes (2011) 40-49, 59-79 shows.

Gregory speaks in highly laudatory terms about the miracle of perceiving the work of the Creator as he reads Basil's work, emphasising the *enargeia* (though without explicitly naming the rhetorical term) and suggesting that reading this text is a means to comprehending the Creation (i.e. the world).

Of course similar imagery can be found in earlier Graeco-Roman literature, most notably in Lucretius, for whom the letters of the alphabet (and thus his text as a whole) stand for the atoms of Epicurean theory. Moreover, use of natural imagery to describe books can be found in a wide variety of contexts, from the use of terms such as *anthology* and *florilegium* to describe collections of texts, to Chaucer's extended metaphor for writing as farming and gardening in the *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women*.

Before returning to Prudentius I should like to examine one further parallel. In a recent article, John Eidinow has argued for a new reading of the ending of Horace, *Ode* 1.1. The poem concludes:

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49 For Lucretius and the universe as text, see Kennedy (2000); Kennedy (2002) esp 90-95, 106-117; Friedlander (1941); Snyder (1980) 31-51. On the reader as a traveller in the *de Rerum Natura* see especially Reinhardt (2004); also Gale (2004). For Prudentius' knowledge of Lucretius see Brakman (1920), Rapisarda (1950), and now Dykes (2011) 174-244: a major study of Lucretius' influence on the literature of late antiquity remains a desideratum.
50 For the origins of the term ἄνθολογία to refer to a book collection, see Alan Cameron (1993) 5, and for Meleager's *Garland* (cf. *AP* 4.1) see Gutzwiller (1997). The title *Peristephanon*, whether Prudentian or later, must contain on some level an allusion to a poetic collection as a garland (besides the more obvious reference to the "crown" of martyrdom): see further my discussion of the conclusion of *Pe*. 3 in Chapter Five. On Chaucer see Gellrich (1985) 210-213 on *PLGW*, G 61-80 in particular.
51 Eidinow (2009).
quodsi me lyricis uatibus inseres, 
sublimi feriam sidera uertice. 
(Carm. 1.1.35-36)

Eidinow suggests that behind the word *sidera* we should see a reference to the editorial asterisk. As he notes, Hephaestion tells us that an asterisk was used in editing volumes to mark out a difference of metre between poems:

> Καὶ μάλιστα εἰώθεν ὁ ἀστερίσκος τίθεσθαι, ἐὰν ἑτερόμετρον ἢ τὸ ἄσμα τὸ ἐξῆς· ὃ καὶ [μᾶλλον] ἐπὶ τῶν ποιημάτων τῶν μονοστροφικῶν γίνεται Σαπροῦς τε καὶ Ανακρέόντος καὶ Ἀλκαίου.

Hephaestion, *De Signis* 74.7-11

Thus, Eidinow suggests, Horace hints at the hope that he will enter the "canon" of lyric authors by being edited, and gives his future editor a head-start by marking out the end of his poem, which differs in metre from *Ode* 1.2: "By writing *uertice* at the end of the ode, the poet will make the word *uertex*, the verbal representation of his own head, strike the critics' asterisk - if, that is, he is judged to be worth editing."\(^{52}\) Eidinow goes on to suggest similar allusions to formal editorial features in *Ode* 1.38 (hinting at the *coronis* which would mark the end of a book-roll).\(^{53}\) Further examples of such paratextual play are to be found (unsurprisingly) in the Hellenistic poets.\(^{54}\)

To take Eidinow's provocative suggestion a little further, I would suggest that what Horace is in fact doing at the beginning and end of his first book of *Odes* is presenting his collection as a textual representation of the world: all that occurs within the collection is "within the text", though Horace's poetic self-regard enables him to stretch those boundaries, by reaching to the

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\(^{52}\) Eidinow (2009) 84-85, quote on p.85.  
editorial markers in the sky. Within the collection, Horace also likens Vergil's journey from Italy to Greece to Vergil's own composition of the *Aeneid*, at *Carm.* 1.3,⁵⁵ while his own journey beyond the bounds of his Sabine farm in *Carm.* 1.22 must on some level be related to issues of generic boundaries.⁵⁶ Thus Horace represents his lyric collection as a navigable world, the limits of which are marked by generic or metrical distinctions.

I think we can see a similar paratextual joke taking place in the presentation of the *Liber Peristephanon* in the manuscript tradition. I turn first to *Peristephanon* 1, the hymn to Emeterius and Chelidonius. The text itself does not name the martyrs, and they are known to us only from the *inscriptio* above the poem. The *inscriptio*, with the opening few lines, are thus represented as follows:

```
HYMNVS IN HONOREM SANCTORVM MARTYRVM EMETERI ET
CHELIDONI CALAGVRRITANORVM
scripta sunt caelo duo
rum martyrum uocabula,
aureis quae Christus illic adnotauit litteris,
sanguinis notis eadem scripta terris tradidit.
```

Prudentius tells us that the names of the martyrs are written in gold in heaven, and in blood on earth. Now, many titles in late antique manuscripts are written in red ink, in contrast to the main body of the text - see, for instance, the *Vergilius Romanus* and *Vergilius Vaticanus*.⁵⁷ This is also the case for the *Puteanus*, the oldest manuscript of Prudentius.⁵⁸ As an image of this manuscript

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⁵⁶ This is hinted at by Lowrie (1997) 187-94.
⁵⁷ On which cf. Wright (1992); Wright (1993); Wright (2001).
⁵⁸ I have been unable to examine this manuscript personally, but Robert (1884) 407 confirms that titles are written in red therein.
was not readily available, I have included as Figure 1.1 the relevant page from the St. Gall manuscript of Prudentius:59

![Figure 1.1: Cod. Sang. 136, p.43](image)

As we have it, then, the poem presents a reference to the materiality of its presentation. The *caelum* of *scripta sunt in caelo* refers to what is "above" the text, namely the *inscriptio*. We might expect the title to be written in gold leaf - but this text is an earthly creation, and thus the names of the martyrs are recorded in blood-red (*sanguinis notis...scripta*). Thus, as the collection opens, the text is likened to a world: by reading this poem, the reader "sees" the world of the martyrs.

59 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 136, p. 43 (http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0136/43/medium). Note that this manuscript, alone in the tradition, omits the word *SANCTORUM* from the *inscriptio*.
At the conclusion of *Pe. 14*, Prudentius describes Agnes' ascent to heaven:

exutus inde spiritus emicat
liberque in auras exilit, angeli
saepsere euntem tramite candido.
miratur orbem sub pedibus situm,
spectat tenebras ardua subditas
rideoque solis quod rota circuit,
quod mundus omnis uoluit et implicat,
erum quod atro turbine uiiutur,
quod una saecli mobilitas rapit:

(*Pe. 14.91-99*)

This passage owes much to Lucan's description of Pompey's apotheosis at the beginning of *De Bello Civili* 9, and also to the *Somnium Scipionis*. This *contemplatio mundi* is by no means restricted to Christian thought. Yet it is fair to say that it is only in the late antique period that we see the wholesale adoption of the idea of the *contemplatio mundi* as a way of gaining a knowledge of the world as a whole and (crucially) a means of realising the insignificance of the world. This is made very clear by Courcelle in his study of the vision of the world observed by St. Benedict in Gregory the Great's *Vita Sancti Benedicti*. It is clear that this motif stems ultimately from the New Testament, and in particular from Satan's temptation of Christ:

et duxit illum diabolus et ostendit illi omnia regna orbis terrae in momento temporis. et ait ei tibi dabo potestatem hanc uniuersam et gloriam illorum quia mihi tradita sunt et cui uolo do illa. tu ergo si adoraueris coram me erunt tua omnia.

(Luke 4:5-7)

iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum ualde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum. et dixit illi haec tibi omnia dabo si cadens adoraueris me.

(Matthew 4:8-9)

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60 For Lucan, see Palmer (1989) 187-188; for the *Somnium Scipionis*, see Fux (2003) 487-488, who also suggests that the opening lines of this passage are imitated by Dante at *Paradiso* 22.124-132.

61 Courcelle (1967); see also Courcelle (1958). The passage in question is to be found in Gregory, *Dialog*. 2.35.

In both Matthew and Luke, the Devil takes Christ up to the top of a mountain from where he can show him the whole world. Christ's rejection of the promise of the world laid out before him is thus taken up by medieval authors: as Lozovsky puts it, "contemplative cosmic visions embracing the earth at once and presenting it before the eyes of a spectator usually invited him and his listeners to contemplate the smallness, transience, and sinfulness of this world." I suggest that we see a variant on this theme in Agnes' ascent - the virgin martyr's laughter at the sight of the world beneath her feet (orbem sub pedibus situm) and the ultimate emptiness of the bustle of human life (uana saecli mobilitas) as she ascends to heaven is a form of imitatio Christi, reflecting Jesus' rejection of the Devil.

The Peristephanon, then, as it is now presented, opens and concludes with movement between heaven and earth - at the beginning of Pe. 1, the paratextual reference to the inscriptio suggests a movement from the caelum of the work's title down to the mundus of the text, while at the conclusion of Pe. 14, Agnes' ascent provides an opportunity to view this mundus as a whole, only for it to be rejected in favour of heaven. The closing lines of the Peristephanon emphasise an ascetic renunciation of the world, something we see repeatedly in accounts of the deaths of the martyrs themselves (in, for example, the descriptions of the "release" of the soul from the body at Pe. 2.486-7 and Pe. 9.86-8), and something that ultimately harkens back to Prudentius' wish at the close of the Praefatio:

haec dum scribo uel eloquor

63 For a discussion of how medieval scholars attempted to explain how Christ could see the world at once see Lozovsky (2010) 316-319.
65 Cf. the perceptive comment of Fux (2003) ad loc: "à la mobilitas sans but du siècle s'oppose le mouvement ascendant de la martyre, qui aboutit à sa station glorieuse au Ciel." On the martyr as an imitator of Christ, see now Moss (2010).
That this conclusion ought to be read alongside Agnes' ascent at the end of *Peristephanon* 14 is made clear by the verbal similarities: *emicat/emicem; spiritus liber/liber lingua*. Yet to return to the framing of the *Peristephanon* by these two passages, at least as the collection is now ordered: by presenting the text as a world, bookended by visions of heaven, the reader is invited to navigate the collection as though it were a map, as I now proceed to discuss.

### 1.4 The travelling reader

Likening the reading or writing of a poem to a journey was common in antiquity. We might think in particular of texts such as Pindar, *Ol*. 6.22-28:

```greek
ὦ Φίντις, ἀλλὰ ζεῦξον ἥ-
δὴ μοι σθένος ἡμών,
ἀ τάχος, ὅφ’ ὅν κελεύθω τ’ ἐν καθαρᾷ
βάσσομεν δικχον, ἵκωμαι τε π’ ῥός ἀνδρῶν
καὶ γένος· κεῖναι γὰρ ἐξ ἀλ-
λὰν ὄλους ἁγιονευτεῖσαι
ταῦταν ἔπιστανται, στεφάνους ἐν Ὅλυ-
ἐπεὶ δέξαντο· κεῖναν ἐξ ἀλ-
ὁδὸν ἁγιονευτεῖσαι
ταῦταν ἔπιστανται, στεφάνους ἐν Ὅλυ-
ἐπεὶ δέξαντο· κεῖναν ἐξ ἀλ-
μὴν ἀναπτί νάμεν αὐταῖς·
πρὸς Πιτάναν δὲ παρ’ Ἑὐρό-
τα πόρον δεῖ σάμερον ἑλθεῖν ἐν ὃρα
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Similarly, in Latin literature a number of authors compare their texts to journeys, particularly when the texts are themselves *describing* journeys. Perhaps the best known of these is Horace,

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66 Malamud (1989) 77 suggests a play on *liber* and *liber at Praef*. 45: it is tempting to see a similar wordplay occurring at *Pe*. 14.92. For instances of wordplay when there are differences in vowel length between the two words, see Ahl (1985) 56-57. See also Malamud (1989) 172-177 for a discussion of the metapoetic aspects of the conclusion of *Pe*. 14.

67 See the next section for more detail on how readers order the collection to suit their own interests.

68 Cf. Höschele (2007) esp. 335-343, whence a number of the following examples are taken.
Serm. 1.5.104: *Brundisium longae finis chartaeque uiaeque est*, while many Latin and Greek authors compare the act of *writing* poetry to sailing a ship. 69 Prudentius himself compares his text to a journey at the end of the first book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*:

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  sed iam tempus iter longi cohibere libelli,
  ne tractum sine fine ferat fastidia carmen.
(CS 1.656-7) 70
```

As Höschele shows, however, the motif is particularly pronounced in poetry *collections*: both in books of Hellenistic epigrams and in Latin poetic books by figures such as Horace (in the *Sermones*), Martial, and the author of the *Carmina Priapea*. 71 I should like to suggest that certain aspects of the *Liber Peristephanon* lend themselves to a similar reading. I have discussed in the preceding section the ways in which the collection can be read as a textual representation of the world. I should like now to discuss in a little more detail how the arrangement of the poems within the collection by some early readers makes it clear that the possibility of reading the collection as though it were an itinerary was realised early on in the reception of the poems. I shall then conclude by looking closely at *Peristephanon* 4, arguing that it, too, sets itself up as a literary itinerary through which the reader can navigate.

The order of the poems in the *Peristephanon* is by no means uniform across the manuscript tradition (cf. Fig. 1.2). 72 There are four major "families" of manuscripts. Fux does not consider there to be an organising principle at work in any of these families. I would disagree with this,

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71 Cf. Höschele (2007), and on Horace see in particular Zetzel (1980).

72 In what follows I rely mainly on Fux's account of the manuscript tradition.
however: particularly in the case of Family $\beta\alpha$, I think we can see a clear organising principle at work, specifically a geographical one.\textsuperscript{73} The order of poems in this family is relatively uniform: we begin with *Peristephanon* 1, on Emeterius and Chelidonius of Calagurris; followed by *Pe.* 5, Vincent of Caesaraugusta; then *Pe.* 4, on the sixteen martyrs of Caesaraugusta; then *Pe.* 6, on Fructuosus of Tarraco. The most direct route from Calagurris to Tarraco would have followed the road through Caesaraugusta.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Famille $\alpha\alpha$ & 10 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 \\
$CD\alpha$ & 10 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 \\
$A$ & - & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \[
\hline
$\kappa$ & 10 & [psych.] & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 \\
$b$ & 1 & 5 & [cath. 11-12; apoth., ham.] & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 \\
\hline
Famille $\alpha\beta$ & 10 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 5 & 4 & 14 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 11 & 12 & 13 \[
NJTVde & 10 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 5 & 4 & 14 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 11 & 12 & 13 \\
B\textsuperscript{19} & 11 & 13 & 12 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & [cath. 11-12] & 10 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 5 & 4 & 14 & 6 & 7 & 9 \\
\hline
Famille $\beta\alpha$ & 1 & 5 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 & 2 & 3 & 10 \\
$E\text{p}\text{g}i\text{j}kE$ & 1 & 5 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 & 2 & 3 & 10 \\
$b$ & 1 & 5 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 14 & 2 & - & 10 \\
$Ff$ & 1 & 5 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 14 & 2 & 3 & 10 \\
$m$ & 1 & 5 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 13 & 2 & 3 & 14 & 10 \\
\hline
Famille $\beta\beta$\textsuperscript{20} & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & (14\textsuperscript{+}) & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 10 \\
$m$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 10 \\
$U\text{\textsuperscript{21}}$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & - & 10 \\
$O\text{\textsuperscript{5}eg\text{\textsuperscript{6}m\text{\textsuperscript{5}y\text{\textsuperscript{5}z}}}$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 10 \\
$p$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & - & 4 & 14 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 10 \\
$\mu$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & - & 10 \\
$\nu$ & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & 3 & 6 & 7 & - & 1 & 10 \\
n & 1 & 5 & 2 & 11 & 13 & 12 & 4 & 14 & 14\textsuperscript{+} & [cath. 11-12] & 3 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 8 & 10 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Order of the poems of the *Peristephanon* in the manuscript tradition (table from Fux (2003) 88)
\label{fig:order}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{73} For the geographical organisation of catalogues elsewhere in antiquity, see West (1985) 166 on the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, and Cole (2010) for other examples in archaic Greek literature.
The focus then shifts away from Spain, as the next poem in the collection is Pe. 7, to Quirinus of Siscia. After Pe. 7 we find the problematic Pe. 8, the epigram on the spot where Emeterius and Chelidonius died (i.e. in Calagurris), but then we move down the Italian peninsula: first to Forum Cornelii, with Pe. 9, describing the passion of Cassian; then to Hippolytus on the outskirts of Rome in Pe. 11; before reaching Rome proper and Peter and Paul in Pe. 12. After this there is a quick trip across the Mediterranean to the Carthage of Cyprian (Pe. 13) - Carthage, in the Roman imagination directly opposite Rome - before returning to Rome with Pe. 14 on Agnes and Pe. 2 on Lawrence. The collection is concluded with a return to Spain, this time to Emerita Augusta and St. Eulalia, whose passion is described in Pe. 3.

It is reasonable to see a clear geographical organisation in this collection, I think. The first four poems move across northern Spain from west to east. The collection then shifts to Dalmatia, before moving down the Italian peninsula, across to north Africa, back to Italy, and then over to central Spain. The hypothesis is admittedly imperfect, given the troublesome presence of Pe. 8. But nonetheless, the arrangement invites a reader to traverse the collection as though it were an actual journey, an itinerary analogous to that of the Itinerarium Burdigalense or of Egeria, and while it is difficult to explain exactly what to do with Pe. 8, it would be difficult to argue that the overall geographical construction is wholly coincidental.

I should like to conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of travel and geography in Peristephanon 4. The poem is ostensibly dedicated to the eighteen martyrs of Caesaraugusta, as

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74 The poem is anomalous in the Peristephanon: it is an epigram, rather than a hymn, and unlike all other poems in the collection it contains no narrative account of the passion of the martyrs.

75 Cf. Aen. 1.13-14, Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe | ostia, and see also Talbert (2010) for the Peutinger map, in which this geographical organisation is faithfully followed.
the title tells us (*hymnus in honorem sanctorum decem et octo martyrum Caesaraugustanorum*). But the opening sixty lines or so consist of a sweeping survey of Spanish and nearby towns, all of which, Prudentius tells us, will yield to Caesaraugusta on Judgement Day. Jacques Fontaine noted long ago that these opening lines form a sort of literary itinerary, a quasi-pilgrimage in miniature around the Pyrenees.\(^{76}\) As Michael Roberts notes, the description of the various cities forms a parade, which Roberts compares to Paulinus’ description of cities and their saints in his nineteenth poem.\(^{77}\) Another possible influence is Ausonius’ *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, though it is considerably longer. However, I should like to argue that Prudentius' choice of metre should lead us to look for much earlier parallels. Prudentius only uses the Sapphic stanza twice: in *Pe*. 4 and *Cath*. 8.\(^{78}\) In *Pe*. 4, I suggest that this choice is occasioned by the theme of travel. Horace discusses travel in a number of poems in this metre, specifically *Carm*. 1.22, 2.6, 3.14 (dealing with Augustus' return from Spain), 3.27, and 4.2. Catullus, moreover, uses the metre in his eleventh poem, which also deals with travel. The poem opens with the famous address to Furius and Aurelius, who, the poet tells us, would travel to the ends of the earth with him if only he were to ask:

\begin{verbatim}
Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,
siue in extremos penetrabit Indos,
litus ut longe resonante Eoa
tunditur unda,

siue in Hyrcanos Arabasue molles,
\end{verbatim}

\(^{76}\) Fontaine (1974) 249, who in fact argues that the poem represents "les étapes circumpyrénéennes" of Prudentius' own pilgrimage. I should point out that this poem is the subject of an article arguing for radical editorial changes by Christian Gnilka (2000b), who would reject lines 25-28, 37-48, and 61-64 as interpolations. I am not convinced by his arguments.

\(^{77}\) Roberts (1993) 33, claiming that Paulinus’ poem predates that of Prudentius. But the former must be dated to January 405, and so more likely post-dates the Prudentian poem.

\(^{78}\) There does not appear to be any specific rationale behind Prudentius' choice of this metre in *Cath*. 8, the *Hymnus Post Ieiunium*. 
seu Sacas sagittiferosue Parthos,
siue quae septemgeminus colorat
aequora Nilus,

siue trans altas gradietur Alpes,
Caesaris uisens **monumenta** magni,
Gallicum Rhenum, horribiles uitro ulti-
mosque Britannos,

omnia haec, quaecumque feret uoluntas
caelitum, temptare simul parati:
(Catull. 11.1-14)

The poem stretches across the known world, taking in the far east, the far west, and the depths of
the Nile and heights of the Alps. I should like, however, to draw particular attention to line 10,
Caesaris uisens **monumenta** magni. The word **monumentum** occurs only four times in Sapphic
verse in extant classical Latin: here; at Horace, *Carm. 1.2.15* (**monumenta regis**); in Phocas,
carmen de uita Vergilii 7 (**monumenta saeclii**); and at *Pe. 4.46*:

ingeret Tingis sua Cassianum,
festa Massylum **monumenta regum,**
qui cinis gentes domitas coegit
ad iuga Christi.
(*Pe. 4.45-48*)

While the line **monumenta regum** is superficially closer to Horace's **monumenta regis,** in the
context of a catalogue of locations, ranging from the Iberian peninsula to Gaul to North Africa,
we must surely privilege the Catullan text here. Catullus opens by emphasising how far his
friends would travel for his sake, before deflating expectations in the second half of the poem
and asking them only to travel as far as Lesbia's house. Similarly, Prudentius builds up a lengthy
list of the many martyrs in diverse cities around the Mediterranean, but his overall argument is
that none of these can compare to the rich bounty of martyrs to be found in Caesaraugusta. In

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79 On the opening of the poem as an itinerary see most recently Krebs (2008).
both cases, then, we have potential itineraries constructed which are revealed to be ultimately unnecessary. The reader undertakes the literary journey, only to realise, at the conclusion of the poem, that he could have stayed in one place after all.

Thus in *Peristephanon* 4, Prudentius presents his collection in microcosm, making reference to many of the martyrs he will discuss in more detail elsewhere in the collection, as well as some who are not commemorated by him in song, but all the while emphasising to the reader that, if they do not really feel like travelling, they can just as well stay in one place. Reading, once again, becomes a substitute for actual travel.

### 1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have approached the *Peristephanon* from a reader's perspective. I began by surveying the manuscript tradition of the collection, and establishing that there is no secure basis on which to argue for an authorial arrangement of the collection. I then used the parallel of Roman military handbooks to show how Prudentius' *Peristephanon* can function as a textbook for the "armchair pilgrim". By perusing the collection, a reader can gain knowledge of the sites of the cults of the martyrs without having to travel to see them. This argument is supported by the fact that Prudentius' descriptions of various towns and regions bear a clear resemblance to the ethnographic tradition of earlier Latin literature.

In the third section, I discussed the metaphor of the Book of Nature, surveying the use of the metaphor of the world as text in late antiquity, before arguing that paratextual and internal allusions in the manuscript tradition of the *Peristephanon* invite the reader to view the collection as a representation of the world, which can be navigated on the model of a physical journey. This idea was taken up in the final section, in which I argued that one family of manuscripts in the textual tradition present the *Peristephanon* in an order that resembles an itinerary around the
Mediterranean, almost akin to a handbook for pilgrims. But it is not only the reader who goes on a journey in the *Peristephanon*. In Chapter Two, I turn to the depiction of journeys undertaken by characters within the collection.
Chapter Two: Intertextual journeys

In the last chapter, I argued for the existence of a ‘travelling reader’ who, in the course of reading Prudentius’ *Peristephanon*, goes on a sort of pilgrimage by proxy. In this chapter, I would like to examine the theme of travel in the *Peristephanon* from another perspective – that of intertextuality. An introductory section will discuss travel in late antiquity in general, and consider how travel writers conceived of their surroundings (2.1). Here I will argue that descriptions of landscape and journeys in Latin literature are shaped as much by literary concerns as by personal experience. A brief discussion of Ausonius’ *Mosella* (2.2) follows. Ausonius is a useful point of comparison with Prudentius, not only because he is a close contemporary, but also because of the considerable influence he exerted upon Prudentius as a poet.¹ I then move on to discuss three travel narratives in the *Peristephanon* – the hymns to Eulalia (2.3), Hippolytus (2.4), and Cassian (2.5), the last of which is the focus of the bulk of the chapter.

2.1 Travel and experience

Travel in the ancient world was a dangerous business.² Even at the height of the *pax Romana*, a private citizen undertook a journey at his own risk. Pliny the Younger tells us of two of his contemporaries who simply vanished without a trace:

> scribis Robustum, splendidum equitem Romanum, cum Atilio Scauro amico meo
> Oriculum usque commune iter peregisse, deinde nusquam comparuisse; petis ut
> Scaurus ueniat nosque, si potest, in aliqua inquisitionis uestigia inducat. ueniet;
> uereor ne frustra. suspicor enim tale nescio quid Robusto accidisse quale
> aliquando Metilio Crispo municipi meo. huic ego ordinem impetraueram atque
> etiam proficiscenti quadraginta milia nummum ad instruendum se ornandumque

¹ Cf. Charlet (1980).

² There is a new edited volume on this topic: Alvar Nuño (2010), which I have been unable to see.
donaueram, nec postea aut epistulas eius aut aliquem de exitu nuntium accepi. interceptusne sit a suis an cum suis dubium: certe non ipse, non quisquam ex seruis eius adparuit, ut ne Robusti quidem. experiamur tamen, accersamus Scaurum; demus hoc tuis, demus optimi adolescentis honestissimis precibus, qui pietate mira mira etiam sagacitate patrem quuerit. di faueant ut sic inueniat ipsum, quemadmodum iam cum quo fuisset inuenit! uale. (Plin., Ep. 6.25)

Robustus has disappeared while no more than a day’s journey away from Rome. Elsewhere, Pliny expresses his relief that Tacitus has returned to Rome safely (Ep. 4.17.1). This was only shortly before Aelius Aristides could praise the ease of travel in his panegyric to Rome. Even allowing for the excesses of encomium, Aelius’ claims of utter safety across the Empire are striking. And despite this, as the tone of Pliny’s letter shows, disappearances on public roads were not uncommon.

Travel was considerably more problematic in the late fourth century. Gothic incursions and almost two centuries of political upheaval and imperial division had made the Empire more fragmented and more dangerous. And while private Romans were travelling with considerable regularity – indeed, the rise of interest in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, for those who could afford it, may even have resulted in an increase in travel generally – an awareness of the difficulty of travelling is ever-present in the literature of the period. As Horden and Purcell have put it: “We cannot imagine what travelling and communications felt like in the Mediterranean without at least attempting to empathize with those who held that any journey, this journey, had

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3 Sherwin-White (1966) 385.
4 Orationes 26.100-1
5 For an historical overview, see Averil Cameron (1993).
among its genuinely possible destinations the inferno. Eschatological geography patterns the world.”

The exemplary “perilous voyage” is that of Rutilius Namatianus, writing in 417. His account of a sea-voyage from Rome to Gaul is littered with references to the perilous state of the Empire: this is reflected not least in the fact that he has to go to sea at all, and in the late autumn at that, rather than travel by land as would be customary. What is particularly noteworthy about Rutilius’ journey is his insistence on the dangers of the land, rather than on those of the sea, which were particularly dangerous even at the height of summer. This surely points to the extent to which the infrastructure of the empire had been damaged by Gothic incursions and by the Sack of Rome in 410.

But even if travel was getting more dangerous, more and more people were writing accounts of their travels. The rise of pilgrimage narratives in prose, especially those of the Bordeaux pilgrim and Egeria, is particularly noteworthy. Jerome emphasized the importance not only of supplementing biblical exegesis with topographical observation, but also of visiting Greece for an understanding of its history:

quomodo Graecorum historias magis intelligunt, qui Athenas uiderint, et tertium Virgilii librum, qui a Troade per Leucaten, et Acroceraunia ad Sicилиam, et inde ad ostia Tiberis nauigaret: ita sanctam Scripturam lucidius intuebitur, qui Iudaem oculis contemplatus est, et antiquarum urbium memorias, locorumque vocabula, uel mutata cognouerit. unde et nobis curae fuit, cum eruditissimis Hebraeorum hunc laborem subire, ut circumiremus prouinciam, quam uniuersae Christi Ecclesiae sonant.

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7 Horden & Purcell (2000) 444.
8 On the date of Rutilius I follow Cameron (1967).
9 De Reditu Suo 1.37-8, 1.183-4.
10 On the former, see Elsner (2000), on the latter, the commentary of Wilkinson (1999).
Indeed, it seems clear that many journeys were steered by such concerns. This can be seen most clearly in Egeria’s account of her travels to the Holy Land: 

(Pr. Egeriae, It. 2.2)

Egeria’s account of her journey through the Holy Land is wholly shaped by the relation of the landscape to that depicted in Scripture. Indeed, much of the geographical literature of the period takes on a similar narrative thrust, as A. H. Merrills notes. Merrills, in his monograph on the intersection of historical and geographical writing in late antiquity, shows how artificial the distinction between “geography” and “history” is in relation to the ancient world, noting inter alia that denoting history as “narrative” and geography as “descriptive” is problematic given that the majority of late antique histories come in the form of chronicles, while many geographies are cast in narrative form.

More generally, however, the Itinerarium Egeriae is a good example of the sort of “experiential geography” discussed by Katherine Clarke, who makes use of the ideas of the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan to come to the following conclusion: “a sense of place only develops over time, making passage of time essential for the transformation of abstract space into

11 Cited by Horden & Purcell (2000) 77, who also provide a modern exemplar from the writings of Arnaldo Momigliano. See further Hunt (1984) 412.
12 On Egeria see recently Soler (2005a) 357-384.
13 Merrills (2005) 10 and passim.
significant place” and later: “The inextricable connection of time and space meant not only that time was linked to the event, but also that the time of an event was subject to its spatial relationship to the perceiver. This leads us to notions of perspective, focus, and the relationship of the author to text and reader.”

The fundamental point being made by both Merrills and Clarke, though in different ways, is that a place cannot simply be described “as is”, but rather it is the experience of that place that is described. It follows, then, that no two descriptions of a place can be the same, but rather represent their own historical specificity.

By the same token, however, it is worth emphasising the interdependence of different travel narratives, and the fact that one way of making sense of a place or a journey is to compare it to another account of a space or a journey. As the editors of a collection of essays on the representation of landscapes put it: “new worlds are made out of old texts, and old worlds are the basis of new texts.” In the same book, a chapter by Patrick McGreevy argues that accounts of Niagara Falls from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are shaped as much by earlier accounts of the Falls as by the Falls themself.

The tension between “the real” and “the literary” (or the “experienced” and the “studied”) has long been noted in Latin literature. As Gordon Williams puts it, the “general bookishness” of Hellenistic literature infused the Roman literature of the late Republic and early Empire and

17 In relation to the literary geography of late antiquity see now Gibson (2004) on Avienus, and Racine (2009), esp. 122-165.
affected the outlook of the poets of that period, for whom literary knowledge and literary scenes always outweighed the “real”. This tension is perhaps best exemplified by the scholarship on late Republican and Augustan love poetry, in which heated debates on the relative roles of discourse and “real life” have been published.

A similar tension can be seen in accounts of journeys: for example, it has long been noted that Horace’s account of his journey to Brundisium in Satire 1.5 imitates Lucilius’ Iter Siculum, while Tara Welch has more recently shown how the poem draws on Vergil’s Eclogues and Lucretius. Similarly, much of the first half of the Aeneid draws on Homer’s Odyssey, and plays on the reader’s knowledge of that text to help shape Aeneas’ journey. For example, as Williams shows, the description of the Libyan shore at Aeneid 1.159-169 makes use of a number of similar ekphraseis in the Odyssey – 9.136-141 (the Cyclopes), 10.87-94 (the Laestrygonians), and 13.93-115 (Ithaca).

Williams notes: “The literary point of this device is to enable the poet to turn the reader’s, or listener’s, attention deliberately, for a short time, away from the narrative to enjoy a type of digression that invites poetic treatment on its own account. The description then becomes a direct communication from the poet to the audience in a more intimate way than that which

\[\text{**References**}\]

18 Williams (1968) 634.
19 The bibliography is vast, but particularly provocative are Kennedy (1993) for the post-structuralists, and Griffin (1981) for the realists.
20 See Fraenkel (1957) 105-112, who attempts to reconcile imitatio and experience in the poem.
22 See Williams (1968) 637-644 for a detailed treatment.
characterizes normal third-person narrative, for the poet’s description conveys to the audience facts that stand outside the narrative and need not be known to the characters in it."\(^\text{23}\)

For Williams, this is a classic example of a “purple passage”: a stylised, descriptive passage that holds up the “normal...narrative” in order to show off the poet’s skill. But Williams notes that the passage also serves a narrative function, in that it provides additional information to the reader. I would take this further, however: it is precisely by relying on the reader’s recognizing the Homeric allusions that this descriptive passage \textit{can} provide the necessary additional information. Because Aeneas’ journey is associated with that of Odysseus, and because the African shore is compared to the shores of the Cyclopes, the Laestrygonians, and Ithaca, the reader views this landscape with the proper sense of foreboding: we have seen something like this before, and it does not bode well for our hero.

In this way Vergil maps Aeneas’ journey on to that of Odysseus. The travels of Aeneas are new to the hero himself, but they are not new to the reader. Everything Aeneas does in the first six books, everywhere he travels, has a parallel in the Odyssey. Nowhere is this more evident than in the exhaustive collection of imitations in Knauer’s \textit{Die Aeneis und Homer}.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{23}\) Williams (1968) 640.

\(^{24}\) Knauer (1964a). For a more succinct outline of his approach, see Knauer (1964b). Of course other poetic predecessors are also invoked by Vergil, most notably Apollonius’ \textit{Argonautica} (Nelis 2001) and Ennius’ \textit{Annales} (Norden 1915).
2.2 Ausonius’ Mosella

We turn now to the fourth century, and to a work written not too long before Prudentius’ Peristephanon – the Mosella of Ausonius. A leisurely description of the titular river, the purpose of the poem has occasioned the spilling of much ink, particularly over the issue of whether it is intended to reinforce the reign of Valentinian by glossing over the violence of the Gothic incursions into Gaul.

In this section, I do not want to go so far as to argue for Ausonius’ use of intertextuality to further his propagandistic ends. I merely want to show that Ausonius uses intertextuality to present the Mosella as a thoroughly Roman river, in a Roman landscape. In so doing, Ausonius inserts the river into the Roman literary tradition, and also emphasises the Romanness of this region of northern Gaul in the fourth century. Space prevents me from discussing the poem in its entirety, so my discussion here will be restricted to the opening twenty-two lines.

Roger Green has noted the numerous echoes of the Cumaean landfall in the sixth book of the Aeneid in the opening lines. It is clear that Ausonius expects the reader to make the connection between the narrator’s joy at seeing the Mosella (and thus Gaul and Roman territory) once more and Aeneas’ joy at the final landfall in Aeneid Six. I would extend this argument by pointing to the Lucretian echoes in the scene, which make clear the novelty of Ausonius’ subject-matter:

avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis


26 Put forward most forcefully by Marx (1931), and accepted by Kenney (1984) 190. Green (1991) 457-458 is unconvinced.

atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae;
(Lucr. 4.1-5(=1.926-930))

unde iter ingrediens nemorosa per avia solum
et nulla humani spectans vestigia cultus
praetereo aretem sitentibus undique terris
Dumnissum riguasque perenni fonte Tabernas
Arvaque Sauromatum nuper metata colonis;
(Auson., Mos. 5-9)

Neither Green nor Cavarzere note this echo in their commentaries, instead focusing (in line 5 in particular) on the superficially closer *inde iter ingrediens* of Silius 15.503 and Juvenecus 2.99.28 Indeed it may be granted that the verbal association is slight. But there are a number of reasons why it makes sense to see Lucretius behind Ausonius’ text here.

First, Ausonius repeatedly imitates Lucretius, or writes in a Lucretian style, in the remainder of the poem. See, for example, the Lucretian use of alliteration at lines 58-9; compound words such as *squamiger* (83, a favourite Lucretian coinage),29 and direct imitations at 150 (*DRN* 1.373, noted by Green), 172 (*DRN* 4.580, *contra* Green *ad loc*), and 260 (*DRN* 1.147, noted by Green and Cavarzere).

Second, the allusion to an invocation of the Muses is appropriate at the opening of a poem. Moreover, the fact that the invocation imitated is a “proem in the middle” fits well with the imitation of *Aeneid* Six, another “middle” text, that follows.30

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28 See Green (1991) and Cavarzere (2003) *ad loc*. One could argue for the relevance of the Silian passage, as it describes Hasdrubal’s march through Gaul towards the Alps, but this seems unlikely.

29 Cf. *DRN* 1.162, 372, 378, 2.343, 2.1083. A Diogenes search of the PHI Latin corpus reveals only six other instances of the compound in Latin literature up to and including Apuleius: twice each in Germanicus’ *Aratea* and Manilius’ *Astronomica* (both didactic poems, perhaps imitating Lucretius, their predecessor), once in Ovid (*Met.* 4.717), and once in Pliny (*NH* 11.137, of snakes).

30 On proems in the middle see Conte (1992).
Finally, we may be able to see a progression in lines 3-11 in which Ausonius imitates or alludes to Ennius in lines 3-4, Lucretius in lines 5-9, and Vergil in lines 10-11. Can we see a reference to the *Annales* in the description of the Battle of Bingen as the “Cannae of the Gauls” in line 3? Skutsch asserts that Ausonius had a copy of Ennius, though it may only have been a copy of the first book.\(^{31}\) Perhaps a more pressing question would be whether Ennius would still be felt, four centuries after the *Aeneid*, to be a predecessor worthy of mention, but it is notable that one of the most famous surviving fragments of the *Annales*, imitated by Claudian at *Stil.* 2.163ff, was the build-up to the speech of Servilius, which almost certainly belongs to the account of Cannae.\(^ {32}\)

Lucretius, in the passage imitated, is making a claim for the novelty of his versification of Epicurean doctrine. He describes his approach to Helicon and the pleasure he takes in drinking from the fount. Ausonius’ adaptation of this model is ingenious. The pathless regions (*avia*) become the area around Bingen and Kirchberg. But unlike Lucretius, Ausonius passes by this unspoiled region, choosing to mention it only in passing (*praetereo*), and instead deciding to talk about the (much busier, as the poem will reveal) Mosella.

Ausonius uses Lucretius’ words to describe an actual physical landscape, only to decide not to describe it in detail. Instead, like Lucretius, the “untrodden path” he follows is a poetic composition. The Mosella itself may be busy and popular – verse in its honour is not. Ausonius seems to hint at this when he praises the river at line 23, *salue, amnis laudate agris, laudate colonis*. The river is much praised: but only by the fields and the farmers – not by poets. We


\(^ {32}\) Skutsch (1985) 451 and on VII.xii. Cf. also *Stil. pr.* 3.1-20, where Claudian presents himself as a new Ennius to Stilicho’s Scipio.
might go even further – Ausonius’ initial invocation of Lucretius is forestalled because there is no suitable spring for him to drink from: at Kirchberg the land is dry (arentem...Dumissum), while at Tabernae the land is marshy (riguas...Tabernas)\(^{33}\) – but it is a water source that inspires him to write – the Mosella itself is his Helicon.

Lines 7-9 set up a contrast with the Mosella – the isolation of Germania, the excessively dry and excessively damp land, the land only recently settled by the Sarmatians: all this serves as a foil to the bustling Mosella. The sight of the river brings with it the relief of a return to civilization, and hence it is couched in language recalling the Cumaean landfall and Elysium – echoing Aeneas’ long journey to reach Italy.

Let us turn now to the Vergilian imitation in line 10:

\[
\begin{align*}
et \text{ tandem } & \text{primis Belgarum conspicor oris (Ason., Mos. 10)} \\
et \text{ tandem } & \text{Euboicis Cumarum adlabitur oris (Verg., Aen. 6.2)}^{34}
\end{align*}
\]

As Görler argues, the echo of \textit{Aeneid} 6.2 introduces the recurrent association of the landscape of northern Gaul with that of Vergil’s Campania.\(^{35}\) But the Vergilian allusions also draw on the depiction of the Elysian fields later in \textit{Aeneid} Six:

\[
\begin{align*}
purior hic campis aer Phoebusque sereno \\
lumine purpureum reserat iam sudus Olympum \\
nec iam consortis per mutua uincula ramis \\
queritur exclusum uiridi caligine caelum, \\
sed liquidum iubar et rutilam uisentibus aethram
\end{align*}
\]


\(^{34}\) Similar too is \textit{Aeneid} 3.131, \textit{et tandem antiquis Curetum adlabimur oris}, which is being referred to at \textit{Aeneid} 6.2. Nonetheless it seems clear that the line in \textit{Aeneid} 6 is being referred to here, first, because it is likely to have been more recognisable to a late antique reader (given that it comes at the beginning of a book, and in the context of a particularly famous passage), and second, because the sense of joy that accompanies Vergil’s arrival in Italy fits well with the quiet relief that Ausonius hints at as he returns to Roman territory from Germania.

\(^{35}\) Görler (1969) 112, and \textit{passim} for discussion of further echoes beyond the proem.
libera perspicui non inuidet aura diei.
(Auson., Mos. 12-13)

deuenere locos laetos et amoena uirecta
fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
largior hic campos aether et lumine uestit
purpureo, solemque suum, suæ sidera norunt.
(Verg., Aen. 6.638-41)

The echo is unmistakeable, although Ausonius alters *aether* to *aer*.³⁶ As Görler notes, in both cases our protagonist emerges from a dark and eerie landscape into a bright valley.³⁷ This contributes to the presentation of the Mosella valley as an idealised space, a source of relief after the (hellish?) forests of Germania.³⁸ Here again, then, the Mosella and the surrounding countryside are associated with landscapes from Rome’s (mythical) past.

This network of allusions continues in the main body of the poem, supplemented by references to Statius’ *Silvae* and to the *Georgics*.³⁹ Ausonius’ concern throughout is to present the Moselle valley as thoroughly Romanised, as a landscape that would be familiar to any visitor from Italy. The river is thus presented through the lens of the Roman literary tradition, and Ausonius’ account of it is as much indebted to his knowledge of Vergil and related authors as it is to his own experiences in the region.

## 2.3 Eulalia

We turn now to Prudentius, and to the first of the three poems in the *Peristephanon* I want to discuss. The hymn to Eulalia, *Peristephanon* 3, has attracted a vast amount of attention in the

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³⁸ Görler (1969) 96 sees an echo of *Aen. 6.325, haec omnis, quam cernis, inops inhumataque turba est*, in *Mos. 4, infletaque iacent inopes super arua cateruae*.
³⁹ See further Green (1977), and Newlands (1988) on Statius.
scholarship of the past thirty years or so. Some of this has been devoted to investigating the hagiographic background of the account of the virgin martyr, though a number of more literary studies have also been published. The poem contains a number of intriguing features relating to urban space, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three. Here, however, I shall focus on Eulalia’s night-time journey from her enforced hiding in the countryside to Emerita (lines 41-66), which, as has been shown in detail by both Palmer (1989) and Roberts (1993), draws on Aeneas’ voyage to the underworld in the sixth book of the Aeneid. As will become clear in my discussion of the hymns to Cassian and Hippolytus, this section of the Aeneid is frequently echoed in the Peristephanon, something that enables Prudentius to play with notions of physical and spiritual journeys. I will briefly discuss the passage and the allusions to the Aeneid (and to the Old Testament) before engaging in a more sustained analysis.

The imitation of the Aeneid begins before the night-voyage, with a brief verbal imitation at 3.17 (patris ad solium recalling Iovis ad solium of Aen. 12.849) followed by the intriguing five lines at 3.31-5:

infremuit sacer Eulaliae
spiritus ingenique ferox
turibida frangere bella parat
et rude pectus anhela deo
femina prouocat arma uirum.

---

40 See in particular Petruccione (1990).
41 Kubiak (1998) argues that the poem makes use of Vergilian allusions to attack Vergil, building on the approach taken by Smith (1976). Both Palmer (1989) and Roberts (1993) devote considerable space to this poem in their monographs on Prudentius. The motif of the “written body” (see lines 136-40) has been studied by Ross (1995) and Goldhill (1999) esp. p.82, in both cases in connection with the hymn to Cassian, on which see further below.
The phrase *pectus anhela*, as has long been noted, recalls Vergil’s description of the Cumaean Sibyl:

\[
\text{uentum erat ad limen, cum uirgo 'poscere fata tempus' ait; 'deus ecce deus!' cui talia fanti ante fores subito non uultus, non color unus, non comptaee mansere comae; sed *pectus anhelum*, et rabie *fera* corda tument, maiorque uideri nec mortale sonans, adflata est numine quando iam propiore dei. (Verg., *Aen*. 6.45-51)}
\]

Eulalia’s spirit swells with rage at pagan idolatry, and her breast is filled with the Lord, just as the Sibyl is filled with Apollo\(^43\) as she upbraids Aeneas for his perceived lack of devotion (*cessas in uota precesque?*, 45). It is noteworthy that Eulalia’s anger comes from the fact that she is not being permitted to display her devotion and commitment to the Lord, her Christian *pietas*, just as the Sibyl questions Aeneas’ *pietas*, his most enduring and defining characteristic.

This is followed by the phrase *femina prouocat arma uirum* (35), a clear reference to the opening line of the *Aeneid*,\(^44\) hinting that Eulalia will “challenge” the *arma uirumque* of Vergil in the sense that she too is undertaking an epic quest, one infused with verbal echoes from that greatest of all Roman epics.\(^45\) But we can take this even further, by returning to the Sibyl: just as the Sibyl brusquely “challenges” the armed Trojans to remember their duties to absent friends, so

\(^{42}\) See Palmer (1989) 157-158.
\(^{43}\) An appropriate choice given the displacement of Apollo by Christ in the opening line of the *Psychomachia*, see Mastrangelo (2008) 16.
\(^{44}\) Lühken (2002) 104.
\(^{45}\) Most ancient poems were referred to by their opening words, hence the *Aeneid* would be referred to as the “*arma uirumque*”.

too will Eulalia challenge the armed might of the Roman state in her defiance of the threats of torture and execution.

*sed pia cura parentis agit,*
*uirgo animosa domi ut lateat*
*abdita rure et ab urbe procul,*
*ne fera sanguinis in pretium*
*mortis amore puella ruat.*

*illa perosa quietis opem*
*degeneri tolerare mora*
*nocte fores sine teste mouet*
*saeptaque claustra fugax aperit,*
*inde per inuia carpit iter.*

*(Pe. 3.36-45)*

Eulalia defies the *pia cura parentis* (36) which would keep her hidden in the countryside, away from conflict with the magistrate: thus she slips away, undetected, in the middle of the night, to meet her fate. In this she is very much like Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* Nine, as Palmer has pointed out, even if there are no exact verbal parallels to tie down the connection.46 Tiring of her enforced rustication, the rebellious Eulalia slips out unnoticed (*sine teste*) and makes her way through the wasteland.

At line 45 Eulalia embarks on her journey, *inde per inuia carpit iter.* There are many parallels for *carpit iter,* but the usage in the *Ilias Latina* of Odysseus and Diomedes in the night-episode is very close:

*dumque iter horrendum loca pernoctata pauentes*
*carpebant*

*(Ilias Latina 704-705)*

Despite Nisbet and Hubbard’s comment that “carpere suggests plodding persistence”, in both the 
*Ilias Latina* and Prudentius it seems to have the sense of tentative movement.\(^47\) The word *inuia* is 
also notable: properly it means “impassable”, rather than “pathless” (Thomson translates 
“wilds”), though the substantive does tend to be used as a contrast to *vias* by Livy (23.17, 38.23, 
both references in L&S). Twice, however, it is used of Hell: by Seneca, *Herc. Fur.* 715 *Acheron inuius*, 
and in *Aeneid* 6.154, by the Sibyl, in her remonstration to Aeneas for leaving Misenus unburied:

\[
\text{sic demum lucos Stygis et regna inuia uiuis aspicies.} \\
\text{(Verg., Aen. 6.154-5)} 
\]

It is made clear in any case that the journey is into the unknown, something that is further 
reinforced by a lack of any geographical specificity regarding Eulalia’s hiding-place. The 
countryside around Emerita is “impenetrable” not only to the traveller, but to the reader. As a result, I suggest, Eulalia’s journey is conceived of in terms of other literary journeys: Aeneas’ 
trip to the underworld, and the departure of the Jews from Egypt in *Exodus* 14. This not only 
provides Prudentius and a reader with a space in which to imagine Eulalia’s night voyage, but 
also heightens the sense of danger associated with the journey itself: for while Eulalia’s real test 
will come when she arrives back in the town, to challenge the magistrate, Prudentius here points 
to two difficult journeys of the past, to highlight the importance of *this* part of Eulalia’s quest.

The association with Aeneas in the underworld comes in line 47 and the phrase *per loca senta situ*, taken from *Aeneid* 6.462:

\[
\text{sed me iussa deum, quae nunc has ire per umbras,} \\
\text{per loca senta situ cogunt noctemque profundam,} 
\]

---

\(^47\) Nisbet & Hubbard (1978) 278, on Horace, *Carm.* 2.17.11. See also Ovid, *Met.* 8.208, *me duce carpe uiam* 
(Daedalus to Icarus).
imperiis egere suis
(Verg., Aen. 6.461-3)\textsuperscript{48}

Here Aeneas is describing to Dido the difficulty of his journey through the underworld, which he has undertaken at the bidding of the gods. Eulalia is acting out of a similar sense of duty to God as she makes her way through the countryside. But the similarities only go so far: for while Eulalia is travelling through the night, and Aeneas has travelled through the “night” of the underworld (its darkness compared to a moonless night at Aen. 6.270-272), Eulalia has the reassuring guidance of a host of angels (\textit{angelico comitata choro}, Pe. 3.48) which illuminates her way through the night (49-50). This leads Prudentius to compare Eulalia to the patriarchs and the Flight from Egypt in \textit{Exodus} 14:

\begin{verbatim}
sic habuit generosa patrum
turba \textit{columniferum} radium,
scindere qui \textit{tenebrosa} potens
\textit{nocte} uiam face perspicua
praestitit intereunte chao.
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
non aliter pia uirgo uiam
\textit{nocte} secuta diem meruit
nec \textit{tenebris} adoperta fuit,
regna Canopica cum fugeret
et super astra pararet iter.
(Pe. 3.51-60)
\end{verbatim}

tollensque se angelus Dei qui praecedebat castra Israhel abiit post
eos
et cum eo pariter \textit{columna} nubis priora dimittens post tergum
stetit inter castra Aegyptiorum et castra Israhel
et erat nubes \textit{tenebrosa} et \textit{inluminans noctem}
ut ad se inuicem toto \textit{noctis} tempore accedere non ualerent
(Exodus 14 :19-20)

Multiple allusion to Vergil and to the Bible is a characteristic Prudentian technique, as we shall see later in relation to Cassian, and has been exemplified by the study of Heinz.\textsuperscript{49} Here, however,

\textsuperscript{48} Roberts (1993) 92-93.
it is worth noting that while the Vergilian allusions are not explicitly signalled, the Biblical allusion is turned into a simile.\textsuperscript{50}

But in good epic fashion, something of the simile returns to the main narrative, in the rather perplexing line 59: \textit{regna Canopica cum fugeret}. Why is Eulalia described as fleeing \textit{Egypt}? This belongs to the patriarchs and to the Biblical simile, not to the narrative proper. A number of factors dictate Prudentius’ obliqueness here. Eulalia’s journey is \textit{so} like that of the patriarchs that she in effect retraces their steps, fleeing her own enforced exile in the countryside. The vast extent of the patriarchs’ voyage also leaves its trace in Eulalia’s own journey: though the exact distance is never made fully clear by Prudentius (only the vague \textit{milia multa} at 62), it is given the sense of being a particularly long journey by being compared to the flight out of Egypt and the subsequent forty years of wandering in the desert.\textsuperscript{51} The length of Eulalia’s night journey is thus emphasised, as is the sense that the Lord is guiding her on her journey, just as He guided the patriarchs out of Egypt (\textit{non aliter...meruit} 56-57). Similarly, the allusion to Vergil emphasises the difficulty and the danger of Eulalia’s task. We could even see in the phrase \textit{pia uirgo...diem meruit} Eulalia being compared (favourably) to Aeneas, who after all is the \textit{pius} hero \textit{par excellence}, but who has \textit{not} earned a beacon of daylight to accompany him through his adventures in the underworld, being provided with only the aged Sibyl for guidance.

\textsuperscript{49} Heinz (2007).

\textsuperscript{50} Palmer (1989) 161.

\textsuperscript{51} Deuteronomy 29:5, Joshua 5:6.
As Roberts has shown in detail, Eulalia’s entire journey is structured as a katabasis, culminating in her preparation for death (super asta pararet iter, of course her actual death will result in her ascent to heaven).\(^{52}\) The arrival in Emerita coincides with the arrival of morning, and Eulalia makes her way immediately to the forum, where she challenges the magistrate. Her speed in travelling is further emphasised by the enjambment of uociferans at lines 65-6: just as Eulalia can hardly pause for breath before unburdening herself of her message, so too the sentence runs on to the following stanza: the only instance in the entire poem in which this occurs, and something that is rare in Prudentius’ lyric poetry as a whole.\(^{53}\)

The passage as a whole, then, makes considerable use of the Aeneid and the Bible as intertexts to convey the scale of Eulalia’s journey. While Eulalia’s achievement of martyrdom in the remainder of the poem is by no means downplayed, Prudentius goes to considerable lengths in this section of the poem to emphasise the additional challenge Eulalia has had to overcome in order to sacrifice herself for Christ. The unspecified geography of the countryside around Emerita becomes even more dangerous because of its very lack of descriptiveness, and comparison with the wanderings of the patriarchs in the desert and with Aeneas’ descent into Avernus further give a sense of vast emptiness. Eulalia’s spiritual journey towards martyrdom is thus preceded by a physical journey.

2.4 Hippolytus

We turn now to the eleventh hymn in the cycle, the hymn to Hippolytus. This poem is of considerable interest from a geographical perspective, not least because of the rather confusing

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\(^{52}\) Roberts (1993) 91-103.

\(^{53}\) See further Toohey (1989).
representation of space we find within the poem: as Malamud notes, there are two shrines that claim to possess Hippolytus’ remains, one in Ostia and one at Rome. This stems from the fact that a wide variety of conflicting stories about Hippolytus appear to have been in circulation from an early date.\textsuperscript{54} Prudentius sets the actual martyrdom in Ostia, but specifies (in lines 151-152) that Hippolytus’ remains were returned to Rome for burial. But there is a clear tension between city and suburban setting in the poem, which culminates in the annual exodus of citizens from Rome at lines 199-202:

\begin{verbatim}
urbs augusta suos uomit effunditque Quirites,
   una et patricios ambitione pari
confundit plebeia phalanx umbonibus aequis
discrimen procerum praecipitante fide.
\end{verbatim}

These Romans are also joined by pilgrims from across Italy (203-208) in a passage reminiscent of the “Gathering of the Clans” in \textit{Aeneid} 7. The poem is infused with Vergilian allusions, many of which have been discussed by Charles Witke.\textsuperscript{55} I will limit my discussion to Prudentius’ description of the shrine of Hippolytus. This description falls into two parts: the first, from lines 153-176, emphasising the dark claustrophobia of the catacombs for the individual pilgrim. A brief interlude follows in which the poet addresses Valerian, the Spanish bishop to whom the poem is addressed, and praises Hippolytus for hearing his prayers and ensuring his safe return home (lines 177-182). After this, Prudentius returns to the catacombs and describes the ornate materials that now cover the shrine itself (183-188). There is a marked distinction between the


\textsuperscript{55} Witke (2004).
two passages, as Roberts notes, and I suggest that this distinction can be explained at least in part by referring to the *Aeneid*.\(^{56}\)

Hippolytus is condemned to death by being dragged over waste land by a team of horses, like his mythical namesake (85-118). His body is torn apart and scattered across the countryside (119-132). His faithful followers collected his remains and buried him in the catacombs (133-170). The structure of the narrative is strongly reminiscent of *Aeneid* Six: the search for the unburied body of a companion, its burial, and a descent to the underworld.

Indeed, the entrance to the underworld recalls the Sibyl’s warning to Aeneas:

\[
\text{inde ubi}\ \text{progressu facile nigrescere uisa est} \\
\text{nox obscura loci per specus ambiguum} \\
(Pe. 11.159-160)
\]

'sate sanguine diuum, \\
Tros Anchisiade, \textit{facilis descensus} Auerno: \\
octes atque dies patet atr ianua Ditis;' \\
(Verg., \textit{Aen.} 6.125-127)\(^{57}\)

The descent to the catacombs is thus likened to Aeneas’ entrance to the underworld, something that is further suggested by the description of the dim lighting underground:

\[
\text{occurrunt celsis inmissa foramina tectis,} \\
\text{quae iaciant claros antra super radios.} \\
\text{quamlibet ancipites texant hinc inde recessus} \\
\text{arta sub umbrosis atria porticibus,} \\
\text{at tamen excisi subter caua uiscera montis} \\
\text{crebra terebrato forni} \\
\text{lux penetrat.} \\
\text{sic datur absentis per subterranea solis} \\
\text{cernere fulgorem luminibusque frui.} \\
(Pe. 11.161-168)
\]

\(^{56}\) Roberts (1993) 161-162.  
\(^{57}\) Malamud (1989) 105-108 discusses this and a number of the following passages in her chapter on Hippolytus, but presents them simply as comparisons for Prudentius’ account of the catacombs, rather than arguing for imitation.
ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram
perque domos Ditis uacuas et inania regna:
quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
est iter in siluis, ubi caelum condidit umbra
Iuppiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem.
(Verg., Aen. 6.268-272)

In the half-light, however, the pilgrim can make out Hippolytus’ shrine, and, Prudentius tells us, prays successfully to the saint (lines 177-178). It is after this prayer, and after the apostrophe to the addressee, that we are suddenly given a very different vision: the shining light of the decorated shrine:

ipsa illas animae exuuias quae continet intus
aedicula argento fulgurat ex solido.
praefixit tabulas diues manus aequore leui
candentes, recauum quale nitet speculum,
nec Pariis contenta aditus obducere saxis
addidit ornando clara talenta operi.
(Pe. 11.183-188)

After a journey through the darkness, a sudden burst of light: like Ausonius’ arrival in the Moselle valley, this must look back to Aeneas’ arrival in Elysium in Aeneid Six, where, Vergil tells us:

largior hic campos aether et lumine uestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.
(Verg., Aen. 6.640-641)

Elysium, like the shrine of Hippolytus, is miraculously bathed in light, though underground. It is appropriate that this Christian hero should be accorded a privilege similar to that granted to the dead heroes of the Aeneid. But as Roberts notes, the pilgrim’s journey through the darkness into the light also suggests death and resurrection, and the Christian victory over death. This journey, like that of Eulalia, is rich with echoes of Aeneas’ journey in the underworld. However,

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while Eulalia was granted the boon of a column of light to guide her through the night, the lowly pilgrim must fumble in the half-light, only rewarded with clearer vision once he has prayed to Hippolytus. This use of intertextuality to emphasise the importance of piety for the traveller is even more pronounced in the hymn to Cassian, to which we now turn.

2.5 Cassian

The ninth poem in Prudentius’ *Peristephanon* attracts attention for a number of reasons. It is the first poem in the collection (at least as it is now ordered) to employ a dramatic framing narrative: Prudentius tells us that he was on his way to Rome when he stopped in Forum Cornelli (close to modern-day Imola) and found a shrine there to Cassian, a schoolmaster who was martyred by being stabbed to death by his stylus-wielding pupils. The passion is certainly one of the more memorable ones in the collection. Moreover, the emphasis on the personal experience of the narrator has led many to try to infer details about Prudentius’ life from the poem. Indeed, most previous examinations of the poem have been concerned with the relation of the poem to "real" life and have attempted to reconstruct, from this poem, along with poems 11 and 12 in the collection, a pilgrimage that Prudentius is imagined as having made to Rome.

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59 On the order of the poems see Chapter One.

60 Prudentius is our earliest source for Cassian, cf. Palmer (1989) 242-243. The date of his martyrdom is variously attributed to the Diocletianic persecutions and to Julian’s campaign against Christian schoolteachers, though the latter appears to be an inference based solely on Cassian’s profession, and the phrase *uetusti temporis* in line 20 surely removes the possibility of its being such a recent death, as Fux (2003) 328 notes. On Cassian generally see Bless-Grabher (1978). William of Malmsbury reports that John Scottus Eriugena met a similar fate, and Suetonius, in his *Life* of Caligula, reports that a group of senators attacked another senator with their *graphia* (*Cal. 28*, cf. Suet. *Jul. 82* and Suet. *Claud. 15*).

61 See especially Lana (1962) 24-25.

That the trip was not a pilgrimage is made clear by Prudentius’ insistence that he is a reluctant traveller – he notes that he has left his home ‘uncertain of fate’ (*dubia sub sorte*, 9.103) – and the fact that he has not come to Forum Cornelii for the express purpose of visiting the tomb of Cassian: whatever his reasons for travel, they were undoubtedly secular in the first instance.\(^63\) In any case, such a literal reading of the three poems is problematic, not least because of Palmer’s observation that a different *persona* is employed in each of the poems.\(^64\) In this chapter I am less interested in the question of reconstructing Prudentius’ journey than I am in the relation of the poem to two great pagan travel narratives: Vergil’s *Aeneid* and Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. Both of these works have significant religious undertones, and by giving them a prominent position in his own poem Prudentius invites us to draw parallels between his own journey and those of Lucius and Aeneas, while also reflecting on the role the divine plays in human life, as we shall see.

We turn, then, to the opening of the poem. It is clear from the first few lines that Prudentius does not actively seek out the shrine of Cassian, though it is quite possible that, on arriving in Forum Cornelii, he decided to look for local sites of religious interest. Prudentius exhibits a curiosity that leads him, on discovering the shrine, to want to learn more about it and so he consults the sacristan. This blend of curiosity and devotion is palpable even at the very beginning of the poem:

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Sylla Forum statuit Cornelius; hoc Itali urbem
uocant ab ipso conditoris nomine.
hic mihi, cum peterem te, rerum maxima Roma,
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\(^63\) Lana (1962) 27-29 suggests that Prudentius was going to Rome to be tried, though this is doubted by Fux (2003) 55n.67.

spes est oborta prosperum Christum fore.
stratus humi tumulo aduoluebar, quem sacer ornat
martyr dicato Cassianus corpore.
(Pe. 9.1-6)

Soler sees in these lines a shift to the personal in the latter two couplets from the formulaic and formal opening couplet. It is certainly clear that in this poem, more than in any other in the collection, the personal feelings of the narrator are placed to the forefront. The verb *oborior* suggests that Prudentius is almost startled by his discovery. It is unusual to see *oborior* used of emotions rather than of the physical manifestations of emotions. In fact, in poetry the verb is most frequently employed in the context of tears (so in the *Aeneid* it occurs four times, always in the phrase *lacrimis obortis*, and a further dozen times in first-century epic). Prudentius’ own tears are not slow in following this sudden outburst of hope (*7, lacrimans*). Clearly evident in these two lines is the combination of ‘curiosity and credulity’, to paraphrase Palmer’s term. It is not the tomb itself that ‘surprises’ Prudentius, but a feeling of deep religious emotion – the hope that Christ will be favourable (*spes prosperum Christum fore*). The transformation from tourist to pilgrim is instantaneous, and it is worth noting that we are told of Prudentius’ *internal* reaction (*spes oborta*) before we are told of the *external* stimulus (the painting of Cassian).

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65 Soler (2005b) 313.
66 Searches of the OLD and the PHI database produce only three examples in Latin poetry before Prudentius: Ter., *Heauton Timoroumenos* 680 *laetitia obortast*, Inc. Trag. 211 *gaudium obiri*, and Statius, *Theb.* 1.462-3 *oborto...luctu*. In prose, see [Quint.] *Decl.* 12.25 *odia oboriantur*, Livy 2.37.9 *indignatio oborta*, and Livy 26.20.5 *timoris oborti*.
68 See the title of Palmer (1989) ch. 2.
We should also note the parallelism of the latter two couplets, an indication of Prudentius’ debt to Horace as a lyric model.\(^69\) Let us quote it again:

\[
\text{hic mihi, cum peterem te, rerum maxima Roma,}
\text{spes est oborta prosperum Christum fore.}
\text{stratus humi tumulo aduoluebar, quem sacer ornat}
\text{martyr dicato Cassianus corpore.}
\]
\((Pe. 9.3-6)\)

Opening the first and third lines we have *hic mihi* and *stratus humi* – each combining a locative and a first-person reference, both emphasising the personal importance of the space for the narrator,\(^70\) then *peterem* and *aduoluebar*, two first-person verbs. In the second and fourth lines, *spes* and *martyr* are paralleled, appropriately given that Prudentius’ *spes* springs from the discovery of this *martyr*, while *Christum* and *Cassianus* are paralleled, Cassian being an intermediary to Christ for Prudentius. The hope for Christ’s favour springs from Cassian’s martyrdom. The rhyme of *fore/corpore* indicates that the two distichs should be read together.\(^71\)

Moreover, in each distich there is a strong sense of physical movement – the hope that ‘springs up’, *oborta*, within Prudentius causes him to hurl himself to the ground before the shrine, *tumulo aduoluebar*. The physical manifestation of an emotional feeling again may cause us to think of the more frequent use of the verb *oborior*, and also of the transition from *curiositas* to devotion in pilgrimage narratives.

Let us look again at the opening couplet of the poem, which describes the town of Forum Corneli:

\[
\text{Sylla Forum statuit Cornelius; hoc Itali urbem}
\]


\(^71\) On rhyme see Wilkinson (1963) 32-34.
The couplet recalls the enumerative aspect of the prose *itinerarium* (though as we will see, it is also reminiscent of Vergil’s *Aeneid*), with its designation of the next stop on the journey. In addition, we have the figure of the helpful local priest, who expounds at length on Cassian’s martyrdom, in a manner reminiscent of Egeria’s local interlocutors – see, for example, *It. Eg.* 3.7:

> hac sic ergo posteaquam communicaueramus et dederant nobis eulogias sancti illi et egressi sumus foras hostium ecclesiae, tunc cepi eos rogare, ut ostenderent nobis singula loca. tunc statim illi sancti dignati sunt singula ostendere.

We must, however, keep in mind the fact that Prudentius’ journey is not initially undertaken as a pilgrimage. Prudentius’ journey to Rome as it is described in the three ‘personal’ hymns (9, 11, and 12) only gradually takes on the overtones of a pilgrimage. If Pe. 9 describes a religious awakening and reassurance in the course of a secular journey, by Pe. 11 and 12 we are fully within the realm of religious fervour.

A secular journey culminating in religious devotion: we have seen this before in classical literature, in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, the tale of the unfortunate Lucius. Transformed into an ass, he is forced to travel and is subject to many woes, until he is finally saved by the goddess Isis in the eleventh book. Like the narrator of *Peristephanon* 9, Lucius travels under a cloud, and many of his adventures are spurred on by his curiosity, just as Prudentius’ discovery of the shrine of Cassian comes from his thirst for knowledge. Finally, just as in *Peristephanon* 9, the centrepiece of the *Metamorphoses* is an extended inset narrative that bears a close relation to the

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72 The reading of the majority of manuscripts, see Fux (2003) ad loc. Bergman and Cunningham both print *uocitant*, the reading of the earliest manuscript.

73 Roberts (1993) 133 sees it instead as reflecting *verse* itineraria, citing *inter alia* Rutilius 1.249: *nosse iuuat tauri dictas de nomine thermas.*
text as a whole. The tale of Cupid and Psyche has long been seen as reflecting the story of Lucius in the rest of the text – Psyche, like Lucius, is defined by curiositas, something that leads her to incur the wrath of the gods before she ultimately finds redemption and ‘salvation’ in the form of her own apotheosis.\textsuperscript{74}

Apuleius’ works were undergoing something of a revival in the late fourth century.\textsuperscript{75} Ausonius makes reference to his (now lost) epigrams in the postscript to the Cento Nuptialis: meminerint autem...esse Apuleium in uita philosophum, in epigrammatis amatorem.\textsuperscript{76} If Ausonius knew Apuleius’ epigrams, it is likely that he also knew the Metamorphoses. Ammianus Marcellinus certainly had an in-depth knowledge of the novel,\textsuperscript{77} and it is clear that the book was being read at Rome: we can tell this from the subscriptions of Sallustius to the manuscript,\textsuperscript{78} one of which (at the end of Met. 9) gives the date: “Ego Sallustius legi et emendaui Rome [sic] felix Olybrio et Probino u.c. cos.”, i.e. 395. In addition to this, Apuleius appears on a late fourth-century contorniate dated to around 390.\textsuperscript{79} Augustine was familiar with the Metamorphoses as well as with Apuleius’ philosophical works:\textsuperscript{80} at Civ. Dei 18.18, he says:

\begin{quote}
ne\textit{c tamen in eis mentem fieri bestialem, sed rationem humanamque seruari, sicut Apuleius in libris quos asini asine titulu inscrisit sibi ipsi accidisse, ut accepto ueneno humano animo permanente asinus fieret, aut indicauit aut finxit.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{74} See the introduction to Kenney (1990).
\textsuperscript{75} Bradley (2008) 365-366.
\textsuperscript{76} Cf. Carver (2007) 22-23.
\textsuperscript{77} Kelly (2008) 168-170.
\textsuperscript{78} See Gaisser (2008) 45: there are eleven subscriptions.
\textsuperscript{80} Gaisser (2008) 29-36.
As Gaisser notes, Augustine makes a ‘relatively neutral’ reference to the work, alone among Latin writers of the period.\textsuperscript{81}

Apuleius was clearly in fashion at this period, then, and so it is likely that Prudentius had read the \textit{Metamorphoses}. One further association is worth dwelling on: it has been argued that Augustine modelled his \textit{Confessions} on both the \textit{Metamorphoses} and the \textit{Aeneid}.\textsuperscript{82} Certainly, the structural and thematic links between the novel and the \textit{Confessions} are undeniable: an odd number of books, an errant narrator who undergoes a religious conversion, and an ending that differs greatly from the rest of the work.\textsuperscript{83} As for the linking of Apuleius and Vergil, this appears to have been a common association in the fourth century, as evinced by a painting on a ceiling found at Trier, in which Apuleius and Vergil have been identified as a pair, and by the fact that they are the only Roman writers we know of to have had statues erected to them in the Baths of Zeuxippos for the dedication of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{84} Finally, Apuleius himself makes considerable use of the \textit{Aeneid} in the \textit{Metamorphoses}.\textsuperscript{85} Combining allusions to Apuleius and Vergil in one poem would not be out of keeping with the vogue of the times, then.

We have already seen the structural parallels between \textit{Peristephanon} 9 and the \textit{Metamorphoses}, and the association is confirmed by a verbal parallel in the sacristan’s description of Cassian’s martyrdom. He refers to the tale as “\textit{non...inanis aut anilis fabula}”

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81} Gaisser (2008) 41, who also lists other authors who refer to the work, including Macrobius and the author of the \textit{Historia Augusta}. Augustine, of course, attacks Apuleius’ other works at length, see Carver (2007) 23-29.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Martin (1990).
\item \textsuperscript{83} See Carver (2007) 23.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Gaisser (2008) 25-28.
\item \textsuperscript{85} On which see Finkelparl (1998).
\end{itemize}
(9.18), a phrase that draws attention to itself by the wordplay on *inanis...anilis*. Fux notes that *anilis fabula* is a relatively common phrase, citing Horace and Quintilian, but the context and the clear parallels we are expected to draw between Cassian’s sufferings and the woes of Prudentius suggest that Prudentius expects us to think of the words of the old woman to Charite as she begins the tale of Cupid and Psyche in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses: sed ego te narrationibus lepidis anilibusque fabulis protinus auocabo* (4.27.8). The sacristan thus ‘corrects’ the old woman, by indicating that *this* narrative, the tale of Cassian, is no *fabula*, no allegory, but a story, *historia*, something that should make us think once again of inquisitive travellers. While the tale of Cupid and Psyche is an allegory that ought to reassure and instruct Lucius (though he does not understand the message), the passion of Cassian is something ‘true’, and thus a more powerful means of reassuring Prudentius, and of enabling him to see that by trusting in Christ all will turn out for the best, as it did for Cassian. Prudentius is thus a better ‘reader’ than Lucius, who repeatedly fails to notice the warning signs in the inset tales he hears.

One further parallel worth noting is the level of narrative complexity we encounter in this short lyric poem. It is some time after the fact that Prudentius reports this trip to Forum Cornelii (lines 105-106 tell us he has already returned home) and conveys the words of the

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86 Prudentius appears to have liked punning on the word *inanis*, cf. *Pe.* 5.65, *inanis uanitas* (cf. Fux (2003) 246), and *Cath.* 11.35, *inanis nenia*.*is*. I can find no parallels in classical or late antique Latin literature for the play with *anilis*.

87 Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.77 *aniles...fabellas*; Quint. *I.O.* 1.8.19 *anilibus...fabulis*; cf. Fux (2003) ad loc. For uses of the phrase in late antiquity, see Ziolkowski (2002).

88 See further Roberts (1993) 136-137 on the parallels Prudentius perceives between the martyr and himself.

89 The sacristan also corrects the old woman in the sense that the tale of Cupid and Psyche is clearly not an *anilis fabula*. On *fabula* and *historia* in Prudentius see further Fux (2003) ad loc and Mastrangelo (2008) 46-49.

90 See below.

91 On narrative in Apuleius, see Winkler (1985).
aedituus, who is himself describing a painting which is a rendering of a story recorded in books (tradita libris, 19) of an event that happened long ago (uetusti temporis). We might also compare the ironic claim of Lucius after the story of Cupid and Psyche is over: sed astans ego non procul dolebam mehercules quod pugillares et stilum non habebam qui tam bellam fabellam praenotarem (6.25.1), with the mention of the students’ styli (stilis) and writing-tablets (pugillares) at Pe. 9.14-15, with the mention of the students’ styli (stilis) and writing-tablets (pugillares) at Pe. 9.14-15, immediately before the story starts, and the emphasis on writing that runs throughout the account of Cassian’s martyrdom, and, finally, we might ourselves wonder how Prudentius can remember such a story so long after the fact, and whether he had not himself learnt some sort of shorthand with which to note down the martyrdom of the shorthand teacher.

It is clear, then, that Prudentius is hinting at some similarity between the journey of the narrator in Pe. 9 and that of Lucius in the Metamorphoses, and this fits nicely with Hunt’s comments about the influence of Second Sophistic travel narrative on pilgrimage literature. But this allusion to Apuleius is coupled with close imitation of Vergil’s Aeneid, ever present in Prudentius’ poems, and it is to this that I now turn. The opening couplet could be seen as a Vergilian gesture on the part of the poet, introducing a series of allusions to the Aeneid designed to portray Prudentius’ trip to the shrine of Cassian as an episode on his journey to Rome, analogous to one of Aeneas’ adventures in the Aeneid. The phrasing of hoc Itali urbem | uocant ab ipso conditoris nomine suggests Vergilian interest in etymology, while Itali...uocant may

92 This is the only occurrence of the word pugillares in Prudentius.
93 On which see Ross (1995).
94 We might also compare Aen. 6.234-235: monte sub aerio, qui nunc Misenum ab illo | dicitur aeternumque tenet per saecula nomen. On Vergil’s interest in etymology see O’Hara (1996).
recall in particular the description of the Syrtes at the opening of the *Aeneid*, a passage to which Prudentius alludes again in line 13 (see below):

\[
\text{saxa uocant Itali mediis quae in fluctibus Aras,}
\text{dorsum immane mari summo.}
\]

(Verg., *Aen*. 1.109-10)

This is followed by Prudentius’ description of Rome as *rerum maxima Roma* (3), an unmistakeable echo of *Aeneid* 7.602-3, *maxima rerum | Roma*.\(^95\) This phrase, or variants on it, becomes relatively common after Vergil, though I would nonetheless argue that we should see Prudentius as imitating the *Aeneid* passage here.\(^96\) Not only does this passage recall one of the most famous sections of a poem Prudentius undoubtedly knew by heart,\(^97\) reminding the reader of Rome’s glory and (in particular) Rome’s military triumph, but it also invokes a certain ambiguity that runs throughout Prudentius’ Vergilian allusions in this poem. For while the immediate context (601-15) of the Vergilian passage is the relatively positive depiction of Roman foreign policy, Fowler reminds us that the broader context is of epic renewal and the outbreak of war, forced on by Juno’s opening of the gates of war at 7.616-25.\(^98\)

\[
\text{hoc et tum Aeneadis indicere bella Latinus}
\text{more iubebatur tristisque recludere portas.}
\text{abstinuit tactu pater auersusque refugit}
\text{foeda ministeria, et caecis se condidit umbris.}
\text{tum regina deum caelo delapsa morantis}
\text{impulit ipsa manu portas, et cardine uerso}
\]

\(^95\) Noted by Lühken (2002) 309 and Cunningham (1966) ad loc.

\(^96\) Indeed, there is a strong case to be made for *all* later versions of the phrase occurring at line-ending being references to the Vergilian passage: Propertius 4.1.1 *maxima Roma est* (ending a line); Lucan 2.227-8 *bellorum maxima merces | Roma* (repeated at 2.655-6); Manilius 4.694 *rerum maxima Roma* (ending a line); Silius 3.584-5 *quo maxima rerum | nobilior sit Roma*; Claudian, *Olyb. Prob.* 130 *maxima rerum* (ending a line and referring to Roma). Martial 7.96.2 and 10.58.6 *maxima Roma* (the antepenultimate and penultimate words of a pentameter in both cases) are less convincing as parallels. On the phrase see now O’Rourke (2010) esp. 474-478.

\(^97\) As did Augustine: cf. *Conf.* 1.13.

\(^98\) Fowler (2000a) 181 and passim.
belli ferratos rumpit Saturnia postis.
ardet inexcita Ausonia atque immobils ante;
pars pedes ire parat campis, pars arduus altis
puluerulentus equis furit; omnes arma requirunt.

Latinus is unwilling to open the gates and declare war on Aeneas, so Juno opens them herself, and in the process recalls the actions of Discordia in Ennius’ *Annales*:

postquam Discordia taetra
belli ferratos postes portasque refregit.
(Enn., *Ann.* 225-226 Skutsch)

As Fowler notes, the Vergilian passage clearly recalls the unleashing of the storm in the first book of the *Aeneid*: quite aside from the structural symmetry (the opening of the gates of war at the beginning of the second half of the poem matching the release of the winds from the prison of Aeolus at the beginning of the first half), we might note in particular the fact that the winds are likened to an army as they leave the cave of Aeolus:

haec ubi dicta, cauum conuersa cuspide montem
impulit in latus; ac uenti, uelut agmine facto,
qua data porta, ruunt et terras turbine perflant.
(Verg., *Aen.* 1.81-83)

The winds unleashed by Aeolus at the prompting of Juno thus anticipate the actual armies released by her opening of the gates of war six books later. Given this connection, we should not be surprised to see an allusion to that storm only a few lines later in the *Peristephanon*, in line 13’s *miserabile uisu* (on which see below).

Prudentius proceeds to tell us that, as he fell to worship at the tomb, he raised his eyes to heaven only to see a painting of Cassian’s passion (5-16). Here we are surely intended to think of the two parallel *ekphraseis* following landfalls in the *Aeneid* – first, the depiction of the fall of Troy on the temple of Juno in Carthage (1.446-493), and second, the sculptures of Daedalus on the door of the temple of Apollo at Cumae (6.14-33). In both cases, the pictures have a profound
emotional effect on the observers (particularly Aeneas) and in the first case, the *ekphrasis* anticipates a lengthier retelling of the same subject-matter later in the poem.  

Similarly, Prudentius’ description of the picture is followed by the sacristan’s account of Cassian’s passion, which takes up the bulk of the poem.  

Both Prudentius and Aeneas see their own lives reflected in the paintings: Aeneas literally sees himself on Dido’s temple, as well as seeing intimations of his coming war with the Italians, while the sculptures of Icarus and Daedalus at Cumae anticipate Aeneas’ reunion with his father later in Book Six. Prudentius, meanwhile, sees a clear link between himself and Cassian, as Roberts notes.

The next Vergilian echo is at lines 9-11:

erexi ad caelum faciem, stetit obuia contra
fucis colorum picta imago martyris
plagas mille gerens, totos lacerata per artus.

The word *imago* here clearly has the primary sense of ‘picture’ or ‘painting’. However, we might also think of the secondary sense of *imago*, ‘ghost’ or ‘vision’, and in that light it is worth comparing the appearance of Hector’s ghost in the second book of the *Aeneid*:

squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis
*ulnera*que illa *gerens*, quae circum *plurima* muros
accept patrios.
*(Verg., Aen. 2.277-279)*
Like Cassian, Hector has received countless wounds (*uulnera plurima*). Servius, *ad loc.*, comments: ‘*GERENS uelut insignia praeferens et ostentans, quae a diversis pugnans pro patria susceperat*’. Like Hector, the *imago* of Cassian proffers his wounds and displays them. The hypallage of *imago gerens* – it is the *painting* that displays the wounds, not the martyr who bears them – is, of course, a perfectly normal rhetorical figure. But I would like to suggest that Prudentius goes beyond simple hypallage here and is instead playing on the double meanings of *imago* and *gerens*. As the picture displays the martyr’s wounds, the martyr’s spirit comes alive momentarily and shows off the wounds he has suffered, like Hector’s ghost encouraging the spectator to pursue his goal. In other words, Prudentius is playing with the very idea and theory of *ekphrasis* itself, as Lucy Grig has noted: “Prudentius’ *ekphrasis* here plays a double game: stressing the verisimilitude of the representation, while simultaneously reminding us that it is, after all, just a representation.” The vividness of the description of Cassian has also been noted by Laurence Gosserez, who comments: “le tableau...semble s’animer.” Peter Brown has discussed in detail the importance of the tombs of the saints as places in which the martyrs are still very much ‘present’. It is this, I would argue, that lies behind this double play on *imago* as simultaneously signifier and signified. And if we are willing to accept that the ‘shade’ of

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104 To give just two examples: Horace, *Carmina* 1.3.40, *iracunda Iouem ponere fulmina*; 3.21.19f *iratos...regum apices*. The device is by no means restricted to classical literature, as the entertaining examples collected in Hall (1973) show.

105 On wordplay in Prudentius see Malamud (1989) passim, esp. 27-46, although I do not agree with her conclusion that Prudentius’ use of allusion and wordplay indicates a fundamental uneasiness about his Christianity. *Pace* Cameron (1995), I do not think that religious devotion is irreconcilable with ludic writing.

106 See Brown (1981) and Soler (2005b) 314: “L’hypallage…suggère une équivalence entre le martyr et sa représentation.”


Cassian is to a certain extent present in the tomb, then we should not be surprised to find further otherworldly allusions to the *Aeneid* shortly thereafter, as indeed we do in line 13.

Here Prudentius combines two Vergilian tags:

*innumeris circum pueris* (miserabile uisu).

The first, *innumeris circum pueris*, recalls the *innumerae gentes* of *Aen*. 6.706, who flit around Lethe like bees:

> hunc *circum innumerae gentes* populique uolabant:  
> ac *ueluti* in pratis ubi *apes* aestate serena  
> floribus insidunt uariis et candida circum  
> lilia funduntur, strepit omnis *murmure* campus.  
> *horrescit uisu* subito causasque requirit  
> inscius Aeneas, quae sint ea flumina porro,  
> quie uiri tanto complerint agmine ripas.  
> (*Aen*. 6.706-712)

Though for Vergil the bees are harmless, Aeneas is at first appalled by the sight (*horrescit uisu, 710*),¹¹⁰ and appeals to his father Anchises for an explanation – the same pattern of viewing and enquiry that we see in Prudentius’ poem. We are surely not expected to identify the rebellious pupils with the souls of the future leaders of Rome, but nonetheless we can see the method in Prudentius’ borrowing here. First, the context of Lethe is noteworthy, given that the speaker in *Pe. 9* has just mentioned (8-9) that he is pondering his sorry lot and the pain of life – *dum lacrimans mecum reputo mea uulnera et omnes | uitae labores ac dolorum acumina* – the sort of sufferings which the souls, about to drink from Lethe, can forget. That we are expected to think here of bees is supported by *murmur* in line 16, recalling *murmure* at *Aen*. 6.709, and by the image of the boys writing on wax tablets in line 15, *pugillares soliti percurrere ceras*, which

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¹¹⁰ A phrase which may also be alluded to by Prudentius’ *miserabile uisu.*
suggests bees flitting over the wax cells of a hive.\textsuperscript{111} Moreover, the very image of a swarm of pupils (\textit{agmen}, 35 and 44) subjecting their teacher to thousands of tiny pricks suggests the attack of a swarm of bees.\textsuperscript{112} While it is true that bees are generally depicted in positive terms in Latin literature, this changes sharply when we speak of a swarm of bees: as Hünemörder notes,\textsuperscript{113} a swarm (of anything) is rarely seen as a good omen in Latin literature. And even if the Vergilian passage imitated ultimately presents bees as something positive, Prudentius’ \textit{Biblical} sources do just the opposite: two of the three mentions of swarms of bees in the Old Testament depict them as hostile, specifically likened to an attack by Gentiles:\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{verbatim}
 omnes gentes circumdederunt me et in nomine Domini ultus sum eas
 circumdederunt me et obsederunt me sed in nomine Domini ultus sum eas.
circumdederunt me \textit{quasi apes} extinctae sunt quasi ignis spinarum in nomine
 Domini quia ultus sum eas. (Psalm 117.10-12)

 ait mihi [i.e. Moysi] Dominus "dic ad eos nolite ascendere neque pugnetis non
 enim sum uobiscum ne cadatis coram inimicis uestris."
louctus sum et non audistis [i.e. the Israelites] sed aduersantes imperio Domini et
 tumentes superbia ascendistis in montem.
itaque egressus Amorreus qui habitabat in montibus et obuiam ueniens persecutus
 est uos \textit{sicut solent apes persequi} et cecidit de Seir usque Horma
 cunque reuersi ploraretis coram Domino non audiuit uos nec uoci uestrae uoluit
 adquiescere. sedistis ergo in Cadesbarne multo tempore. (Deuteronomy 1.42-46)
\end{verbatim}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Percurre} suggests rapid movement, while \textit{cerae} (in the plural) is used by Vergil of beehives at \textit{Geo} 4.57, 162, and 241.

\textsuperscript{112} Vergil uses \textit{agmen} of bees at \textit{Geo}. 4.59 and 167.

\textsuperscript{113} Hünemörder (1996).

\textsuperscript{114} The third example, Judges 14:8, is in the context of the quasi-\textit{bugonia} discovered by Samson.}
The first passage, from Psalm 117, is particularly relevant to our discussion of Cassian. The version quoted is from the Vulgate; Augustine, however, in his *Enarrationes in Psalmo*, makes use of the Septuagint version, in which the line reads:

ἐκύκλωσάν με ὡσεὶ μέλισσαι κηρίον καὶ ἔξεκακθήσαν ὡσεὶ πῦρ ἐν ἀκάνθαις καὶ τῷ ὄνοματι κυρίου ἠμυνάμην αὐτούς.

Augustine then interprets the hive, κηρίον (=*fauum*), as referring to Christ, and comments:

mel quippe apes operantur in *fauis*: nescientes autem persecutores Domini, fecerunt eum nobis ipsa passione dulciorem; ut gustemus et uideamus quam suauis est Dominus, qui mortuus est propter delicta nostra, et resurrexit propter iustificationem nostram. (*Enarrationes in Psalmo* 117.7)

The interpretation can well be brought to bear on *Pe.* 9, for although Cassian does not exact such a forceful victory over his students as does the speaker in Psalm 117, he nonetheless does ultimately succeed despite their attacks, through his triumphant (or sweet) martyrdom. Here, then, pagan and Christian imagery are set in opposition by a double intertext which rests on the reader’s Aeneas-like ambivalence about the scene. As noted above, Aeneas is initially shocked by the sight of the crowds of souls flocking around Lethe, before Anchises explains their significance. A similar uneasiness on the part of the learned reader will cause him to recall the Biblical parallels of swarms of bees. We might take this even further: the Biblical undertones of the passage force us to rethink our interpretation of the Vergilian passage. In the *Aeneid*, it is ultimately a positive passage, leading as it does into a description of the future heroes of Rome.

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115 Psalm 118 according to the Hebrew numbering.

116 Prudentius uses *dulcis* of martyrdom repeatedly in the *Peristephanon*, while in *Pe.* 9 reference is made to a ‘bitter teacher’ (*doctor amarus*, 27) and ‘training that is not sweet’ (*nec dulcis...disciplina*, 28). Michael Dewar suggests to me that Prudentius may also be thinking of *1Cor.* 15:55, *ubi est, Mors, victoria tua?* | *ubi est, Mors, stimulus tuus?* – note *stimulus* at *Pe.* 9.51, and cf. *Hosea* 13:14 : ποῦ ἡ δίκη σου θάνατε | ποῦ τὸ κέντρον σου ἄδη, though the Vulgate (following the Hebrew) gives the lines as *ero mors tua o mors | ero morsus tuus inferne*. κέντρον could mean the sting of a bee or wasp, cf. e.g. *Ar. Vesp.* 225.

117 An example of the sort of *mehrfache Intertextualität* discussed by Heinz (2007).
But no early Christian would have taken such a positive view of the transmigration of souls.\textsuperscript{118}

That Prudentius is, in effect, rewriting and challenging the Vergilian passage is supported by the fact that in this same phrase, \textit{innumer i pueri}, Prudentius is almost certainly alluding to another famous passage in \textit{Aeneid} 6:

\begin{verbatim}
huc omnis turba ad ripas effuse ruebat,  
matres atque uiri defunctaque corpora uita  
magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae,  
impositique rogis iuuenes ante ora parentum:  
quam multa in siluis autumni frigore primo  
lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto  
quam multae glomerantur aues, ubi frigidus annus  
trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis. (Verg., Aen. 6.305-12)
\end{verbatim}

Here, the multitude of souls waiting to cross the Styx are likened to leaves falling in the autumn or birds migrating. Unburied, they must wait for a century before they are permitted to enter the underworld proper. I would suggest, then, that by alluding to these two passages, Prudentius is arguing that the young boys are damned – pagans who will never gain access to the (Christian) afterlife because they have placed their hopes in false beliefs such as the transmigration of souls.

By contrast, Cassian is like the singer of Psalm 117 – though assailed by a vicious mob of gentiles, he will ultimately be victorious, as he is martyred and freed from the shackles of his body (\textit{retinacula uitae}, 9.87). In both cases, it is only through the Lord’s intervention that the assault can be overcome.

We return to \textit{Pe.} 9.13. The second half of the line is also an allusion to the Aeneid: \textit{miserabile uisu} recalls \textit{Aen.} 1.110-1:

\begin{verbatim}
tris Eurus ab alto
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{118} Origen’s comments on metempsychosis at the end of the first book of the \textit{De Principiis} are perhaps an exception (and see Jerome’s attack on this idea in his \textit{Epistula ad Avitum}).
in breuia et Syrtis urget, **miserable usiu**.\(^{119}\)

The Vergilian context is the storm that drives Aeneas and his companions to the shores of Africa, and in this regard it is noteworthy that the sacristan calls Cassian’s sufferings a ‘cruel storm’ (*tempestas saeua*, 29). Cassian is depicted as being overwhelmed by an uncontrollable force, as is Aeneas,\(^{120}\) and it is only because of Christ’s pity that he is released from his sufferings later in the poem. Similarly, Aeneas is only released from the storm through Neptune’s intervention (1.124-56). But it is worth remembering that this uncontrollable force has been set upon Aeneas by *Juno*, whom we have already encountered in the allusion in line 3 to the Gates of War.

Juno also lies behind the last allusion in the poem. Christ, we are told, finally takes pity on Cassian’s sufferings and allows him to die:

\[
\text{tandem luctantis miseratus ab aethere Christus}
\]
\[
iubet resolui pectoris ligamina
\]
\[
difficilesque moras animae ac retinacula uitae
\]
\[
relaxat artas et latebras expedit. (Pe. 9.85-8)
\]

This is modelled on the close of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*:\(^{121}\)

\[
tum Iuno omnipotens longum miserata dolorem
\]
\[
difficilisque obitus Irím demisit Olympo
\]
\[
quae luctantem animam nexosque resolueret artus. (Verg., Aen. 4.693-5)
\]

Christ, looking down from heaven, takes pity on Cassian, and allows his soul to flee the shackles of the body. In similar fashion, Juno, on Olympus, sends Iris to hasten Dido’s death. In both cases, the suffering has been lengthy (*tandem / longum dolorem*), and the language of the soul escaping from the chains of the body is employed (*retinacula uitae relaxat artas et latebras*

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\(^{119}\) See among others Lühken (2002) 309 and Cunningham (1966) ad loc. In both Vergil and Prudentius the phrase concludes a hexameter line.

\(^{120}\) On the storm as a symbol of chaos see above all Hardie (1986) 90-97, 103-110: Aeneas “is as yet powerless to act towards the preservation of order.” (103).

expedit / nexos resoluerat artus). Dido’s soul is struggling (luctantem), as is Cassian (luctantis) – in both cases, the death is a difficult one (difficilisque obitus / difficilesque moras). Both deaths coincide with the poems’ protagonists’ continuation of their journeys to Rome – Aeneas has already departed when Dido dies, but the passage is the true conclusion of the ‘Dido episode’ in the poem, and marks the beginning of the final leg of Aeneas’ voyage to Italy. Similarly, it is only once the verger has told Prudentius the story of Cassian that the poet can pray to the martyr for help. Prudentius makes it clear in the final couplet of the poem that his safe passage to Rome and home again depended on the intervention of the saint (audior, urbem adeo 105).

Moreover, as we learn in the conclusion to the poem, there are further similarities between our narrator and Aeneas. Prudentius has left his home dubia sub sorte (103), not quite as traumatic, perhaps, as the circumstances in which Aeneas left Troy fato profugus (Aen. 1.2), but in both cases we are clearly dealing with a reluctant traveller. Both men are heading for Rome (though Aeneas does not know it, and will only pass through the ‘actual’ site of Rome), and both are uncertain about what the future may hold (spem futuri forte nutantem boni, Pe. 9.104, perhaps recalling the sentiments of Aeneas at Aeneid 1.208-209, talia uoce refert curisque ingentibus aeger | spem uultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem). In both cases their visits to Rome have successful outcomes (dextris successibus, Pe. 9.105).

The Aeneid, then, is imitated in a sustained manner in this poem, while Apuleius’ Metamorphoses is alluded to more fleetingly. What is Prudentius’ purpose in alluding to these two works? Both describe journeys, of course, and it may simply be the case that Prudentius wanted to place his own journey in the context of the epic travels of Aeneas and Lucius. But I suspect a deeper significance in Prudentius’ allusions. It is no coincidence that most of the Vergilian passages imitated have to do with Juno (the sole exception is the allusion to Book Six).
It is the wrath of Juno that drives the narrative of the *Aeneid*, and it is the awesome power of that goddess that subjects Aeneas to torment after torment: beginning with the storm in Book One and following him all the way to Italy, where she opens the Gates of War and causes more difficulty for the hero. It is clear that Prudentius is concerned about God’s plan for him as he undertakes this journey (*dubia sub sorte*, 103, and *spem future...nutantem boni*, 104), while Cassian’s suffering comes at the hands of a cruel tempest, *tempestas saeua*. Nor should we be in any doubt about the awfulness of Cassian’s death: the martyr displays none of the defiance of a Lawrence (*Pe. 2*) or an Agnes (*Pe. 14*) – he begs for death not because he longs for it but because it will put him out of his misery (*plus dat medellae dum necem prope applicat*, 64).

But there is a happy ending for Cassian, when Christ finally takes pity on him and releases his soul from his body. As we have seen, the lines describing this episode recall the death of Dido at the end of Book Four of the *Aeneid*, where Juno sends Iris down to earth to bring the Carthaginian queen’s sufferings to an end. The same goddess in the *Aeneid* can cause great suffering and bring an end to suffering. Similarly, in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, Psyche suffers because of the wrath of Venus, while Lucius is ultimately saved by the goddess Isis. I suggest, then, that *Peristephanon* 9 is a meditation on the lack of control humans have over their lives, since they are at the mercy of the Lord, but that religious devotion and faith in the Lord will result in a positive outcome, as is the case for Cassian and for Prudentius himself.

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how both Ausonius and Prudentius make use of Vergil’s *Aeneid* in their descriptions of journeys. In each case, use of allusion not only signals the poet’s awareness of the literary tradition, but also helps to frame the journey described. Ausonius likens his emergence from Germania into the Moselle valley to both the Cumaean landfall and Aeneas’
arrival at the Elysian fields. Eulalia’s night-journey takes on the form of an Aeneas-like *katabasis*, as does the journey of the pilgrim down to the tomb of Hippolytus. Finally, in *Peristephanon* 9, Prudentius employs careful and sustained allusion to both the *Aeneid* and to Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* to reflect on the vagaries of travel and the necessity of pious behaviour to ensure a safe and fruitful journey.
Chapter Three: The martyr and the city

The Peristephanon displays a remarkable concern with place and location. The martyrs are identified with specific cities which, Prudentius claims, have been renewed and, in effect, refounded, by these glorious deaths. In this chapter, I discuss this identification of the martyrs as local heroes, each tied to a specific city. I begin by examining Christian attitudes towards the city and towards civic engagement more generally. I show how over the course of the first four centuries, Christians become, in general, more amenable to the idea that one can be simultaneously a Roman citizen and a citizen of God's kingdom, and argue that this lays the foundation for what Prudentius is trying to achieve in his poetry. In Section 3.2, I turn my attention to the Peristephanon and to the depiction of the martyr as civic protector and saviour. In this section, I focus in particular on the openings of the hymns, arguing that Prudentius repeatedly makes use of the opening lines to establish a deep spiritual link between martyr and city. After this, in Section 3.3, I move to a discussion of how Prudentius concludes his hymns, and show how his depictions of public celebrations of the martyrs emphasises the importance of setting aside specific spaces and times for the veneration of these civic heroes, while also representing the act of commemorating the martyrs as an expression of cultural memory.

3.1 Early Christian ideas about the city

Before analysing the role urban space plays in Prudentius' poetry, it is necessary to survey briefly earlier Christian ideas about the city and civic duties. While the praise of martyrs as civic heroes is a logical way of linking civic and Christian affiliations, such an approach is in marked contrast to some earlier Christian attitudes towards engagement with Roman civic life. In fact, the relationship of the Christian to the earthly city is a particularly complex one in the early years of
the Church. As Meeks notes, despite the reservations of the writers of the New Testament about cities, theirs is a text that is written from an overwhelmingly urban perspective.\(^1\) Perhaps the most influential statement about the relationship between Christians and earthly citizenship is to be found in 1 Peter, written in the late first century:\(^2\)

![Greek text with English translation]

Here, Peter addresses the Christian faithful as παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους, "foreigners and soujourners", a reference to the widespread belief, in the immediate aftermath of Christ's crucifixion, that the end of the world was imminent, and that consequently the Christian faithful were to spend their time on earth preparing for a more long-term citizenship in the afterlife. Yet Peter urges Christians to be obedient visitors in this land that is not theirs, telling them to "be subordinate to every human institution on account of the Lord" (ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον). Christians are urged to live among Gentiles and according to their laws, though they are fundamentally different. As Dunning notes in his discussion of this passage, "the text marks Christian identity as distinctive by figuring Christians as outsiders to the social order, while simultaneously engaging in a paraenetic agenda that serves to reinscribe their place in that

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\(^1\) Meeks (1986) 15; see further Meeks (2003) *passim*.

\(^2\) On the date of 1 Peter see most recently Elliott (2000) 136-8.
social order."³ As I discuss below, this interpretation is taken up later by Clement of Alexandria, though before then a number of other Christian thinkers urge a more radical break with society.

The Epistle to Diognetus is an anonymous Greek text written some time in the late second century, supposedly the work of a Christian attempting to explain the new religion to Gentiles, and seemingly the earliest surviving example of Christian apologetic. In the course of his discussion, the author addresses the issue of whether the Christians constitute their own γένος. As Dunning shows convincingly, despite the opening claim of the author that Christianity is a "new race", κανὸν τοῦτο γένος (Ep. 1.1), in his treatment of the relationship of Christians to Greek and Roman cities, the distinction is less clear-cut:⁴

κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδας τε καὶ βαρβάρους ὡς ἐκαστὸς ἐκληρώθη, <καὶ> τοὺς ἐγχωρίους ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐν τε ἐσθῆτι καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ βίῳ, θαυμαστὴν καὶ ὑμολογουμένως παράδοξον ἐνδείκνυται τὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἐαυτῶν πολιτείας. πατρίδας οἰκοῦσιν ἑαυτῶν ώς πάντων ὡς πολίται, καὶ πανθ' ὑπομένουσιν ὡς ξένοι· πᾶσα ξένη πατρίς ἐστιν αὐτῶν, καὶ πᾶσα πατρίς ξένη.

(Ep. ad Diogn. 5.4-5)

Here, the author is quite explicit about the "marvellous paradox" that constitutes Christian citizenship in the world. For while they contribute to civic life, they can never fully be a part of it because of their allegiance to the kingdom of the afterlife. In both 1 Peter and the Epistle to Diognetus, Christians are presented as exemplary earthly citizens, who fulfill the duties of good citizens but also go beyond what is expected of them, though they are nevertheless always marked as outsiders.

A far more radical stance is taken by Tertullian, who rages against what he sees as the fundamental untrustworthiness of the pagans amongst whom Christians must live. The Christians, who have been bidden to love their enemy, are repaid with persecution (Apol. 37). Tertullian suggests that Christians should strike a blow at the heart of the Roman state apparatus by withdrawing from the cities:

\[
\text{si enim tanta uis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abruptissemus a uobis, suffudisset utique dominationem uestram tot qualium cumque ciuium amissio, immo etiam et ipsa destitutione punisset.} \\
\text{(Tertullian, Apol. 37.6)}
\]

As Greer notes, for Tertullian the only solution to the paradox of citizenship is a complete withdrawal from society on the part of the Christians.\(^5\) Clement of Alexandria, writing at roughly the same time as Tertullian, is closer to the views espoused by Peter and the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, arguing that while Christians have their own status as members of the heavenly city, they also have a role to play in contributing to civic and social life under the Roman empire (Stromata 4.26). As Greer puts it, their paradoxical citizenship is "a deliverance not merely from but for the world",\(^6\) since by their exemplary lives on earth they can educate non-Christians and encourage them, too, to abandon pagan customs and turn to God.

It is unsurprising that after the triumph of Constantine, the rhetoric of religious writers is generally directed more towards the intertwining of the civic and the religious, following Constantine's representation of his victory over Maxentius as a specifically Christian victory. In Eusebius' panegyric of Constantine, the Roman empire is depicted as a Christian empire that

\(^6\) Greer (1986) 43.
overcomes many smaller and inferior nations, just as God has overcome a multitude of pagan deities:

ὡς δὲ τὸ σωτήριον ὀργανόν, αὐτὸ δὴ τὸ πανάγιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ σῶμα, τὸ κρείττων ἀπάσης δαμιονικῆς πλάνης καὶ ἐνεργείας ὑφθέν κακίας τε τῆς δι' ἐργον καὶ λόγων ἀλλότριων, νικηθὲν τρόπαιον κατὰ δαμιόν πολλῶν τε κακῶν ἀποτρόπαιον ἀνυψοῦτο, ἐλυσε τε αὐτίκα πάντα δαμίων ἐργα καὶ οὐκέτ' ἦσαν τοπαρχίαι καὶ πολυαρχίαι, τυραννίδες τε καὶ δημοκρατίαι, αἱ τε διὰ ταῦτα συνιστάμεναι κατὰ πόλεις καὶ κατὰ χώρας δημόσιας καὶ πολιορκίας, ἀλλὰ θεός μὲν <εἰς> εἰς πάντας ἐκερύττετο· ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ καὶ βασιλείᾳ μία τοῖς πάσιν ἦ Ρωμαίων ἐπίνθει, ἀνήρτητο τε ἄθροις ἦ εἰς αἰῶνας ἄσπειρος καὶ ἀκατάλλακτος τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔχθρα. ὡς δὲ ἕνος θεοῦ γνώσεις πάσιν ἀνθρώπων παρεδίδοτο καὶ τρόπος εἰς εὐσεβείας σωτηρίας τε τοῦ Χριστοῦ διασκαλία, κατὰ ταύτα καὶ βασιλείας ἔνος ύπ' ἑνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον καθ' ἄλης τῆς Ρωμαίων ἀρχῆς ὑποστάντος εἰρήνη βαθεῖα τά σύμπαντα διελάβανεν· ὡμοὶ τε καὶ υψί ἕνα καὶ τῷ ἕνος θείου νεώματος ἀνεφύοντο εἰς ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθῶν δύο βλαστοί, ἢ τοῦ Ρωμαίων ἀρχῆς καὶ ἡ εὐσεβής διασκαλία.

(Eusebius, de laudibus Constantini 16.3-4)

Here, Eusebius depicts the parallel and interrelated triumphs of the One God and the One Empire. But in so doing, he represents the Roman empire as an ideal society in which Christians have taken their rightful place.7 Similar sentiments can be found in Lactantius and in John Chrysostom, and it is in this context that we must see Prudentius' martyr narratives, and indeed most accounts of martyrs written after 312.8

Lucy Grig has shown how the process of writing martyr-narratives must be seen as reflecting the times in which the narratives are written, rather than as a sort of objective historical lens onto the age of persecutions.9 It is necessary to approach narratives of martyrs as something constructed long after the fact, to serve the interests of later generations. In this chapter I am

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7 Greer (1986) 47.
8 Cf. Lact., Div. Inst. 6.8; John Chrysostom, In Epistulam II ad Corinthios, Hom. 16. Augustine's attitude towards earthly and heavenly cities is more complex, but, since the de ciuitate Dei is undoubtedly later than any of Prudentius' works, I shall not discuss it in detail here.
particularly interested in how this temporal distance relates to the resolution of the traditional
tension between Roman and Christian, and, as I shall discuss in the next section, it is clear that
martyrs are presented as purifying, renewing, and refounding their native cities, thus
emphasising both continuity with the pagan past and a break with that past.

First, however, I shall examine how Prudentius represents martyrdom as something Roman
that effects a banishment of foreign elements from the city. Though this topic is too large to
discuss in detail here, one example should suffice to indicate how Prudentius inverts the
traditional Christian-against-Roman topos to represent martyrs as Roman citizens banishing
foreign superstition from the Empire.

In the preface to the first book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, Paul is described as
follows:

Paulus, praeco Dei, qui fera gentium
primus corda sacro perdomuit stilo
Christum per populos ritibus asperis
inmanes placido dogmate seminans,
inmansueta suas ut cerimoni
 gens pagana Deo sperneret agnito...
(CS pr1.1-6)

The language used by Prudentius to describe Paul's evangelical crusade is reminiscent of Roman
military language. Like a Roman general, Paul tames the wild Gentiles (*fera gentium corda
perdomuit*), who are described as "monstrous" (*populos inmanes*).\(^{10}\) In other words, non-
Christians are represented in terms that are more commonly found being applied to non-

\(^{10}\) Examples are legion, but a number from Claudian should suffice, cf. *Prob*. 148, *qui Poenum domuere ferocem*;
*Gild*. 231-2, *da tangere dextram, | qua gentes cecidere ferae*; *VI Cons*. 381-2 (of Gildo), ipse... *praebert fera colla
iugo.*
Romans. The triumph of Christianity, then, is represented as akin to a military victory over a foreign nation, and this is reinforced at the end of the preface, when Paul is addressed as saluator generis Romulei (80). By prefacing the poem, a diatribe against Roman pagan beliefs, with an account of an incident involving the first prominent Roman follower of Christ (cf. Acts 22:25-29), Prudentius provides the implied addressee, a pagan reader, with an exemplum of a Roman who has seen the error of his ways and devoted his life to converting other Gentiles - an exemplum that would have been comfortingly familiar to a Roman reader raised on tales of Republican military commanders.

3.2 The martyr as saviour of the city

In this section I shall look more closely at the effect of poetic language and structure on the presentation of martyrs as civic saviours. Prudentius opens each hymn in the Peristephanon by praising the relevant city, and thus tying the martyr's death to the urban space in particular. I shall argue that in many cases, the martyr's death is presented as being an act that cleanses the city of sin and Christianises it, while in all cases the presence of the martyr's relics is held up as a major boon for the city. I begin, however, with the sacrificial function of the martyr death, something discussed in detail by John Petruccione in his 1995 article, in which he focuses in particular on Pe. 4. Petruccione shows how in that poem the blood of the sixteen martyrs of Saragossa has both a purificatory and a redemptive function. The blood of the martyrs cleanses the city:

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11 Prudentius may have been influenced by Horace, Ep. 2.1.156, Graecia capta ferum uictorem cepit.
12 Cf. Diefenbach (2007) 289–324, who discusses how Damasus unifies the disparate cults of the Roman martyrs in an attempt to present them as citizens representative of the entire community.
omnibus portis sacer inmolatus
sanguis exclusit genus inuidorum
daemonum et nigras pepulit tenebras
urbe piata.
(Pe. 4.65-8)

Petruccione discusses possible Biblical and patristic parallels for the passage: most notably the lamb's blood used by the Hebrews to identify their homes at Ex. 12:3-13, and Origen's discussion of martyrdom as sacrifice.\(^\text{14}\) I should like here to show how similar sentiments are expressed in other poems in the collection and to argue that the martyrs are thus presented as simultaneously civic and religious heroes. Perhaps the clearest example of this is to be found in Peristephanon 14, the hymn to Agnes of Rome. In the opening of the poem, Agnes is presented as a founding-hero:

Agnes sepulcrum est Romulea in domo
fortis puellae martyris inclytae.
conspectu in ipso condita turrium
seruat salutem uirgo Quiritium
nec non et ipsos protegit aduenas
puro ac fidelci pectore supplices.
(Pe. 14.1-6)

In the first line, Prudentius links Agnes with Romulus, by referring to Rome as Romulea domus.\(^\text{15}\) This association recurs in line 3, where Agnes is described as being buried, condita, within sight of the walls of Rome. The verb condere can, of course, have the sense "to hide" or "to bury", but in connection with Rome a reader's natural first instinct would be to think of the sense "to found" or "to establish", as it is used e.g. at Aeneid 1.5, conderet urbem, or in the title of Livy's work, ab urbe condita. Indeed, of the seventy-odd instances of the verb or its cognates


\(^\text{15}\) Cf. Malamud (1989) 150-151, 156-157
in Prudentius, only eight do not carry the sense of 'establish', 'found', or 'create'. Particularly relevant is the use of *condere* to refer to Christ at *Cath* 5.9-10:

\[
\text{ne nesciret homo spem sibi luminis}
\]\n\[
in\ Christi solido corpore conditam...\]

Here, Prudentius describes how the hope of humanity is built on the body of Christ. Similarly, in *Pe.* 14, the hope of the Roman faithful for salvation is founded on the body of Agnes, who, in imitation of Christ, dies for the sins of her fellow-citizens and protects them by the presence of her remains. Moreover, Agnes is described as protecting not only Roman citizens but also visitors to the city, in what is perhaps a reference to Romulus' asylum (Livy 1.8). As in *Peristephanon* 4, Agnes' martyrdom results in a purification of the city, as Prudentius makes clear at the end of the poem:

\[
o\ uirgo\ felix,\ o\ noua\ gloria,\n\ caelestis\ arcis\ nobilis\ incola\n\ intende\ nostris\ conluionibus\n\ uultum\ gemello\ cum\ diademate,\n\ cui\ posse\ soli\ cunctipares\ dedit\n\ castum\ uel\ ipsum\ reddere\ fornicem!\n\ purgabor\ oris\ propitiabilis\n\ fulgore,\ nostrum\ si\ iecur\ inpleas.\n\ nil\ non\ pudicum\ est\ quod\ pia\ usere\n\ dignaris\ almo\ uel\ pede\ tangere.\n\ (Pe. 14.124-133)\]

Here Prudentius claims that Agnes purified the brothel into which she was thrown (128-129), and that she has a similar purifying effect upon the faithful (130-131). Agnes' purifying touch, now that she is buried in Rome, can reach all Roman citizens who are willing to venerate her.

The purificatory effect of martyrdom can be seen operating in different ways elsewhere in the collection. In *Peristephanon* 1, neither the martyrs nor the city are explicitly named in the body

---

of the poem, though the *inscriptio* states: "*hymnus in honorem sanctorum martyrum Emeteri et Chelidoni Calagurritanorum". Nonetheless, the impact of the martyrs on the region of Spain in which they are buried is made clear at the beginning:

   pollet hoc felix per orbem terra Hibera stemmate,
   hic locus dignus tenendis ossibus uius deo
   qui beatorum pudicus esset hospes corporum.
   (Pe. 1.4-6)

The site of the martyrdom of the two soldiers not only augments the land of Spain, but also has a healing power manifested in the healing of the sick at the end of the poem:

   quid loquar purgata longis alba morbis corpora,
   algidus cum decoloros horror artus concutit?
   hic tumor uultum relinquit, hic color uerus reit.
   (Pe. 1.112-114)

The ill are purified by the very presence of the martyrs, who also provide protection for the citizens of Calagurris (*Pe. 1.115-117*), and Prudentius is quite explicit that it is due to the presence of the martyrs' relics that this is possible.

   Yet the purification of the city is only one of the means by which martyrs are presented as a benefit to their cities. At the opening of almost all of the poems in the *Peristephanon*, the martyr is named and set in some geographical context. Thus in *Pe*. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 14, both city and martyr are named in the opening lines. In *Pe*. 13, Cyprian is described as being of the *Punica terra*, while in *Pe*. 11 Hippolytus is not named until the nineteenth line, though this serves a narrative purpose in that the narrator is actively searching for martyrs to write about.\(^\text{17}\) By naming the martyr in close connection with his or her place of origin at the beginning of the

\(^{17}\) *Pe*. 8 and 10 I exclude, given their anomalous nature within the *Peristephanon*, on which see further Palmer (1989) 87-88 and Fux (2003) 77.
poem, Prudentius emphasises the interconnectedness of the two and also marks out the poem, from the very start, as belonging to that martyr and to that city.

In a twist on the conventional *laus urbis*, Prudentius repeatedly presents martyrs and the presence of martyr relics in a city as something that increases the city's worth.\(^\text{18}\) Hence at the opening of *Peristephanon* 3, Prudentius makes it clear that Emerita Augusta has been both blessed and raised in status by the martyrdom of Eulalia and by the presence of her remains there:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{germine nobilis Eulalia} \\
\text{mortis et indole nobilior} \\
\text{Emeritam sacra urgo suam} \\
\text{cuius ab ubere progenita est} \\
\text{ossibus ornat amore colit.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{proximus occiduo locus est} \\
\text{qui tulit hoc decus egregium} \\
\text{urbe potens populis locuples} \\
\text{sed mage sanguine martyrii} \\
\text{uirgineoque potens titulo.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(Pe. 3.1-10)\]

Here, the poem opens with praise of Eulalia in the first stanza, but moves to a praise of Emerita in the second. Yet the two are clearly closely intertwined, as Prudentius shifts between praising city one minute and martyr the next. Eulalia is noble by birth (germine nobilis) yet by her death she increases the nobility of her city. The image of the brevity of Eulalia's life recurs in the next two lines, in which Emerita is described as the city that nourished Eulalia, and which she now nourishes in turn (cuius ab ubere progenita est...amore colit). The symbiotic relationship of the two is made clear, though the phrasing also emphasises the rapidity of Eulalia's passage to martyrdom.

\[^\text{18}\] As noted by Roberts (1993) 27-37.
Similarly, *Peristephanon* 6 opens with praise of the city of Tarraco:19

```
felix Tarraco, Fructuose, uestris  
attollit caput ignibus coruscum  
leuitis geminis procul relucens.  

Hispanos deus aspicit benignus,  
arcem quandoquidem potens Hiberam  
trino martyre trinitas coronat.  
(Pe. 6.1-6)
```

What is particularly noteworthy about most of Prudentius' poems is that he does not go into any considerable detail about the topography of individual cities. Aside from descriptions of shrines of the martyrs, the urban landscapes of the cities themselves are very much relegated to the background. Instead, cities are presented as noteworthy almost exclusively because of the presence of martyr relics within them. So here, in *Peristephanon* 6, Tarraco is represented as being famous because it has been blessed with not one but three martyrs. Aside from fleeting references to the proximity of the Pyrenees and the ocean at the end of the poem, Prudentius is not inclined to go into any further detail. This is perhaps even clearer in *Peristephanon* 4, which Roberts analyses as a *laus urbis* (see above). In this poem, as Roberts notes, Prudentius does not put Saragossa into its geographical context but rather sets the city on a map of martyrs, providing as he does a catalogue of cities which are famous for housing the relics of martyrs.

It is this treatment of geography as fundamentally religious, I suggest, that we should see lying behind the lack of description of Siscia in *Peristephanon* 7:

```
insignem meriti uirum,  
Quirinum placitum deo,  
urbis moenia Sisciae  
concessum sibi martyrem  
conplexu patrio fouent.  
```

---

19 The most recent discussion of this poem is to be found in Caruso (2010) 298-308.
hic sub Galerio duce,
qui tunc Illyricos sinus
urgebat dicionibus,
fertur catholicam fidem
inlustrasse per exitum.
(Pe. 7.1-10)

It is sometimes stated in relation to this poem that the lack of any geographical description proves that Prudentius had not visited the town.\(^{20}\) As should be clear from comparison with Pe. 6 and with other poems in the collection, however, that omission of physical detail is perfectly normal within the collection. It is clear here that Prudentius' focus on Siscia is entirely dictated by Quirinus' importance for the town. The city is described as holding the remains of Quirinus in a fatherly embrace, and while Prudentius does not state explicitly, as he does elsewhere, that the presence of Quirinus' remains increases the status of the town, Quirinus is described as \textit{insignem meriti} and as having "illuminated the Catholic faith" (\textit{catholicam fidem inlustrasse}) by his death.

It is clear, then, that Prudentius represents the martyrs in his poems as being closely connected to their native cities. Their martyrdom serves a wider function by providing a local example of \textit{imitatio Christi}, but also provides a means by which the city can be purified and refounded as a Christian settlement that can take its place on the map of a Christian empire.

\textbf{3.3 The community and the martyr: procession and celebration}

So far I have examined how Prudentius relates martyrs to their cities, presenting them as heroes whose fortunes are closely intertwined with those of their cities. I now proceed to an examination of how communal celebration of these martyrs, as it is represented in the \textit{Peristephanon},

\(^{20}\) Cf. e.g. Palmer (1989) 25: "The poem about the bishop of Siscia cannot be used to argue that Prudentius governed the Pannonian province of Savia. Indeed, had he done so, he would certainly have enlivened the narrative with local detail and have given some hint of his personal connection with the cult of the martyred bishop Quirinus." See further Palmer (1989) 236-237.
reinforces this association of martyr and city and serves as a means by which citizens can enact civic identity. This is closely associated with ideas of space and time as they relate to martyr-cult, however, and so it is worth examining briefly the discussions of Peter Brown and Michael Roberts relating to this topic.

Roberts, in his discussion of the opening of Pe. 1, argues that Prudentius sets up "oppositions between the past of the historical passions and the present cult of the martyrs, between the immediate location of the shrine and the larger world outside [...] and between the realms of heaven and earth. Although the locus of worship is terrestrial, here and now, the cult of the martyrs has the power to subvert and briefly to abolish the distinctions that define it."²¹ Following Brown, Roberts notes how, in this passage, Prudentius shows how presence at the site of the martyrdom of Emeterius and Chelidonius enables worshippers to inhabit simultaneously the present and the past, since the martyr was always present at the shrine and ready to attend to the requests of his devotees.²² Similarly, the space the martyr inhabits is simultaneously heaven and earth, as Prudentius makes clear particularly in relation to Lawrence:

\[
\text{est aula nam duplex tibi,} \\
\text{hic corporis, mentis polo.} \\
(Pe. 2.551-552)
\]

This twofold presence, paralleled elsewhere in the collection, indicates, according to Brown and Roberts, that the specific site of the martyr's relics serves as a sort of liminal location in which both heaven and earth and past and present exist simultaneously.²³

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Yet neither Brown nor Roberts fully teases out the implications of the fact that, despite this miraculous flattening of space and time at the site of the martyrs, their celebration is ultimately something very much grounded in a concrete conception of space and time, the space being the specific location of the shrine of the relevant martyr, and the time being, in particular, the feast day of the martyr, which Prudentius describes in detail. For as Smith has shown, this concretisation of sacred space is particularly characteristic of the post-Constantinian era.\textsuperscript{24} In this section I discuss how feast days serve as a means by which inhabitants of a city could commemorate their local martyrs and in so doing express their civic identity.

Jill Harries reminds us that a crucial aspect of self-representation and self-presentation was the Christian liturgical calendar, by which Christian cities could display their religiosity.\textsuperscript{25} It is clear that Prudentius' \textit{Peristephanon} has some association with the liturgical calendar - many of the poems make reference to the celebration of the martyrs' feast day, and some even give the dates explicitly - though the question of performance context is a vexed one and one that is not easily answered.\textsuperscript{26} Whatever the circumstances of the performance of the poems, I would argue that they function as a means of celebrating the liturgical calendar.\textsuperscript{27} Even if they were not performed, they contain the \textit{pretence} of being performed, much like many of Horace's odes.

Denis Feeney has shown how time and the relationship of that time to ritual performance changes utterly from Greek to Roman cultures, with the Roman emphasis on the calendar and the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[26] On whether Prudentius' hymns were intended to be sung, see Palmer (1989) 67-86, who argues that they were not, \textit{contra} Cunningham (1963).
\item[27] Palmer (1989) 111-121 examines some of the links between the \textit{Peristephanon} and Ovid's \textit{Fasti}, another poem concerned with religious festivals and time.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
ordering of the year: anniversaries, as Michele Lowrie points out in relation to Horace, become far more important in Roman culture than in Greek.\textsuperscript{28} Time was a fundamentally religious concept for the Romans - even the week being structured around religious festivals and \textit{dies festi}. Thus for Christians, it was necessary to "conquer time".\textsuperscript{29} Michele Salzman has shown in detail how in the Codex-Calendar of 354, two separate ways of ordering time are presented: the traditional pagan religious calendar, and new lists detailing important dates relating to martyrs and bishops.\textsuperscript{30} In a later article, Salzman gives strong evidence for the gradual Christian conquest of the Roman calendar.\textsuperscript{31}

Salzman shows how a number of Christian feasts were intended to distract attention from simultaneous pagan festivals. Yet we should also see the development of the Christian liturgical calendar, made up of feasts of various saints, as a temporal version of the network of interconnected saints we find mapping out Roman geography.\textsuperscript{32} As Ann Marie Yasin has recently emphasised, "an individual saint could be the subject of a specific celebration or vita text, but the text of his or her life also resonated with others of the hagiographical genre, and his or her \textit{natale} (day of death, understood as one's birthday into everlasting life) held place within a larger calendar of feasts. A saint's cult was shaped, in other words, with other saints in

\begin{itemize}
\item[31] Salzman (1999).
\item[32] On the map of martyrs, see Chapter One.
\end{itemize}
mind....one of the central roles that saints played within church communities was to articulate the connection between saints as well as between humans and divine figures.”

That the festivals of major saints structured the Christian calendar is clear. To what extent, then, can we see this appropriated by Prudentius? It is clear from the *Cathemerinon* that Prudentius is concerned with writing hymns appropriate for specific times of day or festivals. Moreover, many of the poems in the *Peristephanon* make explicit reference to veneration of the saints, often describing the celebrations that occur during the feasts of the martyrs.

Prudentius' descriptions of these celebrations present them as an opportunity for a celebration of not merely civic but also religious identity. An excellent example of how Prudentius negotiates this tension and also makes reference to conflicting religious calendars can be found in *Peristephanon* 11. After a lengthy description of the feast of St. Hippolytus, Prudentius closes his poem, written as a letter to a bishop, Valerian, by mentioning the date on which Hippolytus is commemorated:

\[
\text{si bene commenini, colit hunc pulcherrima Roma} \\
\text{Idibus Augusti mensis, ut ipsa vocat} \\
\text{prisco more diem, quem te quoque, sancte magister,} \\
\text{annua festa inter dinumerare uelim.} \\
\text{(*Pe.* 11.231-234)}
\]

As Fux notes, Prudentius here explicitly makes reference to the *Roman* calendar. But by referencing the month of August, which he elsewhere disparages (*CS* 1.246-247), the poet shows how calendars are changeable: by alluding to the fact that this month has a relatively recent name, bestowed in honour of the emperor Augustus, he bolsters his argument for the adoption of

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34 Fux (2003) ad loc.
the celebration of Hippolytus by Valerian, the addressee of the poem. The procession, by being fixed in time on a specific anniversary, recalled on a date in the Roman calendar, is thus presented as both a highly Roman event and as a Christian undertaking that marks out the anniversary of the martyr's sacrifice as a date that is worthy of memory.

As Petruccione has shown, the hymns of the Peristephanon tend to follow a specific outline: praise of the martyr and their city, followed by the martyr-narrative, and concluding with a prayer and, usually, a reference to the celebration of the feast of the martyr. This temporal reference enables the reader to enjoy the feast of the martyr by proxy, by reading. However, the very structure of the poem and its nod to oral delivery and performance in a religious context emphasises the importance of the martyr for the city and as a source of civic communal memory: in other words, the civic celebration of the martyr functions as a means for the city to emphasise its own identity. An example will clarify what I mean here.

In Peristephanon Six, Prudentius describes the martyrdom of Fructuosus, bishop of Tarraco, and his deacons Augurius and Eulogius. The poem ends, like many others in the collection, with an address to the inhabitants of Tarraco to celebrate the martyrs:

```
o triplex honor, o triforme culmen,  
quo nostrae caput excitatur urbis,  
cunctis urbibus eminens Hiberis!

exultare tribus libet patronis,  
quorum praesidio fouemur omnes terrarum populi Pyreneaeum.

circumstet chorus ex utroque sexu,  
heros uirgo puer senex anulla,  
uestrum psallite rite Fructuosum!

laudans Augurium resultet hymnus mixtis Eulogium modis coaequans,  
reddamus paribus pares camenas.
```
hinc aurata sonent in arce tecta,
blandum litoris extet inde murmur
et carmen freta **feriata** pangant.
(*Pe. 6.142-156*)

Prudentius here enacts the performance of his own poem, calling upon the choirs to join with him in singing the praises of the three martyrs (148-150). That this celebration is to take place on the feast day of the martyrs is made clear by the fact that even the sea is expected to observe the feast (*fretæ feriata*, 156). The poet urges the celebrants to give appropriate thanks to the martyrs. This triple martyrdom has resulted in protection and increased prestige for the city, and Prudentius now encourages the citizens of Tarraco to augment further that prestige by singing so loudly that the hymn spreads across the city, echoing off the roofs and reaching as far as the sea. Indeed, the very act of singing in praise of Fructuosus, as it encompasses the entire town, serves a mimetic function, given that Fructuosus himself is described as "covering" the town (*tegens*) at the time of the Last Judgement (*Pe. 6.157-159*).

The poem as a whole, then, encompasses and articulates what it means for Tarraco to be Christianised - from the opening lines, lauding the city, its head adorned with a triple fire (an image picked up in the tri-starred diadem allotted to the city at *Pe. 4.21-28*), thus articulating the image of the city and how it is enriched by the martyrdom of the trio, to the conclusion, in which the celebration of the martyr is located within the religious calendar of the city. Over the course of the poem, then, Prudentius begins by accounting for the importance of the city of Tarraco - important in its own right, as a major city, but made even more important by the particular blessing of a triple martyrdom. Prudentius goes on to explain the glory of the martyrdom of the three, before concluding with a return to the urban space of the city, and a call to its inhabitants to praise the martyrs and thus to praise the city.
This basic pattern is followed in most of the other poems of the *Peristephanon*, though the invocation to the locals to praise the martyrs seems to be restricted to poems for Spanish martyrs. However, in the case of martyrs from towns further afield, Prudentius frequently either describes the celebration in that town or urges Spanish worshippers to adopt the cult of that martyr in their own calendar. In the case of the feast of Hippolytus, he does both - first giving a lengthy account of the veneration of the martyr on his feast day, before concluding by expressing the wish that Hippolytus be remembered in Spain, as well as in Italy.\(^{35}\) In these cases, Prudentius shows how, while martyrs and martyrdom are firmly rooted in locality, they can be spread across the continents by means of praise and worship.

At the end of the third poem in the *Peristephanon*, Prudentius addresses his implied audience, the people of Emerita:

\[
carpite purpureas uiolas, 
sanguineosque crocos metite!...
\]

\[
ista comantibus e foliis 
munera, uirgo puerque, date! 
ast ego sarta choro in medio 
texta feram pede dactylico, 
uilia, marcida, festa tamen.
\]

\[
sic uenerarier ossa libet 
ossibus altar et inpositum, 
illa Dei sita sub pedibus 
prospicit haec populosque suos 
carmine propitiata fouet. 
(Pe. 3.201-202, 206-215)
\]

Here, Prudentius again emphasises the reciprocal relationship between martyr and urban populace, in the final stanza revealing a subtle Christian updating of the traditional reciprocal

nature of Roman religion: the worshippers propitiate Eulalia in song, and in return the martyr watches over the city (\textit{populos suos carmine propitiata fouet}). Similarly, the close emphasis on the relationship of the martyr's bones and their location with urban space more broadly conceived is made clear by \textit{ossa...ossibus altar et inpositum}. The worshippers venerate not only Eulalia's relics themselves, but also the structures that have sprung up around the site of her tomb. The praise of Eulalia is closely associated with the urban prowess of Emerita Augusta: the city has literally expanded as a result of building projects designed to honour its virgin martyr.

Religious calendars and celebrations of martyrs were strongly localised - they could vary from city to city, and it is clear that there was no central liturgical calendar imposed from on high.\textsuperscript{36} It is also clear that the adoption of worship of martyrs from other cities rested very much in the hands of local bishops: we can see this from Prudentius' own writings in \textit{Peristephanon} 11, and it is perhaps clearest in Ambrose's manipulation of social networks in northern Italy by circulating relics of Milanese martyrs.\textsuperscript{37}

It is also worth bearing in mind the assertion of Horden and Purcell that the Mediterranean effectively consisted of a huge numbers of microcultures that remained largely unchanged over the course of antiquity.\textsuperscript{38} Continuity of worship in a small, localised place over centuries was by no means unheard of. Moreover, despite the well-known increase in the popularity and ease of travel in the late antique period, it still must have been comparatively rare. The majority of those

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[38] Horden & Purcell (2000) 53-88
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who would have heard Prudentius' poems performed would never have strayed very far from the place they were born.

Local relations and local heroes were all-important. Consequently, with the advent of Christianity, the veneration of specifically local martyrs became particularly popular. Such celebrations, particularly processions, enacted a form of civic togetherness, as can be seen from the description of the crowds at the feast of Hippolytus in *Peristephanon* 11, and more vividly in *Peristephanon* 2:

```
hic finis orandi fuit
et finis idem uinculi
carnalis: erupit uolens
uocem secutus spiritus.

uxere corpus subditis
ceruicibus quidam patres,
quos mira libertas uiri
ambire Christum suaserat.

repens medullas inole
adflarat et coegerat
amore sublimis Dei
odisse nugas pristinas.

refrixit ex illo die
cultus deorum turpium;
plebs in sacellis rior,
Christi ad tribunal curritur.

sic dimicans Laurentius
non ense praeinxit latus,
hostile sed ferrum retro
torquens in auctorem tulit.

dum daemon invictum Dei
testem lacessit proelio,
perfossus ipse concidit
et stratus aeternum iacet.

mors illa sancti martyris
mors uera templorum fuit,
tunc Vesta Palladios lares
```
I have quoted this lengthy passage in its entirety as it provides an excellent example, not only of the types and nature of worship and processional and communal activity performed on the feast of the martyrs, but also of Prudentius' conception of the power of martyrdom to convert instantly: Lawrence dies, we are told, and *quidam patres* carried him forth, in a manner reminiscent of funeral processions: these senators, we are told, have been converted on the spot.  

This conversion spreads, and Prudentius transitions almost imperceptibly from the description of the ritual carrying of Lawrence to an abandonment of paganism writ large - as Prudentius tells us, the death of Lawrence was coterminous with the death of the temples (*mors illa sancti martyris | mors uera templorum fuit*). And now, Prudentius tells us, those who once engaged in large-scale worship of various pagan gods - crucially, in their roles as public officers,

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39 This instantaneous conversion surely has its origins in the character of the Centurion who is converted at the moment of Christ's death: Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47.
as is made clear by the explicit mention of senators who also served as *luperci aut flamines* - now enter the church, worship the thresholds of the martyrs, and sing out the martyr in hymns. Pagan religious office as an integral part of public service is thus replaced by the communal concelebration of a Roman martyr. Lawrence's martyrdom presents him as a double martyr, who has a place in the kingdom of heaven (*aula*), but also wears the civic crown (*corona civica*) in Rome, the crown awarded to soldiers who had saved the lives of fellow-soldiers. The *miles Christi* motif is strong here, and Lawrence is depicted not only as a good Christian but as a good Roman, for he has, after all, saved the lives of *all* his fellow-soldiers in Christ by convincing them of the True Path and the rectitude of worshipping the Lord. It is by means of this double crown, Prudentius goes on to say, that he can worship Lawrence while living in Spain, since the martyr exists in both heaven and on earth in Rome at the same time. Prudentius' desire for Rome and desire to see the city of Rome is alleviated, in part, by his veneration of Lawrence, yet this also paradoxically increases his desire to visit the city itself.

### 3.4 Conclusion

For Prudentius, then, the relationship between cities and martyrs serves a dual purpose. On the general level, martyrs protect their native cities, and by the presence of their remains increase the renown of the locality. More specifically, the feasts of the martyrs serve as a locus for public commemoration and celebration. The old Roman calendar gives way to a new liturgical calendar, which incorporates the feast days of martyrs both local and distant, while carefully choreographed religious processions enable the faithful to sanctify their cities. As I have demonstrated, the question of how to reconcile life as a Christian with membership in an earthly community is one that exercises the ingenuity of many early Christian thinkers. Prudentius' response is to depict martyrs as simultaneously local heroes and universal exemplars, rooted in the time of their feast day and accessible at any time through song. Prudentius' poetry provides a
means of transcending the constraints of everyday space and time, while at the same time emphasising the importance of the specificity of the shrines and feasts of the martyrs. The *Peristephanon* simultaneously praises individual cities for their possession of martyrs' relics, and reassures those who are unable to travel to see those relics that, through the act of reading Prudentius' poems, they too can participate in the cult of the saints.
Chapter Four: Prudentius and the pastoral

In the last chapter, I discussed Prudentius’ depiction of urban spaces and how the martyrs of the *Peristephanon* are presented as local heroes analogous to city-founders. In this chapter, I turn from the city to the countryside, and discuss the representation of nature, farming, and the pastoral in Prudentius’ poetry. I begin, in section 4.1, with a survey of the uses of pastoral by Christian writers from Lactantius to Jerome, concluding with a brief examination of the *De mortibus Boum* of Endelechius, showing how Endelechius uses classical pastoral imagery to present the miracle of the resurrection and the importance of faith in Christ. I then move on to contrast Endelechius’ conception of a god intervening to protect flocks with Prudentius’ discussion of the relationship between worship and agricultural fecundity in the *Contra Orationem Symmachii* in section 4.2, arguing that Prudentius rejects traditional Roman religious approaches to farming, and instead claims that for a Christian, faith in God provides a source of comfort in times of hardship, rather than active protection against that hardship. In section 4.3, I move to a discussion of the representation of Paradise in the *Cathemerinon*, and argue that the accounts of idealised pastoral spaces we find in *Cath. 3, 5, and 11* are intended to provide similar solace to Christians as they go about their everyday life.

It is worth discussing how the subject-matter I treat in this chapter relates to broader issues of geography and space: the depictions of heaven in the *Cathemerinon* cannot be mapped on to a specific physical 'place' that Prudentius may have had in mind. Yet I believe proper study of these 'imagined landscapes' is essential to an understanding of Prudentius' concept of space. After all, such pastoral spaces are a natural progression from the *locus amoenus* of classical literature, and from the fictitious spaces of texts like the *Eclogues*. Moreover, my approach here
is influenced by Mary Beard's discussion of 'imaginary horti'.\(^1\) Beard argues that 'written horti' are used by Roman emperors as a means of negotiating imperial identity. Beard's concept can well be applied to Prudentius, I suggest: what Prudentius is in effect doing is refocusing the traditional genre of pastoral and of the idealised countryside as seen from the city, to embrace Christian ideas of heaven as a similarly idealised space.

### 4.1 Endelechius and Christian pastoral

Despite the apparent popularity of pastoral poetry in late antiquity, relatively few Latin examples of the genre survive.\(^2\) Aside from quasi-pastoral passages in Prudentius, Ausonius, Paulinus, and other authors,\(^3\) there are only two examples of works that are entirely pastoral in mood: Endelechius' *de mortibus boum*, and Pomponius' *Versus ad Gratiam Domini* (or *Versus Tityri*), both of which appear to date from the fourth century CE,\(^4\) although neither of these is pastoral in the strictest sense: Endelechius writes in Asclepiads, while Pomponius’s poem consists of a cento derived from Vergil’s works.

It is clear that pastoral, and in particular Vergil’s *Eclogues*, served as a touchstone for literary figures of the period, corroborating Curtius' famous claim that "[i]t is not too much to say that anyone unfamiliar with [the first *Eclogue*] lacks one key to the literary tradition of Europe."\(^5\) At

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3. See Alpers (1996) on the distinction between pastoral genre and pastoral mode.
4. Endelechius is generally identified with the person mentioned by Paulinus of Nola in *Ep*. 28.6, probably the orator mentioned by Sallustius in the Apuleian subscriptions. For further biographical information on Endelechius, see Schmid (1953) especially 120-2, Corsaro (1975), and Korzeniewski (1976) 4-6. Pomponius is linked with Proba by Isidore (*Etym*. 1.39.26), and it is on the basis of this association that he has been dated to the fourth century by Schenkl (1888) 561.
5. Curtius (1953) 190.
this time we see a number of authors making use of the *Eclogues* (and to a lesser extent the *Georgics*) to convey Christian thought. Such an approach is dictated in part by the perceived similarity between Latin pastoral and the imagery of the Good Shepherd we find in the Hebrew and Christian pastoral traditions (see, for instance, Psalm 23 (*Dominus reget me et nihil mihi deerit*) and John 10, describing Christ as the Good Shepherd).

That such pastoral imagery was exceptionally popular is also clear from its preponderance in artistic representations in late antiquity. Not only were generic pastoral scenes common in various media of the time (such as the silver bowls from fourth-century Carthage now in the British Museum, AF.3275 and AF.3276), but a very popular representation of Christ as the Good Shepherd seems to have flourished in the third and fourth centuries, before declining in favour of a depiction of Christ as king or as teacher. A number of well-known mosaics can be given as examples: that of Christ as the Good Shepherd in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna is perhaps the most famous. But more telling is the preponderance of sculptures of Christ carrying a lamb on his shoulders, which, as Leclercq notes, is clearly a Christian imitation of Hellenistic pastoral sculptures.

To return to Vergil, however, it is very clear that the Fourth *Eclogue* was particularly important for early Christian writers. The close similarities between this poem and the image of the Good Shepherd in the Bible are remarkable, and Vergil's reference to the Sibyl led many

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6 For full catalogue details of these bowls see Dalton (1901) 356-7.

7 Cf. Leclercq (1938) for a survey of images, and on the decline in popularity of the image in favour of the representation of Christ as king see Ramsey (1983).

8 Leclercq (1938) 2276-2282. A number of sarcophagi in the Museo Pio Cristiano are adorned with relief carvings of the Good Shepherd: these include Pio Cristiano inv. 110, 201, and 224, on which see further Huskinson (1996) 68-71.
early Christian writers to attempt to establish a concrete link between Vergil and Jewish prophecies. To give just one example, the similarity between *Ecl. 4.6* (*iam reedit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna*) and passages such as Isaiah 7:14 (*uirgo concipiet et pariet filium*) and Matthew 1:23 (*ecce, uirgo in utero habebit et pariet filium*), attracted the attention of Christian writers, as did the general subject-matter of the coming of a saviour and the birth of a child heralding the dawn of a new Golden Age.

Servius reveals that the Fourth *Eclogue* was subjected to allegorical readings from very early on. It is not until Lactantius, however, that we find a Christian writer embracing the Vergilian idea of the Golden Age and the messianic aspects of the Fourth *Eclogue* as an indication of prophecy of the birth of Christ, at *Div. Inst.* 7.24. After quoting verses from the Fourth *Eclogue*, Lactantius states that "the poet said these things according to the songs of the Cumaean Sibyl" (*quae [uerba] poeta secundum Cymaeae Sibyllae carmina prolocutus est*), and claims that the poetic "memory" of the Golden Age as the age of Saturn stems from a misunderstanding of the nature of prophecy:

\[\text{denique tum fient illa quae poetae aureis temporibus facta esse iam Saturno regnante dixerunt. quorum error hinc ortus est, quod prophetae futurorum pleraque sic proferunt et enuntiant quasi iam peracta.}\]

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9 Indeed, some modern scholars have argued that Vergil could have had some knowledge of Jewish mysticism, given that Asinius Pollio (mentioned at *Ecl. 4.12*) appears to have had links with a number of Jewish thinkers. See further Feldman (1953).


11 Cf. Servius on *Ecl. 4.11*: *Asconius Pedianus a Gallo audisse se referit, hanc eclogam in honorem eius factam*, a conversation that would probably have taken place during the reign of Tiberius (given that Asinius Gallo died in 33 CE and Asconius Pedianus was born in 3 CE). See further Ziolkowski & Putnam (2008) 488.

Lactantius' claim that Latin poets presented a Saturnian Golden Age due to a misunderstanding of how prophecies work is perhaps more radical than has often been noted. After all, what Lactantius is in effect doing is demolishing the notion of an Italian Golden Age under Saturn, doing away with the idea that Italy is somehow a 'privileged space' as it is presented in the laudes Italiae of the second book of the Georgics. Such Saturnian landscapes form a major part of Roman cultural identity, as is clear from their use in Aeneid Eight, and by challenging these lieux de mémoire, to use Nora's phrase, Lactantius reconciles Christianity with Roman ideals of a pastoral prehistory, showing that these imagined spaces, so embedded in the Roman psyche, are in fact a dim memory of prophecies of the Christian Paradise that is yet to come.

After Lactantius, the next major discussion of the Fourth Eclogue is found in the Oratio Constantini ad sanctorum coetum, traditionally attributed to the emperor Constantine. In this text, the virgo of Ecl. 4 is associated with the Virgin Mary and the consequent ordo renascendi is seen as an anticipation of the Last Judgement. The author's exegesis finds hidden meanings in the text:

συνίεμεν δὴ φανερῶς τε ἄμα καὶ ἀποκρύφως δι' ἄλληγοριῶν τα<ῦτα> λεχθέντα, τόις μὲν βαθύτερον ἐξετάζουσι τὴν τῶν ἐπών δύναμιν ὑπὲρ δυσμὲνης τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεότητος, ὅπως δὲ μὴ τις τῶν δυσαναπόντων ἐν τῇ βασιλευούσῃ πόλει ἐγκαλείν ἔχῃ τῷ ποιητῇ, ὡς πάρα τοῦς πατρῴους νόμους συγγράφοντο ἐκβάλλοντι τε τὰ πάλαι ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων περί τῶν θεῶν νομίζομεν, ἐπικαλύπτεται τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ἦπιστατο γὰρ οἴμαι τὴν μακαρίαν καὶ ἐπώνυμον τοῦ σωτῆρος τελετήν (Oratio 19.9)

13 On this see Apostol (2009).
15 As Barnes (2001) 26 notes, the scholarly consensus seemed to be that Constantine was indeed the author of the speech, though in the same year, Geymonat (2001) challenged Constantinian authorship, and the most recent article on the work calls it "una falsificazione" (Pietras (2008) 738).
The author has just analysed a series of passages from the Fourth *Eclogue* (quoted in a Greek translation). Here, he claims that the poet is using allegory to prophesy the coming of Christ, hiding his argument in order to avoid censure from *οἱ δυναστεύοντες*, and so describing aspects of worship that would be familiar to Roman readers. The author of this text goes further than any other Christian author in his claims for Vergil's prophetic powers. Unlike Lactantius and Augustine, who see the poet as an unwitting vessel for the prophecies of the Sibyl, the author of the *Oratio* is explicit in his claim that Vergil himself was a believer: "For I think he knew the blessed mystery that bestowed the name of saviour."

Later in the fourth century, however, it is clear that Christian thinkers begin to feel less comfortable about the association of the pagan Roman poet par excellence with Christian thought. Thus we find Damasus in his third epigram apparently criticising a fellow Christian who uses Vergilian pastoral as a model for his Christian poetry. Damasus opens with the line *Tityre, tu fido recubans sub tegmine Christi*, an imitation of the first line of the *Eclogues*. Damasus thus demonstrates his own awareness of the Vergilian text, before going on to chide the addressee of the poem for misusing his knowledge.

Similarly, Augustine is unwilling to accept Vergil himself as a proto-Christian, though he does suggest that the poet's quotation of the Sibyl indicates that prophecies about the Messiah were circulating in non-Jewish circles:

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17 And, of course, of the sphragis to the fourth Georgic. The first line of Pomponius’ Cento is *Eclogue* 1.1. A possible later imitation is Venantius Fortunatus, *VSM* 1.101, which ends *sub tegmine diuo*.

18 McGill (2005) 183n.61
non enim te [i.e. Porphyrium] decepisset, quem uestra, ut tu ipse scribis, oracula sanctum inmortalemque confessa sunt; de quo etiam poeta nobilissimus poetice quidem, quia in alterius adumbrata persona, ueraciter tamen, si ad ipsum referas, dixit:

   te duce, si qua manent sceleris uestigia nostri,
   inrita perpetua soluunt formidine terras. [Ecl. 4.13-14]

....nam utique non hoc a se ipso se dixisse Vergilius in eclogae ipsius quarto ferme uersu indicat, ubi ait:

   ultima Cumaei uenit iam carminis aetas [Ecl. 4.4]

unde hoc a Cumaea Sibylla dictum esse incunctanter apparat.
(Aug., Civ. Dei 10.27)

fuerunt et prophetae non ipsius, in quibus etiam aliqua inueniuntur, quae de Christo audita cecinerunt, sicut etiam de Sibylla dicitur. quod non facile crederem, nisi quod poetae quidam in Romana lingua nobilissimus, antequam diceret ea de innovatione saeculi, quae in Domini nostri Iesu Christi regnum satis concinere et conuenire uideatur, praeposuit uersum dicens:

   ultima Cumaei uenit iam carminis aetas [Ecl. 4.4]
(Aug., Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio 3)

The passage from the City of God makes it clear that Augustine does not believe that Vergil wrote the Fourth Eclogue about Christ, but rather about another (in alterius persona). Yet, Augustine goes on to claim, Vergil presents the words as being those of the Sibyl, rather than his own, and so the alert Christian reader can find a prophecy of Christ's birth in the poem. Similarly, in the Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio, Augustine uses the Fourth Eclogue as evidence of prophecies circulating in non-Jewish contexts before the birth of Christ. As Benko notes, Augustine's attitude towards Vergil changes considerably over the course of his life, and in these late texts it is clear that while he has moved away from his youthful embrace of the poet, as described in the Confessions, he is still keen to defend the poet and to present him as something more than a run-of-the-mill pagan writer.19

Jerome, by contrast, as can be seen from his letter to Paulinus (*Ep.* 53), is critical of the movement to reclaim Vergil for the Christians, and particularly of attempts to re-use the text of Vergil to express Christian thoughts in the form of centos. The fact that he feels the need for such criticism, however, suggests that Messianic interpretations of the Fourth *Eclogue* were by this time fairly widespread:

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quasi non legerimus Homero-centonas et Vergiliocentonas ac non sic etiam
Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum, quia scripsit:
iam redit et virgo, re-deunt Saturnia regna.
iam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto. [*Ecl.* 4.6-7]
et patrem loquentem ad filium,
nate, meae uires, mea magna potentia, solus [*Aen.* 1.664]
et post verba Salvatoris in cruce.
talia per-stabat memorans, fixusque manebat. [*Aen.* 2.650]
puerilia sunt haec, et circu-
latorum ludo similia, docere quod ignores: immo, ut
cum stomacho loquar, ne hoc quidem scire quod nescias.
(Jerome, *Ep.* 53.7)
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Jerome's mocking dismissal of attempts to find hidden Christian messages in Vergil is characteristic of his general attitude towards pagan literature, and his implicit rebuke of Paulinus' own attempts to versify parts of the Bible (e.g. in *Carm.* 6, the *Laus Iohannis*) is further evidence of contemporary distaste for fusion of the classical and the Biblical.

It is clear, then, that the association of Vergil, and specifically the Fourth *Eclogue*, with Christian ideas of the Good Shepherd and Jewish prophecy was widespread between the third and fifth centuries, even if this the association was not always considered an appropriate one. As I noted at the start of this section, then, it is surprising that we do not have more extant attempts at Christian pastoral poetry. Aside from the reference in Damasus to a pastoral versifier and the cento of Pomponius, the only stand-alone attempt at writing Christian pastoral that survives is

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20 On this topic see Vessey (2007).
the poem of Endelechius. This is a marked contrast with the immense popularity of biblical epic in the same period.

I move now to discuss briefly Endelechius' poem as an example of an attempt to update Vergilian pastoral for a Christian audience. In this poem, two shepherds, Aegon and Bucolus, are lamenting their flocks, which have been afflicted by the plague. They are joined by their friend Tityrus, whose sheep are miraculously unaffected. When they ask him the reason for this, Tityrus responds by telling them about a new god who is being worshipped in the towns, Christ, who requires no sacrifices but only belief. It is because of his newfound faith in Christ, Tityrus claims, that his flocks have been unharmed. Aegon and Bucolus are immediately converted, and Bucolus vows to cast off his silly heathen ways:

AEG.: quidnam, quaeso, quid est, quod uario modo
fatum triste necis transilicit alteros
affligitque alios? en tibi Tityrus
saluo laetus agit grege!
BUC.: ipsum contueor. dic age, Tityre:
quis te subripuit cladibus his deus,
ut pestis pecudum, quae populata sit
uicinos, tibi nulla sit?
TIT.: signum, quod perhibent esse crucis dei,
magnis qui colitur solus in urbibus,
Christus....
BUC.: haec si certa probas, Tityre, nil moror,
quin ueris famuler religionibus.
errorem ueterem diffugiam libens,
nam fallax et inanis est.
(De mortibus boum 97-107, 121-4)

The poem is strongly allegorical, of course: as in the parable of the Good Shepherd, the sheep represent people, while their deaths correspond to the utter death of those who do not put their
faith in Christ.\textsuperscript{22} As Curtius notes, the presence of thirty-three stanzas (corresponding to Christ's thirty-three years) is no coincidence.\textsuperscript{23} Yet it would be wrong not to treat this poem as a reflection of serious concerns about the uptake of Christianity among rural communities. The poem treats the dichotomy between Christian and pagan as similar to that between urban and rural, to the point that Tityrus describes Christ as an urban god \textit{(magnis qui colitur solus in urbibus)}, presumably to be held up as a contrast to the myriad of rustic gods still being worshipped by shepherds.\textsuperscript{24} The word \textit{paganus}, after all, has its origins in \textit{pagus}, and originally simply meant "countryman" or "peasant".\textsuperscript{25} The idea that the rural poor are particularly prone to superstition and worship of old gods is found as far back as Lucretius \textit{(DRN 4.580-9)}, and in the fourth century can be paralleled in the concerns of Paulinus of Nola, who worries that his flock will continue to cling to their old pagan traditions.\textsuperscript{26} Similar concern can be seen in the Gaul of the 390s, and in particular in the work undertaken by Martin of Tours to stamp out paganism - with comic results on occasion, as at Sulpicius Severus, \textit{Vita Martini} 12, where Martin mistakes a funeral procession for a pagan procession. Elsewhere, Sulpicius Severus describes how Martin protects a community in Gallia Lugdunensis from the devastating effects a storm has on their crops:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Barton (2000) 160-82.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Curtius (1953) 505.
\item \textsuperscript{24} It is noteworthy that the description of a single saviour in the towns is strongly reminiscent of the portrait of Octavian in the First \textit{Eclogue}. The distinction between urban and rural is characteristic of pastoral: see further Skoie (2006) on the \textit{Eclogues}.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Whether the word was adopted by Christians to denigrate non-Christians as being "rustic", or stemmed from the imperial sense of \textit{paganus} as the opposite of \textit{miles}, and so came to mean those who did not soldier for Christ, is still unclear. O’Donnell (1977) summarises the various arguments, and see now Cameron (2011) 14-25.
\item \textsuperscript{26} On such concerns in Paulinus see Trout (1995).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
pagum quemdam in Senonico annis singulis grando uastabat. compulsi extremis malis incolae a Martino auxilium poposcerunt, missa per Auspicium praefectorium uirum satis fida legatione, cuius agros specialiter grauior quam caeterorum assueuerat procella populari. sed facta ibi oratione Martinus ita uniuersam penitus liberuit ab ingruenti peste regionem, ut per uiginti annos, quibus postea mansit in corpore, grandinem in illis locis nemo pertulerit. quod ne fortuitum esse et non potius Martino praestitum putaretur, eo anno quo ille defunctus est rursus incubuit rediuiua tempestas: adeo sensit et mundus uiri fidelis excessum, ut cuius uita iure gaudebat, etiam eiusdem mortem lugeret.

(Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogus* 3.7)

The landscape of Sulpicius' Gaul is like that described by Endelechius: one in which God (acting through holy men as his vessels on earth or otherwise) actively intervenes and performs miracles. As in the case of Endelechius, Christian faith results in agricultural success. In many ways, in both cases we have in effect a continuation of traditional religious practices: faith in a god who will intervene to protect a worshipper's flocks or crops. Linger ing pagan traditions, particularly in rural areas, tend to blend into Christian forms of worship.\(^{27}\)

We find a very different approach in Prudentius. There are no non-biblical miracles to be found in Prudentius' works outside of the *Peristephanon*: instead, Prudentius focuses on the "slow" miracle of the creation of the world, rather than on the "quick" miracles of intervention in a landscape.\(^{28}\) As I shall discuss in section 4.3, Prudentius attempts to articulate an appreciation of the miracle of Creation by describing the spiritual landscapes of heaven in the *Cathemerinon*. First, however, I shall examine how Prudentius addresses the issue of divine intervention and religious worship in relation to farming and agriculture in another work.

\(^{27}\) On this see further Trout (1995) and Humphries (2000) 36ff, also Horden & Purcell (2000) 401-12.

\(^{28}\) On the world as the ultimate miracle, see Aug. *Civ. Dei* 21.7, 21.9, and for the distinction between "slow" and "quick" miracles see Aug. *Ep.* 137.3.10 and Brown (2000) 420.
4.2 Farming and faith in the Contra Orationem Symmachi

In the second book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*, Prudentius goes into considerable detail about farming practices, and about the relationship of religion to farming. His approach is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it indicates a contrast with attitudes in the Bible towards miracles and the sparing of the chosen race, and second, because it marks a considerable shift from traditional Roman literary accounts of farming, which tend to emphasise religious piety and worship as an integral part of that activity.

It is necessary from the outset to be quite clear about a major aspect of Prudentius' account of farming in the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*: the view of agriculture is an entirely urban one. That is, the poem is presented as a Roman response to the Roman speech of Symmachus, and consequently depicts agriculture as something that happens in other places. Prudentius focuses on Egypt in particular, also mentioning Sicily, Sardinia, and Carthage, but he makes no mention whatsoever of Italian farming. Granted, Prudentius' focus is on the major grain-producing centres of late antiquity, particularly those that fed Rome and Constantinople. Yet it is telling that in this tirade against Roman religious conservatism and appeals to tradition, the poet avoids any mention of agricultural activity on the estates of Italian landowners. Instead, agriculture and the countryside are treated as abstractions: as spaces far removed from the Rome in which this literary debate is set. Prudentius' account of farming and agriculture is based largely on received wisdom and, where there is any detail, on descriptions from the *Georgics*. Very little first-hand awareness of farming is evident in the poem - though this seems to be more a result of of the poem's urban setting than any lack of knowledge on Prudentius' part.

Prudentius' discussion of agriculture is directed entirely towards the rejection of Symmachus' argument and towards a refutation of the basis of Roman religion. Like Endelechius, Prudentius
rejects the *do ut des* nature of Roman religion. At CS 2.910ff, Prudentius takes on Symmachus' claim (at *Rel.* 3.11, 15-7, quoted with the text of Prudentius in most manuscripts) that Gratian's removal of the public stipend from the priestly colleges in 382 resulted in the Vestal Virgins' being unable to tend properly to the shrine of Vesta, causing a crop failure:

> non sunt haec uitia terrarum. nihil inputemus austris. nec rubigo segetibus obfuit, nec auena fruges necauit. sacrilegio annus exaruit. necesse enim fuit perire omnibus quod religionibus negatur. (Symm., *Rel.* 3.15)

Symmachus is very explicit in his claim that the crop failure is due to religious negligence: he rejects out of hand the possibility that natural causes alone could be behind such a crisis. Prudentius counters this by claiming ignorance of any crop failure, highlighting as he does the fact that any knowledge of how the crops are faring must rest on hearsay, since all agricultural production is set so far from Rome:

> quae tanta extiterit praesenti tempore tamque inuidiosa famis, quam Triptolemi Cererisque mouerit ira penu pro uirginis ulciscendo, non memini nec tale aliquid uel fama susurrat. audio per Pharios Nilum discurrere campos more suo uiridisque sata stagnare Canopi. aut ueniat sicco qui flumine nuntius adfert ieiunam squalere siti sub puluere Memphim nec Pelusiacae limum sudare paludis. (CS 2.917-925)

At 2.921-923 we see a hint of the *Georgic* imagery that will characterise the remainder of Prudentius' passage: the description of Egypt in the context of a discussion of the need for religious rites to ward off agricultural disaster calls to mind the fourth *Georgic* and the description of the *bugonia*, which, Vergil claims, is practised in Egypt:

> nam qua Pellaei gens fortunata Canopi accolit effuso stagnantem flumine Nilum
The allusion to the *bugonia* implicitly reinforces Prudentius' attack on religious superstition: the fact that no such rituals are any longer being practised has not resulted in the *effusum flumen* of Vergil's text turning to a putative *siccum flumen*. After this dismissal of crisis in Egypt, Prudentius speaks more generally about the vicissitudes of a farmer's life:

\[
\text{sit fortasse aliquis paulo infecundior annus;}
\text{nil mirum, nec in orbe nouum. didicere priores}
\text{perpessi plerumque famem...}
\text{his, ni fallor, ager uitiis corruptus et ante}
\text{subiacuit, quam Palladium, quam Vesta penates}
\text{sub lare Pergameo seruarent igne reposto..}
\text{(CS 2.955-957, 965-967)}
\]
Prudentius claims that agricultural success and failure has long preceded the worship of Vesta, something that reinforces the poet's larger argument, that religious belief has nothing to do with agricultural success. Prudentius here implies that faith in Christ will not necessarily result in a more successful harvest. Indeed, later in the poem he spells this out explicitly:

\[
\text{sed si Vestales ulciscitur ista puellas}
\text{pestis, ab infido quae gignitur inproba mundo,}
\text{cur non Christicum tantum populatur agellos,}
\text{per quos virginibus uestris stata dona negantur?}
\text{(CS 2.1001-1004)}
\]
Prudentius asks why Christians are not specifically targeted, given that it is through Christian faith that the Vestal Virgins have been impoverished. The fact that the supposed *pestis* does not discriminate is, according to Prudentius, proof that religious rites have no effect on agriculture.  

In so saying, of course, he rejects the traditions of Roman farming, and in fact goes further, remarking on how Christian farmers take no notice of the rites traditionally accorded to Roman

\[29\] The allusion is noted, albeit tentatively, by Lühken (2002) 308.

\[30\] Prudentius is particularly taken by pagan rituals: see in particular his lurid description of the *taurobolium* at Pe. 10.1036-40, cf. McLynn (1996) and Lennon (2010).
Prudentius' approach to agriculture is purely practical. Religion plays no part in the day-to-day practice of farming. Unlike Endelechius or Sulpicius Severus, Prudentius does not allow that prayer can result in special protection of farmers. Rather, Prudentius claims, the benefit of a Christian lifestyle is that it provides comfort when farming, both because Christians are content to subsist on a meagre diet and because true faith can provide solace in times of hardship: as Prudentius goes on to remark, farming can function as a metaphor for spiritual life:

\[\text{nam quibus aeternum spes informatur in aeuum,}\
\text{omne bonum tenue est quod praesens ingerit aetas.}\
\text{(CS 2.1018-1019).}\]

The asceticism espoused here is strongly reminiscent of Horatian ideals of self-sufficiency (cf. the \textit{mensa tenuis} of \textit{Carm.} 2.16.14). Prudentius' praise of the simple life can be seen as a rebuke to the urban life of the Roman senatorial elite, who are over-reliant on grain shipments from across the empire, rather than living off their own land. Prudentius then returns to Vergil with a very clear allusion to two famous passages in \textit{Georgics} Book 2:

\[\text{o felix nimium, sapiens et rusticus idem,}\
\text{qui terras animumque colens inpendit utrisque}\
\text{curam perugiulem, quales quos imbuit auctor}\
\text{Christus, et adsumptis dedit haec praecepta colonis...}\
\text{(CS 2.1020-1023)}\]

Any sort of invocation of a \textit{vir felix}, particularly in the context of agriculture, is bound to bring to mind \textit{Georgic} 2.490-494:  

\[\text{________________________________________________________________________}\
\text{31 See e.g. Cato, \textit{de agri cultura} 141.1-3 and Thomas (1988) index sv. “religion”.}\
\text{32 On Horatian autarky see, among many others, Gowers (1993) 126-30, and for a discussion of its relationship to Horatian poetics, Mette (1961).}\
\text{33 The imitation is discussed by Palla (1983) 191.}\]
felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis auari:
fortunatus et ille deos qui nouit agrestis
Panaque Siluanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.

Here Vergil praises Lucretius for knowledge of the universe.\(^{34}\) As Thomas points out ad loc., "It is 'understanding' of nature that is the goal throughout the *Georgics*", and lines 493-494 seem to evoke the *Eclogues*.\(^{35}\) Yet the phrase *o felix nimium* also calls to mind the beginning of the praise of country life, at *Geo.* 2.458: *o fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, | agricolas!*\(^{36}\) With this double allusion, Prudentius presents his ideal farmer as one who is a self-sufficient Christian. He praises the man who is *sapiens et rusticus idem*, thus combining two terms that, at least in classical Latin literature, are usually set against one another,\(^{37}\) and perhaps alluding to his own self-presentation as a *poeta rusticus* (*Pe.* 2.574). Yet this is in keeping with the Vergilian context, for as Thomas notes, the ideal farmer who is presented to us in the *Georgics* is indeed *sapiens*. Like Vergil's farmer, the *uir felix* in the *Contra Orationem Symmachi* goes about his work with an exhaustive attention to detail, while the fortunate man who "knows" the *dei agrestes* is replaced by one who pays equal attention to the land and to his soul (*animum colens*, cf. *Christicolum* at *CS* 2.1003, and who is able to follow the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23), which Prudentius retells in the following lines, while continuing to allude to the *Georgics*:

*semina cum sulcis committitis*, arua cauete
dura lapillorum macie

\(^{34}\) *Pace* Thomas (1988) *ad loc.* For the identification of Lucretius as the *uir felix* see Gale (2000) 9ff.

\(^{35}\) Thomas (1988) *ad loc.*


(CS 2.1024-5)

debita quam sulcis committas semina quamque inuitae properes anni spem credere terrae.
(Geo. 1.223-4)

Vergil is talking about the correct time to sow. Prudentius takes the wording of this and reuses it to paraphrase Matthew 13:4-6, the Parable of the Sower. In so doing, Prudentius borrows a technique from biblical epic,\(^{38}\) in which a passage from the Bible is rendered into Latin verse by means of epic (and particularly Vergilian) wording. This method of writing is particularly favoured by Sedulius, who occasionally borrows entire lines from Vergil in his Carmen Paschale.\(^{39}\) By combining a verbal echo of a classical text with an imitation of a Biblical passage, Prudentius signals the importance of the reader's erudition. Here, this has a metapoetic function: the uit sapiens is not only one who knows about farming, but is specifically one who remembers both his Vergil and his New Testament and can appreciate Prudentius' combination of the two source-texts.

To conclude: in the Contra Orationem Symmachii, Prudentius attempts to reject the arguments of Symmachus for preserving aspects of Roman religion. He dismisses the possibility that religious rites can have any effect on agricultural output, but instead presents an image of the ideal farmer as one who is content with little and whose Christian faith provides him with solace in times of need.

\(^{38}\) See generally Green (2006).

4.3 Visions of heaven

I turn now to the *Liber Cathemerinon*, and to the descriptions of heavenly pastoral spaces to be found in the third, fifth, and eleventh hymns in the cycle. Though these spaces do not correspond to any "real" spaces, they are inspired by Prudentius' appreciation of the miracle of Creation and the beauty of earthly nature. Moreover, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Prudentius' descriptions of paradisiacal spaces should be seen as a development of the imagined garden spaces that are so common in Augustan and early imperial Latin literature. I show in this section how Prudentius uses Paradise as a means of representing spatially the triumph of Christianity over hunger, over darkness, and over winter. In each case, the description of the ideal landscape of Paradise serves to provide solace to the Christian reader in times of difficulty.

The third poem in the *Liber Cathemerinon*, the *Hymnus ante cibum*, contains a detailed discussion of God's bounty. Jacques Fontaine has shown how the poem is indebted to the depiction of Eden in Genesis. I argue here that the poem's structure is closely modelled on the account of Creation.

The poem begins with praise of Christ (3.1-15), in which Prudentius requests permission to treat the enjoyment of a meal as worship of the Lord (*nominis ut sub honore tui | has epulas liceat capere*, 3.9-10). Indeed, Prudentius emphasises that it is through faith in Christ that food can have any flavour or taste at all (11-15) and expresses the wish that his dishes smell of Christ. From this invocation of smell, Prudentius moves on to a description of the ambrosia-like scent that fills him whenever he eats in the name of the Lord:

```
hic mihi nulla rosae spolia,  
nullus aromate fragrat odor,  
```

sed liquor influit ambrosius  
nectareamque fidem redolet  
fusus ab usque Patris gremio.  
(Cath. 3.21-25).

The stanza suggests that, in fact, Prudentius experiences a heaven-like sensation simply by eating food, which is the product of God's bounty. By opening the stanza with the word *hic*, the poet gives a concrete sense of space and location. Rejecting the conventional earthly smells of flowers, Prudentius instead presents himself as being transported to a heavenly location. The very act of eating, and the awareness of God's munificence, causes him to feel close to the Lord. This leads into an explicit statement about God's role in the creation of all things, and Prudentius proceeds to describe the possibilities for consuming the bounty of the sea, of the air, and of the earth: in the case of the sea and the air, Prudentius tells us, one can capture animals through trickery (*dolus*, Cath. 3.42), while the land provides nourishment of its own accord - a scene clearly indebted to Golden Age imagery:

fundit opes ager ingenuas,  
diues aristiferae segetis,  
hic *ubi uitea* pampineo  
bracchia palmite luxuriant,  
pacis alumna *ubi baca uiret*.  
(Cath. 3.51-5).

Here Lühken compares Horace, *Carm.* 2.6.13-20:41

ille terrarum mihi praeter omnis  
angulus ridet, *ubi* non Hymetto  
mella decedunt *uiridique* certat  
    *baca* Venafro,  
ue *ubi* longum tepidasque praebet  
Iuppiter brumas et amicus Aulon  
fertili Baccho minimum Falernis  
inuidet *uuis*.

Tellingly, Prudentius imitates a passage of Horace in which Tarentum is described in highly idealised terms.\textsuperscript{42} The world that God has created provides an abundance of riches for the faithful. That such bounty is being provided with no need for toil on the part of the faithful is clear from the diction Prudentius employs: \textit{fundit opes ager}, implying that the land brings forth nourishment of its own accord. That we should think of Genesis here is made clear in the lines that follow:

\begin{verbatim}
haec opulentia Christicolis
seruit et omnia subpeditat.
absit enim procul illa fames,
caedibus ut pecudum libeat
sanguineas lacerare dapes.

sint fera gentibus indomitis
prandia de nece quadrupedum;
nos holeris coma, nos siliqua
feta legumine multimodo
pauerit innocuis epulis.
\end{verbatim}

\textit{(Cath. 3.56-65)}

The rejection of meat-eating appears to have its roots in Genesis 1:29-30:

\begin{verbatim}
dixitque Deus "ecce dedi uobis omnem herbam adferentem semen super terram et
universa ligna quae habent in semet ipsis sementem generis sui ut sint uobis in
escam et cunctis animantibus terrae omnique uolucri caeli et uniuersis quae
mouentur in terra et in quibus est anima uiuens ut habeant ad uescendum." et
factum est ita.
\end{verbatim}

That the Golden Age would result in such peaceful coexistence between animals, and in vegetarianism on the part of men, is also noted by Lactantius in his discussion of the subject \textit{(Div. Inst. 7.24)}, and can be paralleled in classical texts, most notably in Ovid, \textit{Met. 15.75-95}.\textsuperscript{43} The Golden Age aspects of the scene, and its relationship to the Garden of Eden, are clear. And

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{42} Cf. Nisbet & Hubbard (1978) 95.
\textsuperscript{43} For discussion see Wheeler (2000) 118-21.
\end{flushright}
yet it must be kept in mind that this Golden Age imagery takes place in an imagined landscape: Prudentius never explicitly states that he is describing Paradise, but rather is attempting to articulate in spatial terms the blissful state of mind that comes from consuming food in the full knowledge that this is the product of God's bounty.\textsuperscript{44}

I have already remarked on how Prudentius' narrative follows the structure of the first chapter of Genesis: first we have the distinction between heaven and earth, and subsequently sea (Gen. 1.1-10, \textit{Cath} 3.38-55). God first creates Sky (Gen. 1.7-8), just as Prudentius first describes the food that is to be had from the air (\textit{Cath} 3.41-45), then creates the Earth from out of the Seas. Prudentius then describes the vegetation to be found on the earth at \textit{Cath} 3.51-55, which is the next creation to be described at Gen. 1.11-13, before moving on to a description of the animals to be found on the land (\textit{Cath}. 3.56-75, cf. Gen. 1.20-24), whose bounty (in the form of milk and honey) is provided for man's enjoyment. Prudentius then moves on to describe God's creation of man at lines 91-100, and the Fall of Man (101ff).

Later in the poem, Prudentius concludes by praying to God that his meagre diet will suffice:

\begin{verbatim}
da, locuples Deus, hoc famul\is
rite precantibus, ut tenui
membra cibo recreata leuent,
neu piger inmodicis dapibus
uiscrea tenta grauet stomachus.
\textit{(Pe.} 3.171-5)\end{verbatim}

This stanza holds the key to understanding what has gone before, and indeed it points to Prudentius' careful negotiation of the tension between asceticism and Paradise, and Golden Age and idleness. As I have already noted in my discussion of the \textit{Contra Orationem Symmachi},

\textsuperscript{44} Compare the description of Eden in Avitus of Vienne's \textit{De Spiritualis Historiae Gestis} 1-2, especially 2.1-34. Avitus knew and imitated the \textit{Cathemerinon}: cf. Beikircher (1986).
Prudentius presents the ideal Christian as one who eats sparingly and can survive on *tenuis uictus*. How is this to be reconciled with the description of abundance that has gone before? I suggest we should see this in the context of many other Prudentian passages, in which real-life wealth (of one type or another) is rejected in favour of the spiritual rewards of heaven.\(^{45}\) In other words, this lavish description of Paradise is something that is in the mind of every Christian as they eat their humble fare (*tenui cibo, Cath. 3.172-173*), in the knowledge that an eternal reward awaits them. Here Prudentius clearly has in mind Jesus' words at John 6:26-59:

> respondit ei Iesus et dixit "amen amen dico uobis quaeritis me non quia uidistis signa sed quia manducastis ex panibus et saturati estis. operamini non cibum qui perit sed qui permanet in uitaeternam quem Filius hominis uobis dabit."
> (John 6:26-7)

After performing the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, Jesus cautions his followers to seek the spiritual nourishment that will come from true faith, rather than following Jesus because he provides material comfort.\(^{46}\) Prudentius' rejection of lavish meals should be seen as a response to Jesus' self-proclamation as the Bread of Life (*ego sum panis uitaet*, John 6:35).

I move on to *Cath. 5*, the *Hymnus ad Incensum Lucernae*. This poem is filled with pastoral imagery and is also more generally concerned with the representation of ideal and rural spaces. The poem, as Jacqueline Clarke has shown, consists of a sustained response to the "miracle" of the recently invented glass lamps, though Prudentius does not limit himself to discussion of this alone, but also reflects more generally on the miracle of light as one of God's creations.\(^{47}\) The poet describes the column of light God provided to the Hebrews during the

\(^{45}\) I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five.

\(^{46}\) Augustine discusses this passage in detail in *Tract. in euangelium Iohannis* 25.10.

Flight from Egypt (Cath. 5.36-44, cf. Pe. 3.48-60). This leads to a description of the Parting of the Red Sea and the death of the Egyptians, which gives the poet an opportunity to demonstrate God's power over the world in general: the ability to cause the sea to ebb and flow, and to cause water to appear in the desert, and the bitter to taste sweet (Cath. 5.45-104, cf. Exodus 15.23-5).

The miracle of the manna in the desert is also recounted, which Prudentius likens to the spiritual nourishment provided to the Christian faithful of his own time:

```latex
haec olim patribus praemia contulit
insignis pietas numinis unici,
cuius subsidio nos quoque uescimur
pascentes dapibus pectora mysticis.
(Cath., 5.105-8)
```

Here Prudentius returns to John 6, in which Jesus differentiates between manna and the bread of life. As Augustine notes in his discussion of that passage, Jesus' promise of eternal nourishment is to be contrasted with the temporary relief from hunger provided by Moses (Tract. in euangelium Iohannis 25.12-14, cf. John 6:31-40). As in Cath. 3, then, Prudentius shows how faith in Christ and the taking of communion (dapibus...mysticis) will guarantee permanent contentment in Paradise, which the poet now describes in considerable detail:

```latex
illic purpureis tecta rosariis
omnis fragrat humus caltaque pinguia
et molles uiolas et tenues crocos
fundit fonticulis uda fugacibus.

illic et gracili balsama surculo
desudata fluunt, raraque cinnama
spirant, et folium, fonte quod abdito
praelambens fluuius portat in exitum.

felices animae prata per herbida
concentu pariles suaue sonantibus
hymnorum modulis dulce canunt melos,
calcant et pedibus lilia candidis.
(Cath. 5.113-124)
```
The passage is, in effect, describing a *locus amoenus*, with its focus on the sense of calm that is to be felt in such spaces. Here, this sense of calm is emphasised by the fact that it is placed between two scenes of disorder - the "storms" of earthly life in the lines immediately preceding, and the brief depiction of Hell in the lines immediately afterwards. Such descriptions also frequently include reference to a passing stream - which is included by Prudentius (*praelambens fluuius*). But rather than a mere adornment, this stream serves a function, as it carries nard (the *folium* of line 119) and thus helps contribute to the lavish ornamentness of the *locus amoenus*. The reference to nard, which is used by Mary to anoint Christ's feet at John 12:3, may also indicate that Prudentius was here influenced by the Song of Solomon, in which the addressee is compared to a garden containing nard and cinnamon:

> hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus. emissiones tuae paradisu malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructibus cypri cum nardo. nardus et crocus fistula et cinnamomum cum uniuersis lignis Libani murra et aloe cum omnibus primis unguentis. (Song of Solomon 4:11-15)

In addition to pleasing scents, Prudentius lists a number of flowers to be found: roses, marigolds, violets, and crocuses. The vibrant colours of these flowers are made all the more vivid by their contrast with the grim darkness of the sea-storm of life in the preceding lines.

It is important to note the activities that Prudentius envisages taking place in this idealised space: the *felices animae* spend their time singing and dancing, in a description that is strongly reminiscent of the Elysian Fields in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*:

> pars pedibus plaudit choreas et carmina dicunt... conspicit, ecce, alios dextra laeuaque per herbam

48 On the *locus amoenus* in late Latin see Curtius (1953) 195-200.

49 Cf. also Mark 14:3-7, where a woman anoints Jesus with nard in anticipation of his burial (14:8: *haec fecit praevenit unguere corpus meum in seputuram*).
uescentis laetumque choro paeana canentis
inter odoratum lauris nemus, unde superne
plurimus Eridani per siluam uoluitur amnis.
(Verg., Aen. 6.644, 656-659)\textsuperscript{50}

The passage also recalls, however, the description of young men and women dancing and
celebrating the martyrdom of Eulalia at the end of Peristephanon 3:

carpit purpureas uiolas
sanguineosque crocos metite.
non caret his genialis hiems,
laxat et arua tepens glacies,
floribus ut cumulet calathos.

ista comantibus e foliis
munera, uirgo puerque, date.
ast ego serta choro in medio
texta feram pede dactylico,
uiilia, marcida, festa tamen.
(Pe. 3.201-210)

Prudentius describes himself as being choro in medio, and exhorts the youth of Emerita to pluck
brightly-coloured flowers. The splendid meadow is thus presented as an idealised space that has
strong ties to worship, in Pe. 3, and to heaven, in Cath. 5. The emphasis on music and song in
such idyllic spaces is particularly noteworthy, and it is perhaps no coincidence that it is in Pe. 3
and Cath. 3 that we find two of Prudentius' most explicit descriptions of his concept of poetry.

The final text in the Cathemerinon I should like to discuss is the eleventh poem, the Hymnus
VIII Kal. Ianuarias. The description of the world on Christmas morning is filled with imitation
of Vergil and Horace, and combines this with a spiritual emphasis on the miracle of Creation.\textsuperscript{51}

As Heinz notes, Prudentius follows the practice begun in Cath. 1 and 2, in which a natural

\textsuperscript{50} Lühken (2002) 162 comments on the similarity between pedibus plaudunt (Aen. 6.44) and calcant et pedibus (Cath. 5.124).

\textsuperscript{51} For a fuller discussion of Prudentius' imitation of the Fourth Eclogue and Horace's sixteenth Epode in this poem, see Heinz (2007) 15-22
occurrence becomes an allegory for Christ. In the first four lines, Christ is praised as the bringer of light, who dispels the winter darkness:52

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{quid est quod artum circulum} \\
\text{sol iam recurrens deserit?} \\
\text{Christusne terris nascitur,} \\
\text{qui lucis auget tramitem?}
\end{align*}
\]

(Cath. 11.1-4)

If these lines recall the Fourth Eclogue, the following stanza calls to mind Horace, Carm. 2.14:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{heu quam fugacem gratiam} \\
\text{festina uoluebat dies,} \\
\text{quam paene subductam facem} \\
\text{sensim recisa extinxerat.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Cath. 11.5-8)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,} \\
\text{labuntur anni nec pietas moram} \\
\text{rugis et instanti senectae} \\
\text{adferet indomitaque morti.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Hor., Carm. 2.14.1-4)

The allusion to Horace's lament about the passage of time demonstrates how the faithful Christian reader can overcome pagan fears of death. While for Horace, the end of winter is merely a bitter reminder about the inevitability of death (as in Carm. 4.7), Christmas Day causes the Christian reader to realise that the changing of the seasons and the return of spring after the darkness of winter are proof that Christ's birth on Christmas Day has conquered death altogether.

Later in the poem, Prudentius returns to the Fourth Eclogue, describing the young boy as a dulcis pusio (Cath. 11.13) born of a virgin (mater...castitas, 11.14). The description of Mary as a uirgo nobilis reminds the reader of the Virgo of Vergil's poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sentisne, uirgo nobilis,} \\
\text{matura per fastidia} \\
\text{pudoris intactum decus}
\end{align*}
\]

honore partus crescere?

o quanta rerum gaudia
aluus pudica continet,
ex qua nouellum saeculum
procedit et lux aurea!
(Cath. 11.53-60)

Note the explicit association of a *nouellum saeculum* and a *lux aurea*. Prudentius does not go quite so far as to call this period an *aetas aurea*, but the golden light which emanates from Christ is a clear allusion to the atmosphere of the Golden Age we find in the Fourth *Eclogue*.53 Moreover, Christ the illuminator has already appeared in a number of other poems, as I have discussed above, and indeed Christ's appearance here serves the same purpose as the Pillar of Light in Exodus, as it dispells the gloam of the world:

\[
\text{uagitus ille exordium} \\
\text{uernantis orbis prodidit,} \\
\text{nam tunc renatus sordidum} \\
\text{mundus ueternum depulit.} \\
(C\text{ath. 11.61-4})
\]

Here, Prudentius exploits the spring imagery to point to both the annual coming of spring shortly after Christmas Day, and the Paradise that is anticipated by the birth of Christ. That Christ's appearance had an immediate impact on the environment is asserted in the following lines, in which Prudentius claims that the countryside spontaneously generated flowers to herald his arrival, and that the desert provided new scents. Indeed, so miraculous was Christ's arrival, and so great its impact on fertility, that it caused rocks to become overgrown with moss almost immediately:

\[
\text{uictusque saxorum rigor} \\
\text{obduxit herbam cotibus.} \\
(C\text{ath. 11.71-2}).
\]

53 Noteworthy, too, is Prudentius' use of the word *fastidia* in line 53 (cf. Ecl. 4.61).
This description of grass overgrowing rock inverts two traditional conceits. First, the frequent complaint of greenery giving way to built-up urban spaces (e.g. in Juvenal 3.11-20, as I discuss in Chapter Five), and second, the negative portrayal of derelict buildings being subjected to the passage of time. Here, the growth of grass on stone is presented as miraculous, vibrant, and fertile, rather than as an indication of neglect.

The poem concludes, once again, with an image of Christ as illuminator:

meritis rependet congrua,
his lucis usum perpetis,
illis gehennam et Tartarum
(Cath. 11.110-2).

In this poem, taking as his cue the fact that Christ's birth occurs shortly after the winter solstice, as the days begin to lengthen in anticipation of spring, Prudentius emphasises the miracle of this birth, claiming that it brings freedom from darkness and from the infertility of winter, and instead provides the light of eternal life, and fertility from an unexpected, virgin source. Indeed, the birth from an unexpected source echoes the "unexpectedness" of spring emerging from winter every year. Note too, how Prudentius does not present us with a realistic description of spring, but instead gives us an idealised landscape, built of Biblical and classical allusions. In other words, Prudentius shifts from the realistic to the allegorical very early on in the poem, and stays in that mode throughout. We see a similar method of working in Cath. 3 and 5, and elsewhere in the collection: Prudentius takes an ordinary, mundane event, and moves from it to an exposition of the imagined landscape of heaven. The poet's landscapes should be seen as reflecting a state of mind and a sense of religious fervour and fidelity. For the faithful Christian, the promise of heaven and the spatial representation of Paradise is ever-present.
As I hope to have shown, Prudentius mobilises images of rural and pastoral spaces as a way of describing the miracle of Christianity. In the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, he rejects the role of religion in farming, but instead moves from a discussion of the difficulties of agricultural practice to a reflection on the Parable of the Sower. In the *Cathemerinon*, Prudentius uses imagined descriptions of heaven to emphasise the beauty of Creation. By presenting the reader with the promise of an afterlife consisting of an idealised landscape, filled with Golden Age bounty, he shows how a faithful Christian can take comfort in a meagre meal, in the darkness of the night, or in the inhospitable cold of winter. While Prudentius' descriptions cannot be identified with a real space, unlike his vivid accounts of Spanish and Italian cities, it is precisely the imagined nature of these spaces that gives them their force. The very concept of Paradise is a shared imagined space that forms part of Christian cultural identity. Just as the bucolic landscapes of *Aeneid* Eight are central to Roman identity, these spaces are, for Prudentius, fundamental to the idea of what it is to be a Christian.
Chapter Five: Art and architecture in the *Peristephanon*

In previous chapters, I have looked at various geographical tropes in Prudentius: the journey of reading; travel and intertextuality; cities and Christianity; and pastoral landscapes. In this final chapter I want to turn to Prudentius’ treatment of constructed spaces, that is, architectural structures, particularly temples and churches. Moreover, I shall examine Prudentius’ attitude towards art in general, and argue that the poet puts forward a claim for the superiority of poetry and the word over the visual arts. In section 5.1, I shall look at Prudentius’ reservations about Christian images and their interpretation by the faithful, while in section 5.2 I examine some of the passages in which Prudentius attacks idolatry and argue that, at least in certain cases, his argument is based on the shortcomings of visual art. Section 5.3 looks at Prudentius’ description of churches in *Peristephanon* 3, 11, and 12, and I shall argue that Prudentius exhibits a deep uncertainty about the appropriateness of elaborate houses of worship.

5.1 The problem of interpreting Christian art

At the end of the sixth century, Gregory the Great commented on the usefulness of art in a church setting as a means of conveying information to the illiterate:

idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus uidendo legant, quae legere in codicibus non ualent.  
(*Ep. 9.209*)

frangi ergo non debuit quod non ad adorandum in ecclesiis sed ad instruendas solummodo mentes fuit nescientium collocatum. (*Ep. 11.10*)

Gregory is writing to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, who has busied himself with removing such images on the grounds that they are idolatrous. Gregory argues that they are *not* idolatrous but rather serve an important function in reaching out to members of the church.
The question of what exactly Gregory meant by “reading” is much debated, and recent studies have attempted to challenge what they see as an overly simplistic interpretation of Gregory’s words.¹ But it is certainly clear that Gregory has a much more tolerant attitude towards images as a means of education than did Augustine, Paulinus, or, as I shall argue in this section, Prudentius. At the very least, as Cynthia Hahn notes, it is clear that shrines in the Latin West were expected to instruct, amongst other things, and for her Gregory seems to be chastising a certain way of looking at images which does not fit with proper Christian behaviour.²

Cynthia Chazelle notes that no “unambiguous statements” asserting that visual media are as suitable for educational purposes as words exist before Gregory the Great, at least in Latin, though she does give some Greek examples.³ One noteworthy Latin predecessor that is relevant to the study of Prudentius is Augustine’s *In Iohannis Evangelium* (*Tract. 24*), in which the philosopher discusses miracles. He differentiates between those who understand miracles for their deeper meaning and those who simply admire the visual spectacle of the miracles. This, Chazelle argues, sets up an implicit contrast between people who read texts and those who rely on images alone for their information.⁴

There is evident in the writings of both Augustine and Gregory not an attack on images and paintings themselves, but rather a concern with how these images are being used – whether as mere objects of devotion or entertainment, or else as a means to supplement already-existing scriptural or written knowledge. Thus Hahn sees a series of poems describing the church of St.

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³ Chazelle (1990) 144.
⁴ Chazelle (1990) 146-7.
Martin at Tours as setting up a sort of “itinerary” that prepares readers for their entrance into the church.  

Augustine, Paulinus, and Prudentius all share a concern that images by themselves will mislead the viewer, and that some sort of verbal explanation is necessary in order to supplement the image. So Augustine comments:

```
cum enim uellent tale aliquid fingere Christum scripsisse ad discipulos suos, cogitauerunt ad quos potissimum scribere potuisse facile crederetur, tamquam ad illos qui ei familiaris adhaesissent, quibus illud quasi secretum digne committeretur: et occurrit eis Petrus et Paulus, credo quod pluribus locis simul eos cum illo pictos uiderent; quia merita Petri et Pauli etiam propter eundem passionis diem celebrius solemniter Roma commendat. sic omnino errare meruerunt, qui Christum et Apostolos eius non in sanctis codicibus, sed in pictis parietibus quaesierunt: nec mirum si a pingentibus fingentes decepti sunt.  
```

(Aug., De consensu evangelistarum 1.X.16 [PL 34:1049])

Augustine gives a concrete example of how those who rely solely on images can be misled – many of those unwilling or unable to read Scripture believe, on the strength of images they have seen, that Paul was a companion of Christ’s, whereas he did not become a follower until some time after Christ’s death. Augustine’s uneasiness about the benefits of the visual arts is clear.

Elsewhere, he mentions that some devotees of martyr-cults worship images, while the contemporary Greek writer Epiphanius of Salamis comments darkly: στήσαντες...τὰς εἰκόνας τὰ τὸν ἔθνων ἕθη λουπὸν ποιοῦσι. That the cult of the saints was susceptible to influence from

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5 Hahn (1997) 1095. The poems are collected in Pietri (1983) 802-812, and see the translation and commentary in Van Dam (1993) 308-317. Hahn refers to the poems as "a series of epigrams by Paulinus of Périgueux", though in fact only one of the poems is by Paulinus, and the majority are anonymous. See further Van Dam (1985) 239-249.

6 Christ is depicted sitting between Peter and Paul on the door of the Church of Santa Sabina (built by Celestine I, (422-432)): for discussion see Spieser (1991) 63-9.

7 See further Chazelle (1990), O’Connell (1978), and Arthur (1945).

8 Epiphanius, Panarion haer. 27.6.10. Cf. Augustine, De moribus ecclesiae catholicae 1.34, both cited by Kitzinger (1954) 92-3.
pagan rites was a source of concern to both Ambrose and Augustine, amongst others. Indeed, Paulinus, who is happy to add images to his church at Nola, takes steps to ensure that they are correctly interpreted by supplementing them with inscriptions:

forte requiratur quanam ratione gerendi
sederit haec nobis sententia, pingere sanctas
raro more domos animantibus adsimulatis.
accipite et paucis temptabo exponere causas.
quos agat hue sancti Felicis gloria coetus,
obscurn nulli; sed turba frequentior hic est
rusticitas non cassa fide neque docta legendi.

... propterea uis nobis opus utile totis
Felicis domibus pictura ludere sancta,
si forte adtonitas haec per spectacula mentes
agrestum caperet fucata coloribus umbra,
quae super exprimitur titulis, ut littera monstr
quod manus explicuit, dumque omnes picta uicissim
ostendunt releguntque sibi...
(Paul. Nol., Carm. 27.542-548, 580-586)

Paulinus installs the pictures in an attempt to win over the rustic worshippers, who tend to celebrate the feast of St Felix by getting drunk (27.555-595) – but lest these worshippers, who are recent converts to Christianity (haec adsueta diu sacris seruire profanis uentre deo, 27.549-550), misinterpret the pictures, he provides inscriptions to direct their minds. Even if some of the viewers were illiterate (as neque docta legendi would suggest), they would nonetheless notice the inscriptions and, presumably, request them to be read aloud. In this way, Paulinus attempts

10 Paulinus gives some examples of his inscriptions in Ep. 32. For further discussion of Paulinus’ churches, see Goldschmidt (1940).
11 I take neque docta legendi at 27.548 to mean illiteracy. At first glance, dumque omnes picta uicissim | ostendunt releguntque sibi (28.585-586) might suggest that the worshippers are “reading” the inscriptions, but the object of relegunt is clearly picta, the paintings, and the idea of “reading” a picture can be paralleled by Aen. 6.33-34, quin protinus omnia perlegerent oculis. On the ‘impulse towards literacy’ in early Christianity (that is, an awareness of the importance of the written word even amongst the illiterate), see Cameron (1991) 109-10. See also Kaesser (2010) 159-60, though I am unconvinced by his interpretation of quod manus explicuit.
to impose order on the potentially ambiguous images, while the presence of the written inscriptions emphasises the importance of the Word for Christians. The pictures, Paulinus claims, will draw the attention of the rustic mob, but the written inscriptions are essential to ensure that they do not go astray.\textsuperscript{12} The attitude of Paulinus (shared by Prudentius) is close to that described by Roland Barthes, in his comments on the role of copy in advertising:

“\textit{[A]ll images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others. Polysemy poses a question of meaning and this question always comes through as a dysfunction...Hence in every society various techniques are developed intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques. At the level of the literal message, the text replies - in a more or less direct, more or less partial manner - to the question: what is it?...the caption...helps me to choose the correct level of perception, permits me to focus not simply my gaze but also my understanding.}”\textsuperscript{13}

The role of the text in advertising, according to Barthes, is to direct the viewer’s interpretation of the image, and to restrict meaning to what is officially sanctioned.\textsuperscript{14} It is no surprise that early Christians, who placed such importance on correct interpretation of Scripture, and on recording the truth about the fates of various martyrs, would be eager to ensure that images were being interpreted correctly. As in advertising, these religious images draw the viewer’s attention, while the text limits the interpretative possibilities.

Prudentius’ \textit{Dittochaeon}, or \textit{Tituli Historiarum}, is a collection of forty-nine hexameter quatrains (\textit{tituli}), all describing Biblical scenes and intended to accompany paintings, most likely in a church. The question of whether the poems were written to accompany paintings or as

\textsuperscript{12} The distinction between "seeing" letters and "marvelling" at them, and "reading" and "understanding" them, is also to be found in Augustine, \textit{Tractatus in euangelium Ioannis} 24.2.

\textsuperscript{13} Barthes (1977) 38-9.

\textsuperscript{14} See further Squire (2009) 1-12.
“guidelines” for hypothetical paintings (as argued by Mannelli (1947)) really ought to have been settled in favour of the former argument by the studies of Charlet (1975) and Pillinger (1980) 18. The main argument against the text and image hypothesis appears to have been the scarcity of references to such collocations from the period in question (though by the time of Venantius Fortunatus, it appears to be accepted that such tituli were perfectly common).15 Nonetheless, it is clear from Paulinus of Nola that such inscriptions did exist, even if they were scarce (as Paulinus himself says, they are unusual).16 Besides these examples, we have the Ambrosian distichs intended for his basilica,17 and the Miracula Christi, a set of distichs attributed to Claudian.18 Moreover, I have seen no really convincing refutation of Kirsch’s argument that the allegorical sections of the Dittochaeon make most sense if we imagine the text accompanying pictures.19 In addition to this, the fact that the titles for the individual quatrains are almost certainly not the work of Prudentius, as they appear in no manuscripts,20 further suggests that the texts were meant to accompany images. The titles provide valuable contextualising information, without

15 See now Roberts (2009b) 189-99. He is unconvinced that the Dittochaeon were intended as tituli.
16 raro more, 27.545.
17 See Bernt (1968) 64-8.
18 Hall prints these distichs with the carmina spuria vel suspecta in his edition. Calcagnini (1993) makes a strong argument for the poem’s status as a later compilation of eight distichs, intended to adorn the walls of a baptistry – on the question of authorship, she concludes that there is insufficient evidence to attribute them to Claudian. Kaesser (2010) argues that the Dittochaeon would have struck an ancient reader as highly "peculiar", though I think the existence of similar verses by Ambrose and pseudo-Claudian (not mentioned by Kaesser) means they are less unusual than he appears to think.
19 Kirsch (1902).
which the *tituli* would be ambiguous. As Bernt points out, this contextualising information would originally have been provided by the images themselves.\(^{21}\)

If it is the case that Prudentius wrote *tituli*, then it would fit with what was clearly a common concern at the time about the correct interpretation of images, and indeed Prudentius exhibits uneasiness about what he perceives to be the unclear images depicted at the tombs of Cassian and Hippolytus.

I have already discussed *Pe. 9*, the hymn to Cassian, in Chapter Two. The poem describes Prudentius’ visit to Forum Cornelii and his discovery of a shrine to Cassian there. Prudentius describes the image of Cassian’s suffering he sees on the shrine (9-16), and, seeking further information, he asks the *aedituus* to tell him about the image. The *aedituus’* account makes up the bulk of the poem. The poem, then, is inspired by an image, but consists of a narrative account based on that image, rather than a description of the image itself. This trope (marvelling at a picture and asking an interpreter to explain it) appears elsewhere in Graeco-Roman literature, most famously in the prologue to *Daphnis and Chloe* (though the situation there is quite different, as the narrator tells us he was simply inspired to compose a story as a response to the painting). Other examples appear in Lucian’s *Calumny of Apelles* and in the *Tabula Cebetis*.\(^{22}\) The request for an interpreter is significant. Prudentius has discovered Cassian’s shrine by chance, and makes a considerable effort to ensure that he can understand the picture correctly. Moreover, the image itself is insufficient proof of the truth of the tale, as the comments of the sacristan make clear:

\(^{21}\) Bernt (1968) 30.

The sacristan first emphasises the fact that the picture represents a true story, not an invention or a legend, and then goes on to note that the authority for the story is preserved in books – that is, in writing.\(^\text{23}\) In other words, a work of art by itself is insufficient evidence for a martyr-narrative – it must be supported by written sources.\(^\text{24}\) Here we can see an indication of Prudentius’ preference for the word over the image, and something of the shortcomings of the image as a result. Lucy Grig comments “From the beginning it is clear that what we do not have is a ‘straight’ description, but a subjective account of the poet’s experience of the painting, narrativised and historicised.”\(^\text{25}\) On the contrary, Prudentius limits his emotional responses to the beginning and the end of the poem, and the actual account of Cassian’s martyrdom is delivered entirely by the sacristan. It may be argued that the sacristan himself is responding emotionally to the painting, but it is worth remembering that it is he who emphasises that the image represents the truth and is based on actual records. But Prudentius’ presentation of the story does show the limits of art when it comes to conveying information accurately and unambiguously: the picture itself is described in only a few lines, while the sacristan’s account is considerably more detailed.

We can take this further, however: as with the rustic crowds at Nola, it is the painting that initially attracts Prudentius’ attention, and that provokes an emotional response, but he is unwilling to rely on the image for his information about Cassian, seeking instead confirmation

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\(^\text{23}\) Kaesser (2002).

\(^\text{24}\) Prudentius laments the loss of written sources for the martyrdom of Emeterius and Chelidonius at Pe. 1.73-81.

and further information from the sacristan. Prudentius presents himself as an exemplary worshipper: drawn in by a striking image, he acts as a conscientious Christian and asks for an explanation, not content to interpret the painting by itself.

We move on to *Peristephanon* 11, the hymn to Hippolytus, which contains detailed descriptions of the shrine set up to the martyr and of the painting of the saint’s martyrdom in the shrine. Prudentius praises the painting for its vividness (*picta...species...uiget*, 11.125). But this painting is only mentioned *after* Prudentius has already given his own version of Hippolytus’ martyrdom. Moreover, it is implied that his account is based on written sources:

\[
\text{haec dum lustro oculis et sicubi forte latentes}
\]

\[
\text{rerum apices ueterum per monumenta sequor,}
\]

\[
\text{inuenio Hippolytum…}
\]

*(Pe. 11.17-9)*

Prudentius is looking for *apices* which will shed light on the fates of the martyrs buried in the catacombs. The image is worth a mention, but its value as a source is minimal. The location of the painting’s description in the poem is significant, too – it comes immediately after the narrative of Hippolytus’ brutal death, enabling Prudentius to dwell on the gory image of the priest’s remains scattered around the countryside, and precedes the more prosaic account of how the martyr’s followers gathered up the body parts and buried them. We should note, too, that Prudentius keeps the painting separate from his description of worshippers visiting the tomb and church of Hippolytus at the end of the poem. The image is not given as one of the things one ought to see – is Prudentius subtly suggesting that there is a risk that the worshippers will misinterpret it? After all, the iconography of Hippolytus is strongly reminiscent of that of the hero from classical mythology – something made explicit by the judge’s statement at 11.87, *ergo sit Hippolytus* – and given the worries of Augustine, Paulinus, and Epiphanius, there would surely have been a risk that recent converts would confuse the two. The addressee of Prudentius’
letter, the bishop Valerian, would presumably be at no such risk, and so the poet can encourage him to adopt the worship of Hippolytus. Armed with Prudentius’ written account of the martyrdom, the bishop can establish devotion to Hippolytus without risking the conflation of classical myth and hagiography that the image Prudentius sees could encourage.

In *Peristephanon* 9 and 11, Prudentius addresses the problems associated with ambiguous Christian art. Rather than letting images speak for themselves, he is keen to emphasise that one should ask for assistance in interpreting unfamiliar pictures. The verses in the *Dittochaeon* constitute further evidence of the poet’s attempt to control the interpretation of art. In all cases, Prudentius is wary of the power of art to mislead, though he is not hostile towards the medium. A considerably more aggressive approach is taken in his treatment of pagan art.

**5.2 Idolatry**

Many of Prudentius’ attacks on paganism consist of attacks on idolatry. Martyrs are frequently condemned by magistrates for their refusal to bow before graven images, or to sacrifice to them.²⁶ In a number of cases, statues of pagan gods are described in terms that emphasise their status as works of art. One method of doing so is to reduce the god to the raw materials out of which the statue is made.

The first example occurs at *Cath.* 4.40-45. Taken from the *hymnus post cibum*, this passage describes Daniel refusing to bow before Bel.²⁷ According to the poet, Daniel “thinks it wicked to bow his head before polished bronze” *(curiare caput sub expolita | aeris materia nefas*

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²⁶ See, for example, Eulalia (*Pe.* 3.66-125, especially 122-125), Vincent (*Pe.* 5.42-52), Agnes (*Pe.* 14.10-30), and cf. Petruccione (1985) 12-5. The attractiveness of the martyr can be seen as an intended contrast with the squalor of the graven images they are asked to worship. See further Petruccione 1985, pp.37-8.

²⁷ Cf. Daniel 14.
By reducing the god to its elemental state, Prudentius highlights the fact that this is a mere statue, something man-made, and so it would be wicked to worship it.

Condemnation of idolatry recurs in the *Apotheosis*, when Prudentius describes a failed ritual undertaken by Julian the Apostate (449-502). Prudentius is surprisingly even-handed about the emperor himself:

\[
ductor fortissimus armis,  
conditor et legum, celeberrimus ore manuque,  
consultor patriae, sed non consultor habendae  
religionis, amans ter centum milia diuum.  
perfidus ille Deo quamuis non perfidus orbi.  
\]
\[(\textit{Apo}. 450-454)\]

Julian would be a model emperor, but for his rejection of God and worship of pagan gods. As a result, he comes in for some harsh criticism:

\[
augustum caput ante pedes curuare Mineruae,  
fictilis et soleas lunonis lambere, plantis  
Herculis aduolui, genua incerare Dianae,  
quen et Apollineo frontem submittere gypso  
aut Pollucis equum suffire ardentibus extis.  
\]
\[(\textit{Apo}. 455-459)\]

The language used heightens the contrast with the examples of glorious leadership given a few lines earlier. The *ductor fortissimus*, the leader of the empire, is depicted bestowing slobbering kisses on a clay statue of Juno (*lambere*). Prudentius emphasises the fact that these are mere statues – *fictilis*...*lunonis*, *Apollineo*...*gypso* – and the futility of worshipping something man-made is combined with disgust at the grotesque methods of veneration employed, something Prudentius returns to in his descriptions of blood-spattered marble statues. For our purposes, however, the crucial point is that these gods are reduced to their composite materials.\(^{28}\)

\(^{28}\) The word *fictilis* has added resonance in that it is ultimately derived from *fingo*, emphasizing its constructed nature.
It is in the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, however, that Prudentius undertakes his most sustained assault on idolatry. The poem, a refutation of Symmachus’ arguments for the preservation of the Altar of Victory, devotes a great deal of space to attacks on works of art, though here Prudentius is happy to grant that the works of art have considerable artistic merit, and is willing to keep them on that basis, even though he is scornful of the attribution of divine powers to lifeless statues. As with Christian art, Prudentius and the speakers in the poem are keen to restrict the possibilities for interpreting these sculptures, rejecting their religious associations and presenting them instead as examples of *ars gratia artis*.

Early on in the poem, Prudentius tells us that it was Saturn – a man, not a god – who caused the introduction of idolatry into Italy:

\begin{verbatim}
inde deos, quorum patria spectata sepulcra
scimus, in aere hebetes informauere minores,
aduena quos profugus gignens et equina libido
intuilit Italiae : Tuscis namque ille puellis
primus adhinniuit simulato numine moechus.
\end{verbatim}

\((CS 1.54-8)\)

It is important to note here that Saturn is presented as a cunning man – introducing a trope that is very prominent in the poem, that is, the dangers posed by clever people, be they skilled manipulators (as Saturn is), artists, or poets. The lustful Saturn sets an example to be followed by other self-made gods, and in lines 1.102ff Prudentius lists a number of mortals who have established themselves forever in the city of Rome, their statues set up as objects of veneration. The man-made nature of the statues and the self-made nature of pagan divinity are mutually reinforcing.

\footnote{On the context of the poem’s composition and its dating, see Barnes (1976) and Shanzer (1989b). On the debate over the Altar of Victory see most recently Chenault (2008) 239-58 and Cameron (2011) 33-51.}
Towards the end of the first book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, in the course of a lengthy speech to the goddess Roma (*CS* 1.415-505), Theodosius remarks on the futility of worshipping statues, since they are subject to the ruin of time. The language of ruin and decay fits with Theodosius’ overall message of relief from darkness and gloom and a promise of a new Golden Age.\(^{30}\) These works are aged, indicating the fact that they have been neglected, now that Christ is being worshipped in Rome:

\begin{quote}
non patiar ueteres teneas ut me duce nugas,

ut cariosorum uenereris monstra deorum.

si laps est, senio dissoluitur aut crepat ictu percussus tenui; mollis si brattea gypsum texerat, infido rarescit gluttine sensim;

si formam statuae lamnis commisit aenis lima terens, aut in partem caua membra grauato pondere curuantur, scabra aut aerugo peresam conficit effigiem crebroque foramine rumpit.

(*CS* 1.433-41)
\end{quote}

Theodosius talks in general terms about the inevitable fate of man-made items. Yet by referring to the gods as *cariosi*, he also suggests that this has already happened to the gods of Rome – that they have been neglected to such an extent that they have withered and decayed. As the statues crumble, so do the gods themselves age and “die”. But Theodosius is reluctant to let the statues be destroyed – instead, he ordains that they be kept, but cleansed of any pagan association (symbolised by the ritual cleaning of sacrificial blood from the statues):

\begin{quote}
marmora tabenti respergine tincta lauate,

o proceres. liceat statuas consistere puras,

artificum magnorum opera. hae pulcherrima nostrae

ornamenta fiant patriae nec decolor usus

in uitium uersae monumenta coinquinet artis.

(*CS* 1.501-5)\(^{31}\)
\end{quote}

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\(^{30}\) On the Golden Age in Theodosio-Honorian propaganda, see Ware (2006) 227-86.

\(^{31}\) It is notable that *pulcherrima nostrae | ornamenta* is echoed shortly afterwards when Prudentius refers to the senators as *pulcherrima mundi | lumina* (544-5) – perhaps a tacit suggestion that the Roman senate is outdated and
This is the most explicit statement in Prudentius of tolerance towards art – stripped of all its original context, a statue of a pagan god can remain as a testament to the artistic talents of its sculptor. This sentiment recurs in the second book of the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*, at lines 2.18-66, where the Senate as a whole addresses Symmachus and attacks his praise of the statue of Victory. The senators question the value of the statue as it has no real value in war – it is no challenge to the arms of men.\(^\text{32}\) Moreover, the senators complain of the untrustworthiness of artists. The argument follows on from that of Theodosius at the close of the preceding book: works of art in and of themselves have no value, no magical power to influence anything. They are a testament to the skill of their creator, but that is all. Prudentius condemns the “poetic license” that allows sculptors (and poets) to conjure up fearsome *monstra*, monstrous images in the statues that can influence the unwary. In the poem, Prudentius repeatedly attempts to strip pagan art of any meaning or association – art must be purely aesthetic.\(^\text{33}\) Throughout the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*, the same solution is raised again and again: the works of art may stay, a memorial of the artists who created them and a testament to the creative powers of the Roman people – but they cannot be objects of worship, that is, the temples in which they are housed must not actually be used for religious purposes, but must instead turn into museums – resting-places for dead gods.

Moving on to the *Peristephanon*, in the hymn to St. Lawrence there are a number of references to wealth, art, and beauty. Lawrence’s promise to the city magistrate that he will ineffective? Note too that the *senes Catones* (545) are depicted removing their priestly apparatus and instead putting on brilliant white robes (546-547).

\(^\text{32}\) It is tempting to see here a connection with the scene involving Luxuria and Sobrietas at *Psych*. 310-453.

\(^\text{33}\) Almost a proto-Kantian stance. For modern ideas about the aesthetic, see Eagleton (1990).
deliver up to him the riches of the church (Pe. 2.292-312) is, of course, a continuation of the running theme we have seen so many times already, that of the spiritual riches and spiritual works of art of the church, to be contrasted with the transient secular artworks of the non-Christian world. But towards the end of the poem, we find a prophecy of what has come to pass in the Contra Orationem Symmachi – a promise that Theodosius (the princeps mentioned in 2.473) will close down the temples. As a result, Prudentius tells us, the works of art in the temples will shine forth once again, cleansed of the pagan sacrificial connotations they have borne for so long:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tunc pura ab omni sanguine} \\
\text{tandem nitebunt marmora,} \\
\text{stabunt et aera innoxia,} \\
\text{quae nunc habentur idola.} \\
\text{(Pe. 2.481-4)}
\end{align*}
\]

The cleansed statues, Prudentius tells us, will “shine out” (nitebunt) – the emphasis on the dazzling visual aspect of the renewed works of art a stark contrast with the darkness of pagan days. The contrast between light and dark in Prudentius has been discussed at length by Laurence Gosserez.\(^{34}\) Here, it has a moralising quality: once the true nature of the statues is revealed to the public at large, it helps to illuminate the falseness of pagan belief and the truth of Christian doctrine.

The attack on man-made gods recurs in the next poem, in the characteristically aggressive denunciation of paganism by the young Eulalia, who claims to trample idols beneath her feet (3.74) and states that the gods are of no value, quia facta manu (3.78). Maximian, the emperor, is condemned as being a cliens lapidum (3.82), like Julian, though unlike the latter, Maximian has very few (if any) redeeming qualities. Similarly, in Pe. 5, Vincent condemns these gods who are,

\(^{34}\) Cf. Gosserez (2001) passim.
he claims scornfully, *condigna uestris sensibus* (5.67), “worthy of your intelligence” – the point being that man-made gods and idols will only ever be as powerful as the men who created them. Prudentius dwells on the process by which the idols are created (*cauis recocta...follibus*, 5.70), and, in a brilliant antithesis, notes how as a result of these statues temples rise and sacrificial victims fall:

\[\begin{align*}
&\text{his sumptuosa splendido} \\
&\text{delubra } \textbf{crescunt} \text{ marmore,} \\
&\text{his colla mugientium} \\
&\text{percussa taurorum } \textbf{cadunt}. \\
&(\text{Pe. 5.73-6})
\end{align*}\]

Though Vincent describes the idols themselves rather contemptuously, the temples, by contrast, are constructed of “shining marble”, but this is already tainted by their association with slaughter. Gods made by mortals beget further mortality. The careful use of alliteration (*sumptuosa splendido; crescunt...colla...percussa...cadunt; marmore...mugientium*) emphasises the interconnection of the splendid temples and the debased activities they host.

The most sustained attack on pagan art in all of Prudentius’ work is to be found in the lengthy poem dedicated to Romanus of Antioch, the tenth hymn in the *Peristephanon*. Romanus attacks paganism in a series of speeches, and pours particular scorn on idolatry and the preponderance of statues the Romans have set up to their gods. As elsewhere in Prudentius’ works, one of the ways in which idolatry is mocked is by reducing the gods to their constituent parts. So at *Peristephanon* 10.151-2, a statue is referred to as a *sectilis quercus*, a chopped-down oak, before which, Romanus says, a noble man prostrates himself basely (*quid esse uobis aestimem proiectius?*, 153). An attempt to excuse poets for writing about mythology is refuted, since, as Romanus says, even though the poets can employ poetic licence, *sunt et ipsi talibus mysteriis | tecum dicati* (216-7). But it is the artists who come in for the brunt of Romanus’ complaints, at 266ff. Romanus himself anticipates the very argument that Prudentius elsewhere
tacitly puts forward in favour of preserving the works of art – *pulchra res est forma in aere sculptilis* (266) – and condemns it, cursing the Greek workshops which have produced gods for "foolish peoples" (*quid inprecabor officinis Graeciae | quae condiderunt gentibus stultis deos*, 267-8). Art, Romanus states, is particularly capable of preying on the notions of the foolish, and in perpetuating superstitious beliefs. This certainly chimes with the attitude of Prudentius, as I showed in the previous section.

But Romanus also appears to hold that the sheer skill of Greek sculptors in creating lifelike sculptures is in part the cause of idolatry and pagan superstition – the statues of Jupiter, Liber, and Minerva are so terrifyingly real, he claims, that of course they would cause men to begin to worship them (266-285):

> ‘sed pulchra res est forma in aere sculptilis’.
> *quid inprecabor officinis Graeciae,*
> *quae condiderunt gentibus stultis deos?*
> *forceps Mironis, malleus Polycliti*
> *natura uestrum est atque origo caelitum.*

> *ars seminandis efficax erroribus,*
> *barbam rigentem dum Iouis circumcipicat,*
> *dum defluentem leniter flectens comam*
> *limat capillos et corymbos Liberi,*
> *et dum Minervaue pectus hydris asperat,*

> *iniecit atram territis formidinem,*
> *ut fulmen aeris ceu Tonantis horreant,*
> *tremant uenenum sibilants Gorgonae,*
> *putent ephebum post triumfos Indicos*
> *ferire thyrso posse, cum sit ebrius.*

> *tum quod Dianam molle succinctam uident,*
> *uenantis arcum pertimescunt uirginis.*
> *si forte uultum tristioris Herculis*
> *liquore crispo massa finxit fusilis,*
> *clauam minari ni colatur creditur.*

Romanus anticipates the argument that art should be preserved for its beauty, but rejects it, calling down curses on the Greek sculptors whom he sees as ultimately responsible for
superstition about pagan gods. Here, again, we see the reduction of statues to their nascent states – the beginnings of the gods, Romanus claims, can be found in the tools of Myron and Polycleitus. Later, he goes even further, denouncing the worship of gods made out of pots and pans (10.299-330).

Romanus’ argument closely follows the mode of attack taken by Prudentius in the *Contra Orationem Symmachi*. The technical skill of the sculptors is never in doubt – indeed, the careful description of their workmanship almost suggests admiration – though this is tempered by a belief that this art is deceptive (*Pe*. 10.290, *lapis seuera fronte mentitur minas*, cf. *CS* 2.645-646, *orandi arte potens et callida fingere doctus* | *mentitumque grauis personae inducere pondus*). Similarly, Prudentius is at pains in the *Contra Orationem Symmachi* to praise the technical skill of his opponent, and contrasts it with his own verbal inadequacy (*CS* 1.632-655). In both cases, however, it is the very skill of the pagan creator that is so dangerous: the artist’s ability to represent realistically Bacchus’ shaggy hair or Jupiter’s beard, or the skill of the orator that is likened to the poisonous bite of a snake (*Praef. CS* 1).

As Romanus goes on to note, the skill of the Greek artists is such that even educated men are taken in by the deceptive statues: *uos eruditos miror et doctos uiros...nescire uel diuina uel mortalia* | *quo iure constent* (*Pe*. 10.306-309). We may well think here of Prudentius’ own deep emotional response to the depiction of the martyrdom of Cassian, discussed above.

Romanus’ stance is considerably more extreme than what we encounter anywhere else in Prudentius’ works. This may be attributed in part to Romanus’ career as a rhetorician, and the
satirical aspect of his speeches.\textsuperscript{35} In a recent dissertation, Jared Hammad has argued that Romanus’ attitude represents Prudentius’ own view, and it is certainly true that Prudentius does himself attack idolatry, expressing the wish in his preface that his poems will “inflict destruction on Rome’s idols” \textit{(labem, Roma, tuis inferat idolis, Praef. 41)}.\textsuperscript{36} Moreover, as I have noted above, Prudentius is well aware of the power of influence works of art possess, and though he is not willing to denounce Christian art, he does attempt to limit its powers of persuasion.

However, Prudentius’ ambivalent attitude towards works of art is not limited to statues and paintings. As I discuss in the next section, the poet repeatedly hints at uneasiness about elaborate shrines and churches set up in honour of martyrs.

\textbf{5.3 Ambiguous architecture}

Though there are many references to shrines and basilicas in passing in the \textit{Peristephanon}, I will focus in this section on the extended descriptions in \textit{Peristephanon} 3, 11, and 12. In all three cases the dazzling splendour of the basilica is emphasised, and is set up in stark contrast to the brutal deaths of the martyrs.\textsuperscript{37} I will take each passage in order and discuss in detail the imagery Prudentius gives us.

First, the description of the basilica set up to honour Eulalia in Emerita, in \textit{Peristephanon} 3:

\begin{quote}
\textit{nunc locus Emerita est tumulo, clara colonia Vettoniae,}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} On \textit{Peristephanon} 10, see Levine (1991), Henke (1983), and Thraede (1965) 122-137. On Prudentius and satire, see Marie (1962).

\textsuperscript{36} Hammad (2010) especially 48-81. Similarly, Barnes (2010) 240 considers this poem to represent Prudentius' "literary creed."

From the cold of winter and the snows that fall to cover the young martyr’s body we move to scenes of fertility and life: the swiftly-moving river Guadiana, which flows by the town, and the shining basilica set up to Eulalia. The basilica, we are told, gleams with marble, and has a golden ceiling and a floor adorned with a mosaic. The mosaic is compared to flowers in a meadow, and this leads into an appeal to the young people of Emerita to gather flowers in honour of the virgin martyr:

ista comantibus e foliis
munera, uirgo puerque, date!
ast ego serta choro in medio
texta feram pede dactylico,
uiilia marcida, festa tamen.

sic uenerarier ossa libet
ossibus altar et inpositum,
illa dei sita sub pedibus
prospicit haec populosque suos
carmine propitiata fouet.

---

38 For the archaeological remains of the fourth-century structure on the site of the later basilica of St. Eulalia, see most recently Mateos Cruz (1999), especially 50-71 and 112-143. There is no indication of any floral mosaics, though Mateos Cruz does mention a patterned mosaic (fig. 27, p. 64) – in any case, he notes that there is insufficient archeological evidence to verify the accuracy of Prudentius’ description of the structure (p.198). See also the earlier account by Caballero Zoreda & Mateos Cruz (1992) especially 22-32. San Bernardino (1996) attempts to assess Prudentius' credibility in relation to his description of the basilica from a purely literary-historical perspective.
Patricia Cox Miller notes that Prudentius here makes explicit the link between his poetry and flowers. Michael Roberts also discusses the use of floral imagery to describe poems in late antiquity, though he tends to use this in support of his argument that such imagery is intended to make poetry seem “visual”. This is surely not Prudentius’ intent here, as I discuss below.

First, Prudentius describes the church itself – made of “clear marble”, he tells us, *marmore perspicuo*, reminiscent of his comments about the effects of Theodosius’ purification of the empire at the end of *Peristephanon* 2 (*tunc pura ab omni sanguine | tandem nitebunt marmora* 2.481-2) and perhaps also suggestive of the cleansing effect of Eulalia’s martyrdom on the city. The scene then shifts indoors, and Prudentius describes the brilliance of the ceiling of the basilica. There is, I would argue, a certain ambivalence in this description of the ceiling, and in particular in the phrase *laquearibus aureolis* (197). Mahoney saw this as an imitation of the palace of Dido in *Aeneid* 1. In fact, earlier mentions of “golden ceilings” in Latin literature tend to be pejorative – after all, wealthy Carthage is held up as an example of decadent Eastern luxury, to which Aeneas will fall prey, while references in Pliny and in Persius are equally dismissive. We should of course remember that imitations do not always carry with them the

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40 Roberts (1989) 46-53. Roberts somewhat overstates the novelty of this phenomenon, given that poems were frequently described as flowers in Hellenistic literature – see e.g. Meleager, *AP* 4.1.
41 See the collection of references cited by Fux (2003) 217 ad loc.
42 On the martyr death as sacrifice, see Petruccione (1995).
44 Persius 3.40, Pliny, *NH* 33.57.1-2. See further Horace, *Carm.* 2.16.11 and 2.18.1 with the comments of Nisbet & Hubbard (1978) ad loc, and for an example contemporaneous with Prudentius, see Claudian, *Get.* 223-4. Statius,
full force of the original context, but the existence of golden ceilings is perhaps suggestive of excessive wealth and its attendant moral failings, rather than anything else. Moreover, the other imitations of the same Vergilian passage, at Cath. 5.25-28 and 5.141-145, do not describe elaborate dwellings, but instead note how humble buildings are made beautiful by the lighting of the lamps, a gift from God. And while Prudentius does not go so far as to criticise the structure of the basilica, if we are to take anything away from this putative imitation, perhaps it should be a hint at uneasiness about overly ornate sites of worship, something that is certainly evident in the hymn to Hippolytus.

In any case, Prudentius’ focus is very much on the natural world – the basilica succeeds not because of its intrinsic beauty, but because it reminds the viewer of the outside world, and in particular of blossoming meadows, which reflect Eulalia’s bloody martyrdom and her youth. More importantly, however, the passage moves from the description of a human construction, intended to honour God, to the grander construction of the world by God. Prudentius then moves on to discuss the blossoming of flowers, and calls on the children of the town to gather them in offering to Eulalia. Then, Prudentius goes on to describe his own poetry as a garland, uilia marcida, festa tamen (3.210). The poet’s interjection must be read in connection with a similar interjection that concludes the previous poem. By referring to his poetry as marcida, Prudentius is surely calling attention to his age, as he does in the Praefatio and in the preface to the Silv. 4.2.30-1 may be seen as a counter-example, but it should be remembered that Statius’ praise of villas frequently tends to praise the imposition of order on nature (cf. Pavlovskis (1973)), and so differs from the moralising approach of other poets.

45 For the imitations, see Lühken (2002) 313. On Cath. 5 and the lighting of the lamps, see Clarke (2007).

46 The sexual aspect of the imagery has been discussed in detail by Miller (2000).
*Psychomachia*. In contrast to the boys and girls, who gather just-blooming flowers, Prudentius, the old man, is only able to offer up a withered poem. In other words, the floral imagery is not an example of the “jewelled style” in the sense that Roberts means – rather, it sets up a contrast between the young martyr and the children who will commemorate her, and the aged poet.

We move on to *Peristephanon* 11, and the description of the church erected next to the catacombs. Prudentius has already described the vast crowds of pilgrims who flock to the site of Hippolytus’ martyrdom. Much of this is rhetorical, of course, and the description of the arrival of crowds from across Italy should be put in the context of Paulinus’ similar description at *Carm.* 14.55-78. But Prudentius then goes on to describe the vastness of the crowds:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{uix capiunt patuli populum gaudia campi,} \\
\text{haeret et in magnis densa cohort spatii.} \\
\text{angustum tantis illud specus esse cateruis} \\
\text{haud dubium est, ampla fauce licet pateat.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(*Pe.* 11.211-4)

The crowd spreads across the plains of Latium, we are told, and is too vast to descend to the catacombs, large though the entrance is. Prudentius comments:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{plena laborantes aegre domus accipit undas,} \\
\text{artaque conferti aestuat in foribus,} \\
\text{maternum pandens gremium, quo condat alumnos} \\
\text{ac foueat fetos adcumulata sinus.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(*Pe.* 11.227-30)

This is where Grig identifies the beginnings of Prudentius’ reservations about the shortcomings of art. As she notes, despite the elaborate description of the church, it is not accessible by all.

47 The story of Abraham and Sara’s late begetting of a son must surely reflect Prudentius’ own late start in life as a poet. I hope to explore this elsewhere.

48 As noted by Fux (2003) 398, who goes into considerable detail about the relationship between the two passages. See also Costanza (1977).

We should be cautious of taking too literally a description which may be little more than rhetorical exaggeration: the cult of Hippolytus has grown so swiftly that the church simply cannot hold all of them. But I think Grig is right in detecting a note of concern in Prudentius’ description. After all, the surrounding passage has been full of detail about how the worship of Hippolytus engenders a massive communal gathering, one that cuts across traditional social boundaries – one notes in particular 11.202, *discrimen procerum praecipitante fide*. Moreover, as Roberts notes, *within* the church there appears to be a division into social classes – the priest elevated above the flock, the aisles lower than the nave (11.223-226).\(^{50}\) Prudentius’ narrative can thus be broken down as follows: the crowds flow out of Rome, and in the process shed all social distinctions – but once they arrive at the church, and squeeze into it, the old hierarchies return. Again, I do not want to push this too far, but it does suggest a certain uneasiness on the part of Prudentius with regard to religious structures. By their constrained nature, they restrict the possibility of full participation in worship, something that, as we shall see, Prudentius’ poetry provides.

Cynthia Hahn, in the course of a discussion on ring crypts in the Carolingian era, remarks that “For most viewers...contact with the saint was now radically circumscribed. In general, the ring crypt tends to restrict access to the saints to those participating in liturgical performances or those fortunate enough to be buried *ad sanctos*.”\(^{51}\) Hahn notes that already in the sixth century access was restricted, citing Gregory of Tours on the shrine of St Martin.\(^{52}\) I suggest that

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\(^{50}\) Roberts (1993) 164. See also Smith (1987) 47-73 and Testini (1980) 598-9, both cited by Roberts – though Testini is concerned with the sixth century.

\(^{51}\) Hahn (1997) 1099.

Prudentius raises a tacit objection to a similar restriction of access at the church erected to Hippolytus. The construction of this church not only seeks to divert the attention of the masses away from the shrine itself, but also results in the restriction of access to this secondary place of worship. Again, much of this must be related to the very elaborate descriptions of the temples – and as Grig notes, Prudentius “shares a contemporary Christian concern for the spiritual over the merely showy.”\textsuperscript{53} If this is so, then perhaps the word Nolanus at Pe. 11.208, which has been seen as a reference to Paulinus of Nola, is intended to be a rebuke of that poet’s building projects.\textsuperscript{54} Recent studies of this period of late antiquity have emphasised how power and control over relics allows a new way for the Roman elite to exercise power over the masses.\textsuperscript{55} Is Prudentius, who claims in his preface to have withdrawn from secular life,\textsuperscript{56} chastising the likes of Paulinus and Ambrose who use their power and wealth to create shrines and churches that ultimately serve themselves more than the community? It is notable that Prudentius never mentions Ambrose by name, nor do Felix of Nola or any Milanese saints feature in the Peristephanon. The poet’s withdrawal into the life of an ascetic poet is a marked contrast to the wheeling and dealing of an Ambrose, or the project of public works so beloved by Paulinus. In the Epilogus, Prudentius once again emphasises his poverty and rejection of wealth, referring to himself as a “cheap vessel” (obsoletum uasculum, Epil. 26) in the house of the Lord, a contrast to the many elaborate adornments of the rich man’s house. Unlike Ambrose and Paulinus, who combine poetry with public works, Prudentius can offer only his verses.

\textsuperscript{53} Grig (2004) 117.
\textsuperscript{55} See e.g. Humphries (2000) on Ambrose, and Trout (1999), especially 186-197, on Paulinus.
\textsuperscript{56} Praef., especially 6, 31-6.
In Peristephanon 12, Prudentius describes structures built in honour of Peter and Paul at Rome. In both cases, as Michael Roberts has noted, the buildings blur the boundary between art and nature.\(^57\) First, the baptistry of Peter is described.\(^58\) It is notable that Prudentius does not describe the basilica of St Peter itself, built by members of the Constantinian dynasty in the fourth century, but restricts himself to an account of the baptistry, built by the pope Damasus.

In a manner similar to Vergil’s geographical descriptions in the eight book of the Aeneid, Prudentius describes the site of Peter’s baptistry both in the past and in the present. Peter is now covered by *tecta aurea* (12.31), but the place was once a site of natural beauty:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{canens oliua, murmurans fluento:} \\
\text{namque supercilio saxi liquor ortus excitauit} \\
\text{frondem}^59 \text{perennem chrismatis feracem.} \\
(Pe. 12.32-34)
\end{align*}
\]

Fux discusses the allusions to Damasus, the builder of the baptistry, in these lines.\(^60\) The following lines describe in more detail the actual baptistry itself, as it is in Prudentius' time:

\[
\begin{align*}
nunc pretiosa ruit per marmora lubricatque cliuum, & \text{donec uirenti fluctuet colymbo.} \\
\text{interior tumuli pars est, ubi lapsibus sonoris} & \text{stagnum niuali uoluitur profundo.} \\
\text{omnicolor uitreas pictura superne tinguit undas,} & \text{musci relucent et uirescit aurum} \\
\text{cyaneusque latex umbram trahit inminentis ostri :} & \text{credas moueri fluctibus lacunar.} \\
\text{pastor oues alit ipse illic gelidi rigore fontis,}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{57}\) Roberts (1993) 172ff.

\(^{58}\) This baptistry was located on the *mons Vaticanus*, near the nascent basilica of St Peter. Smith (1988) argues that Prudentius was simply wrong, and that the baptistry was in fact located on the Gianicolo, but as Roberts (1993) 167n.66 points out, much of her argument is founded on a misreading of Prudentius’ Latin. See further Gnilka (2000a) 666-8 and Gnilka (2005).

\(^{59}\) Bergman, Cunningham and Lavarenne all print *frondem*, but Arevalo printed *frontem*, and Fontaine (1964) 249-50 puts forward a convincing argument in its favour: the reading is adopted by Fux (2003) and accepted by Roberts (1993) 173.

uidet sitire quas fluenta Christi.
(Pe. 12.35-44)

The *nunc* that opens the description of the baptistry is crucial. As Fux notes, it is an “éloge discret des récents travaux hydrauliques damasiens.” But we also should see something similar to what happens in *Aeneid* VIII taking place here: the distinction between the rustic setting of the past and the shiny new site of a recent re-founder of Rome evokes fairly clearly the image of Augustus that lies behind much of that section of Vergil’s work. Roberts goes into considerable detail about the ambiguity between art and nature in the description of the baptistry – but I think we should also see the “ambiguity” as lying in the overlapping layers of historical sites depicted by Prudentius. The reference to the shepherd watering his sheep at the spring, though it is a clear reference to St Peter and possibly to Damasus or to Jesus, is also reminiscent of Vergil’s description of the Forum: *passimque armenta uidebant* | *Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.* (*Aen.* 8.360-361). The dual reference to the bucolic genre and to the pastoral imagery of the New Testament is something we have already seen in Chapter Four, while here it adds a temporal dimension to the art-nature boundary that Roberts notes in the scene.

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62 On Damasus as an Augustus-like figure see Trout (2003).
65 As argued by Roberts (1989) 174.
66 Gnilka (2005) claims that the couplet describing the *pastor*, Pe. 12.43-44, is an interpolation, though I am not convinced by his arguments.
67 On the pastoral in *Aeneid* Eight see now Apostol (2009).
The passage is also reminiscent of the opening of Juvenal’s Third *Satire* (3.10-20), in which the speaker complains that the sacred Valley of Egeria has been stripped of its natural beauty and rented out to Jews. In particular, Juvenal notes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{in uallem Egeriae descendimus et speluncas} \\
\text{dissimiles ueris. quanto praestantius esset} \\
\text{numen aquis, uiridi si margine cluderet undas} \\
\text{herba nec ingenuum uiolarent marmora tofum.} \\
\text{(Juv., *Sat.* 3.17-20)}
\end{align*}
\]

It is not entirely clear who or what is to blame for the modernisation of the sacred space, though Fredericks is surely right to point to the foreign marble crowding out the native tufa as anticipating Umbricius’ later denunciation of the masses of foreigners at Rome. But Juvenal’s complaint that a sacred grove has lost its sanctity because of later building projects is worth keeping in mind as we read *Pe.* 12. I would not go so far as to argue that Prudentius is consciously imitating Juvenal here, though he certainly knew him well. Rather, his approach is similar to that of the speaker in Juvenal’s poems, who rails against progress and showy ornateness, and points to the importance of the moralising streak in Latin literature that is adopted by many early Christian writers.

The basilica of Paul, on the Via Ostiensis, is the other building described in this poem. The original basilica was built on the orders of Constantine, though Theodosius initiated the construction of a much larger structure. Work on this basilica continued under Honorius, and

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69 Fredericks (1973) 63.

indeed the building was not completed until the mid-fifth century. Prudentius would thus have seen a work in progress, though there is no indication of this in the text.

The Vergilian echoes we have seen in the description of Damasus’ baptistry continue with the phrase *qua stringit amnis caespitem sinistrum* (12.46), which Fux compares to *Aen.* 8.62-64:

> ego sum pleno quem flumine cernis
> **stringentem** ripas et pinguia culta secantem,
> caeruleus Thybris, caelo gratissimus amnis.

In both cases, we have a reference to the river Tiber ‘grazing’ its banks. The allusion conjures up the pastoral past of the site of Rome, as does the word *caespitem.* The natural scene is extended by a comparison between the glass in the basilica and flowers in a meadow (12.54, *sic prata uernis floribus renident*). As in Pe. 3, Prudentius likens the features of this architectural, man-made structure, to aspects of God’s creation of the natural world.

This aside, the basilica is described using words that are hardly uniformly positive:

> regia **pompa** loci est, princeps bonus has sacrauit arces
> lusitque magnis ambitum talentis.
> bratteolas trabibus subleuit, ut omnis aurulenta
> lux esset intus ceu iubar sub ortu.
> subdidit et **Parias fuluis laquearibus columnas,**
> distinguuit illic quas quaternus ordo.
> tum camiros hyalo insigni uarie cucurrit arcus;
> **sic prata uernis floribus renident.**
> *(Pe. 12.47-54)*

*Pompa* (47) is personified as a vice in the *Psychomachia* (line 439), and the word is used of transient, earthly temptations at *Ham.* 438, CS 1.385, 2.581, *Pe.* 3.111, *Pe.* 10.161, and *Pe.* 14.101. The word is used twice of religious processions relating to the martyrs (*Pe.* 1.81 and *Pe.* 10.1082), and to the Vestal Virgins (*CS* 2.1088), admittedly, but in the context in which it

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appears here (relating to material splendour) it surely has negative connotations. The reference to *fuluis laquearibus* also has unsettling implications, as I have shown above in discussing the basilica at Emerita, while *Parias columnas* would seem to contradict God’s own ordinance at CS 2.244, where he asks for a temple to be built in man’s heart, and not made of marble (*quae saxa Paros secat*).

It is clear, of course, that Prudentius could not outwardly criticise building projects undertaken by members of the imperial family, or by bishops at Rome or Emerita Augusta. But his assaults on idolatry and opulence in the *Apotheosis* and in the *Peristephanon* hint at a poet deeply concerned with what he sees as conspicuous consumption in the name of the church. After reading Romanus’ condemnation of the visual arts, and Lawrence’s proclamation that the wealth of the church lies in her people, it is very difficult to take seriously Prudentius’ description of lavish basilicas and shrines. As Grig has noted, the poet shies away from the “showy” aspects of sites of worship, and indeed it is only in his description of imaginary buildings (such as the temple of Sapientia at the end of the *Psychomachia*) that he really exemplifies anything approaching Roberts’ “jewelled style”. Rather, as I have shown in this chapter, he expresses concern about the efficacy of images and the visual arts to transmit religious information. Prudentius presents himself as an ascetic warrior, a “cheap vessel” (*Ep.* 26) far removed from his wealthier contemporaries, who embarked upon opulent building projects to express their piety, but capable nonetheless of trampling on pagan idolatry (*Praef.* 41).

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72 See in particular Trout (1999) 133ff.
Conclusion

Over the past five chapters, I have discussed a number of ways in which the poetry of Prudentius represents geography and space. In the first chapter, I presented the evidence for reading the Liber Peristephanon as a world represented textually, and argued that, based on the varying arrangements of the collection in the manuscript tradition, at least some readers took up the challenge to construct their own itinerary through this literary landscape. In the second chapter, I moved from the reader to the text, discussing intertextual journeys and arguing that both Ausonius and Prudentius make sustained use of imitation of Vergil and other earlier Latin poets to describe their own journeys. Following Katherine Clarke and Andrew Merrills, both of whom insist on the inextricability of historiography and geography in antiquity,¹ I argue that the journeys described by the two late Latin poets are inevitably historicised due to their evocation of earlier literary models.

The two chapters on travel are followed by two on fixed spaces. In Chapter Three, I discussed the relationship between the martyr and the city, and the representation of civic obligation and civic triumph in the Peristephanon. As in the preceding chapter, I show how spatial concerns are always tied up with temporal ones: thus the descriptions of commemorative processions and similar celebrations fix the martyrs in specific places and times. In the fourth chapter, I discussed the representation of the countryside in Prudentius and in Endelechius' De Mortibus Boum. After tracing the reception of Vergil's Fourth Eclogue by early Christian writers, I showed how Endelechius attempts to reconcile Christian ideas of the Good Shepherd with classical pastoral by presenting an allegorical poem modelled on the Eclogues. I then moved on

¹ Clarke (1999); Merrills (2005).
to discuss Prudentius' depiction of rural spaces in the *Cathemerinon* and the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, arguing that Prudentius uses the conceit of the ideal pastoral space, representing heaven, as a means to reflect on Christian ideas of space and heavenly presence. I further discussed how, in the *Contra Orationem Symmachii*, Prudentius rejected the traditional Roman idea of farming as being inextricably tied up with faith.

In the final chapter, I turned to Prudentius' descriptions of works of art, specifically representations of the martyrs situated at their tombs and commemorative structures established in memory of the martyrs. I argued that Prudentius reveals considerable uneasiness about lavish expenditure on religious buildings and structures, while also expressing concerns with the veracity of the visual image as a means of communication, ensuring that in the cases of Saints Cassian and Hippolytus, the visual depictions of their martyrdoms are supplemented and supported by clarificatory verbal accounts.

By way of summing up, I should like to identify what I see as the dominant strand connecting these five chapters, all of which approach the rubric of "geography and space" in differing ways. I hope that it has become clear that the Prudentius I have foregrounded in this study is a particularly *bookish* author, one who is content to learn about the world by reading, rather than by experiencing, and one who encourages his readers to do the same. So in the first chapter, I showed how Prudentius fitted into the context of early Christian ideas about the Book of Nature, and argued for a readerly engagement with his works that mirrored a physical journey: Prudentius then becomes the latest in a long line of Roman authors who prioritise written knowledge over experiential learning. In the second chapter, I argued that Prudentius' descriptions of journeys were modelled on the epic journeys of earlier literature, particularly the journey of Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid*, again making a case for Prudentius as an author whose
descriptions of physical landscapes are always grounded in literary history, something I also argued for in the fourth chapter, in which I discussed Prudentius' use and modification of the pastoral and georgic tradition in Latin literature.

In the third and fourth chapters, too, I built on my arguments in Chapter One that Prudentius expects the *Peristephanon* to function as a literary replacement for the actual experience of pilgrimage. In the third chapter, I showed how Prudentius grounds his hymns to the martyrs in specific places and times, but by doing so in writing frees the celebration of the martyrs from the traditional constraints of physical and temporal location by enabling the reader to contemplate and re-enact the celebration of the martyrs' feasts at any time and place. Similarly, in Chapter Four, Prudentius detaches himself from descriptions of "real" places to emphasise the importance of heavenly spaces and the *locus amoenus* as a crucial aspect of Christian identity. In this, I argue, Prudentius is building on the tradition established by earlier authors of using idealised spaces as representative of the Golden Age of Rome's origins. By indicating that the Christian faithful can have access to contemplative visions of heaven no matter where they are, Prudentius further removes the necessity of physical experience, while also conveying descriptions of these spaces in words, thus subtly reinforcing the necessity of literary reading.

In the final chapter, I approached the issue of "image and text" as it appears in Prudentius' works. I argue that for Prudentius as for a number of other late antique Christian authors, paintings and works of art can be deceptive, and need to be clarified with the aid of words. Similarly, Prudentius finds architectural structures to be lacking as aspects of Christian life. Not only does he express unease at their lavish adornment, but he also shows how, at least in the case of the church built by the shrine of Hippolytus outside Rome, these churches serve to reinforce
the same social distinctions as are to be found within Rome - despite the fact that the Christian faith is supposed to be the great leveller of class.

The Prudentius I have depicted, then, is a bookish author, one who is concerned with the importance of literature *qua* literature and who attempts to undermine other forms of media, particularly painting and architecture. An emphasis on the written word is, of course, characteristic of early Christian thought, founded as it is in the importance of the Bible as "the Book", and in the idea of the Word being made Flesh. Yet Prudentius' focus on the written text, and on the relationship between texts, is also supremely Roman: like the poets of the late Republican, Augustan, and early imperial periods, Prudentius writes in a way that assumes extensive knowledge of the literary canon on the part of the reader. But Prudentius' insistence on the primacy of writing is by no means founded in elitist ideas about controlling and restricting the dissemination of knowledge only to the learned, but rather in the perception of literature and writing as things that can travel more easily than works of art, and consequently reach and inform more of the faithful. As I noted in the first chapter, Prudentius emphasises in *Peristephanon* 13 the fact that while Cyprian's resting place may be in Carthage, his oratory and the spread of his words have ensured that he belongs to the world. Literary texts circulate, are copied, and perpetuated, despite their fragility as modes of preservation (as Prudentius himself notes in relation to the *Acta Martyrum*) - paradoxically, just as Horace's work has turned out to be *aere perennius*, it is only in Prudentius' works that buildings like the church erected by Hippolytus' tomb, or the basilica of Eulalia at Emerita Augusta, survive intact. Moreover, Prudentius' own *fortuna* exemplifies his claim: a manuscript tradition that spreads across western Europe and as far north as the British Isles has ensured the survival of a valuable insight into the intellectual and literary life of a Christianised empire at the beginning of the fifth century.
This study has focused on issues of geography and space. A recurring issue, however, has been the question of how these spatial concerns intersect with temporal ones. In Chapter Two, I discussed the historicising effect of intertextuality in relation to descriptions of journeys. In Chapter Three, I showed how Prudentius attempts to present his poetry as a means of both overcoming and reinforcing the spatial and temporal restrictions attending the feasts of the martyrs. In Chapter Four, I discussed how Christian authors negotiated the tension inherent in the similarities between the Roman Golden Age of pastoral, firmly located in the past, and the Paradise that awaits the Christian faithful after death. In all cases, questions of geography and space cannot easily be treated separately from issues of time and history. It seems clear to me that Prudentius' conception of time and history, something that has not been studied in depth, is closely linked with his perception of the physical world. His use of historical exempla, his concerns about the safekeeping of records memorialising martyrdoms, even his conception of narrative time in the Peristephanon, are all topics that remain to be studied, and an investigation of them would be a useful development of the ideas presented in this dissertation.
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