

AUSONIUS' USE OF THE CLASSICAL LATIN POETS: SOME NEW EXAMPLES AND OBSERVATIONS

The primary aim of this article is to reveal a number of previously unrecorded appearances of classical Latin poetry in the poems of Ausonius, with a brief assessment of their value in understanding his text, and an incorporation of them into the general picture of his acquaintance with his predecessors; a final section will outline some ways in which his adoptions and adaptations are used. Latin poets now fragmented or lost are not included in this study; for the survival of a Lucilius or an Ennius has generally enjoyed more attention and study than the after-life of better-known authors. It is moreover doubtful if such early writers had a context to offer the borrower in Late Antiquity; while poets of the second and third centuries A.D. (often denoted by the vacuous term 'neoteric'), who did, are poorly known today. Greek authors, too, are here omitted, although Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, and many poets of the Anthology are used,¹ because they raise many other questions; so do Latin prose writers (such as Pliny, Varro, or Suetonius), although they may make an important contribution to the texture of a poem (e.g. Cic. *pro Arch.* 19 to *Ep.* XXIII.9 Schenkl (= *Ep.* XXVIII.9 Peiper)) or to understanding the poet's meaning (e.g. Symm. *Ep.* 1.15.2 (written to Ausonius), which explains the difficult passage in *Prof.* 15 (14).8). The story of Ausonius' appearances in later writers—Ammianus, Claudian, Rutilius, and many others—has yet to be written.

As for terminology in this article, 'similarity' is a generic term; 'borrowing', 'reminiscence', or 'imitation' will be used to imply a degree of deliberate purpose which is to be expected of a poet who wrote most of his poetry at the end of a career as *rhetor*. Another class is here designated by 'echoes'; these occupy a position on a notional scale of intentionality close to the pole that could be crudely considered 'unintentional' or 'unthinking': there is no obvious reason for their choice, in phrasing or context, or why they should have been retained in the memory. In a pioneer article on this topic Posani² denies that any reminiscences can be called involuntary, but her 'mechanical' reminiscences are close in practice to 'echoes' here. The difference of description and analysis rests to some extent on different views of Ausonius as poet: Posani emphasizes the fact that Ausonius wrote a cento at about the same time as the *Moselle*, but it is a dangerous premiss on which to base a study of his greatest poem, since his cento was both a *jeu d'esprit* and a *tour de force*, and uses the work of a single poet only. It is not proposed in this article to debate the vexed questions of intention and coincidence (which might benefit from a statistical study of probabilities); and it is assumed that we have to do with a conscious artist, so that there is no question for the most part of passages 'being hazy or less suitable in the context when borrowed or imitated by another author', in the words of Löfstedt,³ quoted and followed by Lee.⁴

¹ They are catalogued by F. Stahl, *De Ausonianis studiis poetarum Graecorum* (Diss. Kiel, 1886).

² M. R. Posani, 'Reminiscenze di poeti latini nella "Mosella" di Ausonio', *SIFC* 34 (1962), 31–69.

³ E. Löfstedt, 'Reminiscence and Imitation. Some Problems in Latin Literature', *Eranos* 47 (1949), 148–64.

⁴ A. G. Lee, *Allusion, Parody and Imitation* (University of Hull, 1971).

In the following lists of *loci similes* not mentioned in the various editions, commentaries, and articles on Ausonius, the references to his work are given after the author imitated or echoed. The irrevocable anarchy of Ausonius' multifarious works makes it necessary to refer (where there is no obvious customary abbreviation) first to Schenkl,¹ whose edition, largely but not completely followed by Pastorino,² is the most logically ordered, precisely numbered, and clearly arranged one available, and secondly to Peiper,³ whose order and numbering is reproduced exactly by Evelyn White.⁴ References to the letters of Paulinus of Nola will also be found; for these Hartel's numbering is used,⁵ again with that of Peiper, who includes the letters of both men, numbered consecutively. The examples are accompanied by concise remarks on their significance.

Vergil

Aen. 1.130 doli . . . et irae

ira dolusque *Prof.* 21 (20) 13, (where Peiper reads *dolor*, against the manuscript evidence).

Aen. 3.652 quaecumque fuisset

quicumque fuisses *III.3* (I.3). Vergil's verb, itself anomalous (representing a future perfect (cf. *G.* 1.67) in *oratio obliqua*), helps to explain Ausonius' usage.

Aen. 5.140 ferit aethera

ferit aera *IV.3.85* (II.III.85), but *aethera* should probably be read on theological grounds.

Aen. 7.564 memoratus in oris

memoratus in oris (*Mos.* 376).

Here the reminiscence confirms a difficult phrase, which Pichon had emended to *orsis*.

Aen. 1.555 pater optime Teucrum

pater optime testor *Ep.* 1.25 (*Ep.* XIX.25).

A reverential use, in both poets.

Aen. 4.621 haec precor, hanc vocem

haec precor, hanc vocem *Ep.* XXIII.73 (*Ep.* XXVIII.73).

Dido's last plea, Ausonius' desperate prayer for Paulinus' return.

Aen. 12.440 et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector

proconsul genitor, praefectus avunculus instant *XIII.2.43*

(*Ep.* XXII.43).

Exhortations to Aeneas' son and Ausonius' grandson; the metrically awkward *avunculus* betrays the imitation.

Aen. 3.480/1 quid ultra/provehor?

quo . . . provehor *Ep.* XXIII, 45/6 (*Ep.* XXVIII, 45/6).

Aen. 1.461 sua praemia laudi

sua praemia laudi Paulinus X.152 (*Ep.* XXXI.152).

In the first four examples some help is given in establishing or guaranteeing Ausonius' text; the following three shed new light on our understanding of the

¹ *D. Magni Ausonii Opuscula*, M.G.H., Auct. Ant., Tom. V.2.

² *Opere di Decimo Magno Ausonio* (Turin, 1971).

³ *Decimi Magni Ausonii Burdigalensis*

Opuscula (Leipzig, 1886).

⁴ *Ausonius, with an English Translation* (London and New York, 1919).

⁵ *S. Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Carmina* (C.S.E.L. xxx, Vienna, 1894).

poet's attitude or *persona*; the penultimate phrase is used as a convenient rhetorical formula of conclusion, the last may be a casual echo.

Horace

Epod. 16.35 haec et quae poterunt
haec et quae possunt *Ep.* X.29 (*Ep.* VI.29) (departure from a
detested life in the city).

Serm. 1.1.92 finis quaerendi
finis cupiendi XII.2.15 (III.1.15), a moralizing passage; as the
introduction to the poem implies (reading *Luciliano*), Ausonius is trying to
recreate the atmosphere of satire.

Serm. 2.1.59 seu fors ita iusserit
si fors ita iusserit XIII.2.39 (*Ep.* XXII.39).

Serm. 2.1.77 illidere dentem
interlidere dentem Paulinus X.261 (*Ep.* XXXI.261).

Serm. 2.7.24 usque recuses
usque recuses *Ep.* III.31 (*Ep.* XIV.31).

Ep. 1.6.1 nil admirari
miracula terrae/nulla putem III.3.71/2 (II.III.71/2).

Ep. 2.1.54 paene recens
poena (paene *Heinsius*) recens, *Par.* 11 (9) 10.

Poena gives an entirely suitable, and more vigorous, meaning.

A.P. 331 cum semel imbuerit
qui semel imbuerit XIII.2.17 (*Ep.* XXII.17).

The first two borrowings bring with them important contexts. 'Illidere dentem' sheds light on the meaning, which is not 'force . . . against' (Evelyn White and Walsh¹) but 'thrust in', and 'nil admirari' elucidates a difficult part of Ausonius' prayer. The others are echoes of which Ausonius was arguably unaware; they show great familiarity but no sign of artistic manipulation or of having been chosen for any striking qualities.

Ovid

Met. 2.279 tua fulmina cessant
tua flamina cessant *Ep.* V.33 (*Ep.* XVI.33).

Met. 8.363 trepidantem et terga parantem
trepidantem et cassa parantem XXIII.2.54 (VIII.54) (a cornered
fugitive in both).

Ep. ex P. 3.7.23 proximus huic gradus
proximus . . . gradus *Ep.* XVIII.3 (*Ep.* XIII.3).

Tr. 4.6.12 ne sint tristi . . . sapore cavet
cavesque ne sit tristis . . . *Ep.* XV.3 (*Ep.* XI.3).

F. 1.55 vindicat Ausonias Iunonis cura Kalendas
Hecate Latonia vindicat Idus XIII.2.23 (*Ep.* XXI.23).

F. 6.197 taurinae . . . frontis
taurinae frontis *Mos.* 471.

Her. 6.17 quid queror
quid queror *Ep.* XXV.67 (*Ep.* XXVII.67)

¹ *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola* (Ancient Christian Writers 40: New York, 1975).

Her. 14.74 nox . . . perennis

hiemem perennem III.1.5, (II.1.5) (an unexpected use of *perennis*; Ovid is also referring to the story of Hypermnestra, which is shortly to be used by Ausonius in the same poem).

F. 2.481, *Met.* 14.82 nova moenia

nova moenia *Mos.* 2.

Am. 1.8.42: regnat in urbe sui

regnat in orbe suo: III.34 (I.34).

The last two similarities may seem coincidental, because of the commonness of the words, but the first is supported by the frequently implied contrasts in the *Moselle* with ancient Rome and the second by the original reference to Venus, with whom no Roman emperor would be ashamed to be associated (Themistius wrote a panegyric of Gratian entitled *erōtikos*).

'Tibullus'

1.4.31 fata senectae

fata senectam *Ep.* 1.39 (*Ep.* XIX.39) and *Par.* 9(7).7.

3.4.83 votis contraria vota

contraria votis Paulinus X.126 (*Ep.* XXXI.126).

Propertius

1.14.3/4 et modo tam celeres mireris currere lintres,

et modo tam tardas funibus ire ratis.

ipse tuos quotiens miraris in amne recursus,

legitimosque putas prope segnius ire meatus? *Mos.* 43/4.

(There is no close verbal similarity here, but the Propertian passage yields a valuable clue to the understanding of Ausonius: he is referring to different kinds of motion—upstream and downstream—and not, as generally supposed, repeating a point about meanderings.)

Lucan

1.468/9 fama . . . irrupitque animos populi

fama per aures/irrupit pepulitque animum

Paulinus XI.20/1 (*Ep.* XXX.20/1)

8.758 admotus . . . non subditus

collatus sed non subditus III.22 (I.22)

8.827 quid tibi saeva precer pro tanto crimine tellus? [Egypt]

imprecer ex merito quid non tibi, Hiberia tellus?

Ep. XXIII.53 (*Ep.* XXVIII.53)

Two notable theological reinterpretations:

9.14 sui ludibria trunci

passus ludibria leti IV.3.22 (II. III.22), of Christ's crucifixion.

9.779 quicquid homo est

quicquid homo est Paulinus X.288 (*Ep.* XXXI.288).

9.945 mapalia culmi

mapalia culmo Paulinus X.245 (*Ep.* XXXI.245).

More speculatively,

6.599 vel tu parce deis

sed tu parce feris [venatibus]. *Ep.* III.41 (*Ep.* XIV.41).

(Ausonius' line (from a humorous poem) gains in humour if a pause is made after *feris*.)

Seneca

- Herc. Fur.* 155 pendens scopulis
pendentem scopulis Paulinus X.224 (*Ep.* XXXI.224).
Phoen. 37 animus gestit
gestitque anima Paulinus X.305 (*Ep.* XXXI.305).
Medea 9 (cf. *Herc. Fur.* 610) noctis aeternae chaos
chaos insuperabile noctis IV.3.14 (II.III.14).

Martial

- 12.14.6 fallere . . . solent
fallere namque solent III.6.4 (II.6.4).

A similar quip (or piece of tact): blame is ascribed to a passive object (the ground being ridden over, the meat being cooked) instead of the person who should be in control.

Juvenal

- 3.272 possis ignavus haberi
posses oneratus haberi XIII.2.97 (*Ep.* XXII.97).
6.47 delicias hominis
delicias hominum *Mos.* 71.
6.O 18 seria vitae
seria vitam (so *V*; Peiper *vitans* unnecessarily) *Par.* 14(12).9.
7.10 auctio vendit
auctio vendat *Ep.* III.18 (*Ep.* XIV.18).
7.192 subtexit alutae
praetexit aluta XIII.2.30 (*Ep.* XXII.30).

Statius

- Tb.* 10.448 Phrygiique . . . gloria Nisi
Phrygii quoque gloria Nisi *Ep.* XXV.38 (*Ep.* XXVII.42).
Tb. 12.244 Penthei devexa iugi
Alpini convexa iugi *Ep.* XXIII.70 (*Ep.* XXVIII.70), where
Alpinis conexa iugis (*VP*) gives inferior sense.
Ach. 1.655 magno . . . addita ponto
magnusque honor additus amni *Mos.* 149, where *magno* is
read by all manuscripts except *Z/R*, against the sense, for Ausonius is here
magnifying a fish, not the river.
S. 4.2.10 videor discumbere
videor discumbere III.7.20 (II.VIII.20), in company with
Verg. G. 2.506.

These new similarities bring only minor alterations to the over-all picture of Ausonius' knowledge of classical poets. Vergil is his unshakable favourite; all of his major works are quoted, and with a frequency that is in proportion to their length. Horace is a clear but not a close second: the absence of the *Odes* from the list above is due to their conspicuousness, which has probably left very little still to be detected. Ausonius quotes from about half the *Odes*, but rarely uses an Ode

twice; the *Satires* and *Epistles* are imitated hardly less frequently, and some of the examples given above suggest that their familiarity forced them into his writing, for no particular reason can be seen why they should be consciously chosen. Horace is not imitated in the way that Vergil is in the *Cento Nuptialis* (XXVIII: XVII) or the *Cupido Cruciatu*s (XXIII: VIII), but there are remarkable general similarities to a Horatian Satire in XXVIII (VII.II) (only partly due to a common Greek model), and to a Horatian Ode in III.1 (II.1) and *Prof.* 8 (6) and 9 (7). Ausonius' favourite works of Ovid are the *Metamorphoses* and the Letters (in the widest sense); the *Fasti* are more popular than the erotic works. The *Halieutica* are used in the *Moselle*,¹ and the *Ibis* (68 and 554) is apparently echoed in *Ep.* XVII.8 (*Ep.* II.12) and perhaps *Mos.* 276 ff., where Glaucus' fate is seen, unusually, as a sad one (the herbs are *exitialia*). The echoes of Tibullus noted here are dubious, but his position in Ausonius is secure (*Mos.* 392 and III.3.72 (II.III.72)) even if the similarities adduced by Weinreich² are dismissed as the products of a similar way of thinking. Nor is the above echo of Propertius certain: as with the suggestions of Shackleton Bailey³ there must be a suspicion of casual coincidence.

Lucan, of whom Schenkl noted four echoes only, has been reinstated to a position more in keeping with his status as curriculum author,⁴ not least by Hosius, who edited both authors. (Of those passages quoted above, some refer to Paulinus, and the picture given in my survey of that author must to that extent be revised.⁵) It is notable that several of the imitations of Lucan are drawn from the beginning and end of the poem: reminiscences of the death of Pompey are prominent. Persius is clearly used but not often; Seneca is more disputable. Of Schenkl's similarities only that of *Tro.* 784 in *Epit.* 16(15).5 seems quite certain (whatever its immediate provenance); the above-mentioned similarity to Ausonius (two concern Paulinus) is advanced with caution. Statius and Martial must be counted among our author's favourites: the *Silvae* are common, and used with attention to detail and in a spirit of *aemulatio*, especially in the *Moselle*, but the epics are also quoted, both for telling effect (as in *Par.* 5(3).23, Arborius' prophecy about his nephew Ausonius, and *Ep.* II.11 (*Ep.* XX.11), a remarkably emotional complaint to his son) and in a way that suggests complete familiarity which extends even to the author's rhythms (*Prof.* 2(1).3, *Mos.* 262; *Mos.* 147 is a good example of the 'inattention' to which Lee refers,⁶ for the infinitive after *timent* is unexpected and irregular). The frequency of Martial cannot be explained as wholly due to the epigrams written by Ausonius; he finds his way into all kinds of his verse. The humour noted above may be paralleled in Ausonius' clever use of III.64 in *Prof.* 16 (15).7: if the taciturn Nepotianus had spoken volubly, Ulysses, conqueror of the Sirens, would not fail to have tarried—out of surprise and curiosity. The reminiscences of Juvenal significantly increase the number presented in Schenkl; they seem to be of a similar kind to some in Paulinus⁷—the unpremeditated result of previous reading of this popular author. Of Silius Italicus and Valerius Flaccus Posani⁸ notes one use of each poet: Sil. 14.363 f. in *Mos.* 173 f. and Val. Fl. 5.108 in *Mos.* 194.

¹ Posani, op. cit., pp.56–7.

² O. Weinreich, 'Die Christianisierung einer Tibullstelle', *Hermes* 62 (1927), 122 f.

³ D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 'Echoes of Propertius', *Mnemosyne*, N.S. 4 (1952), 322.

⁴ Jerome, in *Rufinum* 1.16.

⁵ R. P. H. Green, *The Poetry of Paulinus of Nola* (Brussels, 1971), pp.48–9.

⁶ Op. cit., p.9.

⁷ R. P. H. Green, op. cit., p.49.

⁸ On pp.42 and 54.

On Catullus and Lucretius there is nothing to add here; they are rare, but undeniably present, the latter notably, but not exclusively, in the *Moselle*. The fact that no new borrowings from Plautus and Terence have appeared (unless *tamen suspicor* (Ter. *Hec.* 874: *Ep.* XIX.12 (*Ep.* XXIII.12)) is a valid claimant) is a result of Ausonius' method of using them. It is clear that his memory for the comedians is governed by the vividness of scenes, characters, or events in the plays (although his verbal recollection is accurate, and in at least one case useful for reconstituting Plautus' text).¹ Leaving aside the *Ludus Septem Sapientum*, which is carefully and thoroughly Plautine,² we may note the appeals to Plautus' Curculio and Terence's Phormio (the characters, and perhaps also the play as a whole in the first case) in *Ep.* XXII (*Ep.* XXVI) in a letter to Paulinus about a rascal of a bailiff; the mention of Euclio's cock from Plautus' *Aulularia* (465) and the sorex of Ter. *Eun.* 1024 in the introduction to the *Griphus* (written to Symmachus), and Sosias' words from Ter. *Andr.* 43 in another letter to Symmachus (*Ep.* XVII.24 (*Ep.* II.37)); and two references (XIII.1.9 (*Ep.* XXII.15)) and *Ep.* IV.46 (*Ep.* XIII.46) one explicit and one implicit, to the fashionable type of girl mentioned in the *Eunuchus* (313 f.). In the Preface to the *Cupido Cruciatu*s (XXIII.1.1 (VIII.1)) he quotes line 143 of Plautus' *Menaechmi* and invites his reader to supply a sequel: 'enumquam vidisti tabulam pictam in pariete?' is, by itself, a simple and stupid question,³ but Ausonius intends to evoke in reply the query, 'A picture of what?'

The quality of his recollection of the comedians implies an imaginative awareness of these works as dramas and not mere texts, an insight doubtless furthered by teaching. This close familiarity found an outlet also in the composition of short pieces like the extant *Querolus* or the *Delirus* of Axius Paulus mentioned in *Ep.* XI (*Ep.* VII) (where the requirements for writing such a work are spelled out in detail). Further testimony on this point comes from the unlikely area of Paulinus' letters to his Christian friends: in spite of scruples far stronger than those entertained in his Christian poems we find reminiscences of Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus* and the *Lar familiaris* of the prologue of Plautus' *Aulularia* in *Ep.* XXII (p.156 H) and of the *Adelphi* of Terence (82 ff.) in *Ep.* VII.3. (p.458 H).

The possibility that these or Ausonius' other favourite writers—Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Statius, Martial, Lucan, and Juvenal—came to him through the mediation of excerpts or *florilegia* seems to be ruled out by the evidence within his writing. He uses them as often as not with a clear awareness of their context; and in most cases the distribution of their appearances within the original works, is, from a statistical point of view, random. It need hardly be added that his profession of forgetfulness in his *protrepticus ad nepotem* (XIII.2.52 ff. (*Ep.* XXII.52 ff.)) should not be believed: most of his poetry was written after his seventieth year, and his memory either remained excellent or was frequently refreshed. A wide circle of friends and pupils benefited; but it should not be assumed that his wide reading was typical of a well-read schoolmaster of the time or a pure reflection of the curriculum. (The latter question needs to be studied in a wider perspective, though the reading-list offered in the *protrepticus* may form a basis and pose some important questions: is Ovid deliberately omitted? is Catullus included in the Lyric poets? who are the historians besides Sallust? are they abbreviated?)

¹ See Aus. *Ep.* XVI.1 (*Ep.* XII.1). and 158 (1896), 779 ff.
possibly *Ep.* XXII.1 (*Ep.* XXVI).

² F. Leo, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*

³ The manuscripts' *nebulam* is pointless.

The final section of this paper will attempt to classify some of the ways in which Ausonius made use of such width and depth of reading in his own creative writing. In view of the description of his work as a patchwork (Hosius)¹ or the work of a *centonarius* (Posani) it will be wise to begin with that class of poem in which imitations are conspicuous by their rarity. Such poems are the preface *ad lectorem* (III(I)), *Epicedion in Patrem* (XI.2 (III.IV)), *Ep.* I (XVIII) (*ad patrem*), and the *Parentalia* and *Professores*: in these poems the general absence of stylistic elevation is used so as to offer a lowly *persona* and an impression of downright unaffected sincerity. In the preface the tone is simple and humble until the mention of Gratian and court life (31 ff.): then the echo of Ovid mentioned above, undercut by the wry introduction of *penates* to the world of gods and heroes (cf. Ovid, *Met.* 1.174) plays its part in the exaltation of Gratian and the contrast of his world with that of Bordeaux and its environs where the poet grew up. A similar tone, but without humour, is used in the early work written to congratulate his father on reaching the status of grandfather (*Ep.* I (*Ep.* XVIII)): *pater optime testor* (25) stands out in this context, though its component words are no less ordinary than those surrounding them. In the *Epicedion ad Patrem*, a description of his father's life and principles, a minimum of Horatian colouring is given to set the appropriate tone. In the *Parentalia* lines like *Par.* 5(3).22 are meant to be prominent, and appropriate reminiscences of Vergil ring out in the elegy on his wife (11(9)); they are otherwise used rarely (except for characterization in the *Professores*, formulae of transition, and the echo in *Prof.* 13(12).5 which is almost apologetic, since Ausonius knew absolutely nothing of the man commemorated there). Even in the *Moselle* there is an apparent lull in imitation before the invocation of the Naiad (77 ff.) and the catalogue of fishes; while the comparative rarity of classical reminiscence in the *Oratio* (IV.3 (II.III))—though some items are striking—leave the way open for some majestic theology and the humble rectitude of the poet's prayer.

Before turning to those works like the *Moselle* and *Cupido Cruciatu*s which are usually rich in reminiscence there should be mentioned a technique especially notable in poems of an intermediate kind. It may be called an 'introductory' or 'preparatory' technique, since its function is to prepare the reader for an important imitation. The *Protrepicus ad Nepotem* (XIII.2: *Ep.* XXII) offers at least two good examples, one in the prose introduction (a letter to his son) and one in the poem. In the former, an explicit quotation of Terence (*Eunuchus* 313 f.) is preceded by two 'comic diminutives', one actually from Plautus (*venustulus* (*Asin.* 223)), the other not found in comedy but similar (*forticulus*). In line 19 of the poem we have a typically neat use of Vergil in 'seri, nova cura, nepotes' (cf. *G.* 2.58 and *Aen.* 3.505); this awakens us to the epic similes that immediately follow. This preparation may be achieved in other ways: in XII.2.9 (III.1.9) a line-ending typical of Horace ('nulla fuit res') is placed before a passage of Horatian moralizing: in *Prof.* 17(16).10 'principum amicitiae' and the distinctive scansion of *contigerunt* prepare for the periphrases of Constantinople, the climax of Arborius' career. A mention of Vergil by name is ushered in by the rare epithet *dia* in *Mos.* 374.

Poems well stocked in borrowings frequently see a technique known to Pichon²

¹ *Die Moselgedichte des Decimus Magnus Ausonius und des Venantius Fortunatus* (Marburg, 1926), p.37.

² R. Pichon, *Les Derniers Écrivains profanes* (Paris, 1906), p.155.

and Posani as 'contamination'—the combination or compounding of references in the space of a short phrase, a single line, or a description, which merits especial emphasis. It has a literary purpose as well as psychological or compositional interest. So the invocation of the *Nais* to record the fish of the *Moselle*—an important part of the poem and a verbal counterpart to a mosaic at the centre of a Roman house or church—combines words of Statius (*S.* 3.2.14) Lucan (4.110 f.), and perhaps Ovid (*Met.* 5.368) in the words 'cui cura secundae/sortis et aequei cessit tutela tridentis'. The same section ends with the magnification of the *silurus* in 145–7, with Ovid (*Met.* 3.597), Vergil (*Aen.* 3.196), and Statius (*Ach.* 1.462). The fishermen who set out in lines 240 ff. to disturb the river's peace are similarly treated. A cluster of echoes sets off the prestigious comparison in 287 ff. to the Bosphorus, Ausonius' promise to write a greater poem (392 ff.), and the final address to the majestic river in 469 ff. In *Ep.* II.15 (*Ep.* XXI.15) the phrase 'gramineos nunc frango toros'—an imaginative combination of Mart. 2.59.3, Verg. *Aen.* 6.674, and Stat. *Tb.* 1.583—heightens the writer's desperation. In XIII.2.29 ff. (*Ep.* XXII.29) the collection of periphrases for the schoolmaster's weapons (including an amusing use of Vergil's *virgea* . . . *supellex*, *G.* 1.165) underlines the mock-seriousness of what he is describing. The validity of this interpretation of this technique gains striking confirmation from other poems: it is found in *Par.* 11 (9).24–5 (his wife's death) and 14 (12).5 (his sister's way of life), and applied to the brilliantly precocious Alethius Minervius (*Prof.* 7(6)); in Paulinus' first letter to Ausonius the points which may be seen as receiving this kind of emphasis are the new life (29 f.), the power of God as seen in natural phenomena (120 ff.), the contrast of seen and unseen (176 f.: this includes an echo of *Moselle*, 170); the transience of man (288 f.) and the judgement of God (299 ff.). In letters to Paulinus a similar effect is intended in the aggregation of examples of the voices of nature in *Ep.* XXIII.9 ff. (*Ep.* XXVIII.9 ff.) and in the strong climax of *Ep.* XXV (*Ep.* XXVII) in its development of the theme of *reditus amantis*.¹

From the frequency of imitation we must turn to the subtlety of its application, and in particular the exploitation of the original context. In *Mos.* 26 and 47 ff. quotations of Horace are straightforwardly used to reinforce the poet's meaning; Ovid. *F.* 1.286 'tradiderat famulas iam tibi Rhenus aquas' has obvious point in *Mos.* 360. Other reminiscences are less simple; but a warning against hasty condemnation of some such passages as extraneous or irrelevant is offered by the excellent study by Görler² of a chain of references in the *Moselle* to Elysium and the underworld which heighten the praise of the river by both comparison and contrast. This impressive study—which remains so even if details may be controverted—also points up, by signally avoiding it, the danger of eccentric and unreasonable explanation of isolated similarities, and the following are advanced with due caution. In *Mos.* 324 there is more than 'coquetterie' (Posani, p.48) in the borrowing of words used by Vergil (*Aen.* 1.419), of a hill overlooking the new buildings of Carthage; this imitation follows a reference to a temple (*Aen.* 3.536) and the villas are again compared (as they were in 300 ff.) to the greatest of their kind. In *Mos.* 202 the phrase 'et varios ineunt flexus' recalls the *lusus Troiae* (*Aen.* 5.583 'inde alios ineunt cursus'). There is an important reference in 'flaventem . . . Garumnā' (160) to the Tiber (not yet

¹ See C. Witke, *Numen Litterarum* (Leiden and Cologne, 1971), pp.29 ff.

² W. Görler, 'Virgilzitate in Ausonius' *Mosella*', *Hermes* 97 (1969), 94–114.

demoted as it is in 377), through its specific adjective (cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 7.31, Hor. C. 1.8.8). Finally, and no less importantly for the poet's attitudes, the phrase 'satis precum datum deo' (III.4.1; II.4.1) might have led to less misunderstanding of Ausonius' Christianity if Vergilian contexts, intensely religious, had been noted (*Aen.* 2.291, 9.135).

A further category may be outlined, where the original context is pointedly recast or rejected, but ought nevertheless to be borne in mind. In *Mos.* 157 ff., the mountains that were wild to Vergil have now become the hinterland of Constantinople and pullulate with vines (in Stat. *Tb.* 2.81 ff. and 4.653 ff., quoted by Posani (p.43), it is the wildness, not the sweetness, of Bacchus that is emphasized). Another case of such *aemulatio* may be detected in *Mos.* 26, where 'viridissima gramine ripa' is taken from a Vergilian *locus amoenus* (*G.* 3.144) and changed to 'consite gramineas, amnis viridissime, ripas'; the exaggerated and difficult picture of a river 'sown with vines on its grassy banks' is finally resolved in the exquisite development of the conceit in 192 ff. In Epigr. CXIII.4 (II.VII.4) 'copia fandi' (*Aen.* 1.520) is used in a new sense of 'room for words' (on writing material), and in *Prof.* 19 (18).4 sarcastically of a voluble but vacuous speaker; in *Par.* 6(4).29 'concilia . . . priorum' is undoubtedly correct (although Vergil wrote 'piorum/concilia' in *Aen.* 5.734–5), as Ausonius refers to his grandfather's insight into past, present, and future. There is a significant variation on a familiar borrowing in *Ep.* XVIII.5 (*Ep.* XIII.5): the passage of Horace (*Ep.* 2.1.234) is quoted elsewhere with his *acceptos*, but here *interceptos* gives the reader (including of course the correspondent) a choice: were they 'diverted' from another purpose for Ursulus' benefit, or is the gift itself a 'diversion' of money from better uses? Ausonius' cool attitude to Ursulus prompts the latter interpretation, and the original context—Alexander and the uncouth poet—supports the point.

Wit and skill are frequent; parody, in the sense of humour achieved by a small change in the wording or reference of a well-known phrase, is surprisingly rare, especially for a poet often condemned as frivolous, if we omit the rather unfair basis of this judgement, the *Cento Nuptialis* (XXVIII: XVII) and the eccentric *Technopaignion* (XXVII: XII). The amusing introduction of *penates* in III.33 (I.33) has already been mentioned; 'pinifer Atlans' in XIII.2.21 (*Ep.* XXII.21) is an amusing confusion of man and mountain. As I hope to show elsewhere, the 'catalogue' of fish in the *Moselle* emphatically does not enter this category; they symbolize the peace of the region and the dominance of Nature over Nurture. In *Prof.* 5(4).21–2 there is a *double entendre* which is probably accidental: in his comparison of Patera's distinguished old age with an eagle's Ausonius forgets the less than complimentary use of the point in Ter. *Heaut.* 521 of the bibulous Chremes.

Not every re-use of a classical phrase or *topos* is felicitous. 'Glauca fluenta' in *Moselle* 351 has fascinated commentators: why the sudden remembrance of the Stygian 'rauca fluenta' (Verg. *Aen.* 6.327)? Görler (p.103) and Posani (p.41) do not explain its strident suddenness, contrary to the ordered flow of the panegyric. The 'plains' of the *Moselle* in line 12, which are the topographical opposite of the picture given elsewhere, come from Elysium (Verg. *Aen.* 6.640); *tot* in 77 (inspired by Verg. *G.* 2.103 ff.) is pointless, at least in its immediate context—reverence, not their number, makes the poet pause. The connotations of 'tota veste vocat' in *Mos.* 368 may not be thought entirely suitable, not only because the Nile (Verg. *Aen.* 8.712) is not the Moselle and the reference in the

later poet not to a personification,¹ but because of the commitment of our sympathies in opposite directions. Criticism of the use of *topoi* is deceptively easy, especially if the observations of Curtius² (and others), on later poetry, are not tempered with the reservations of Dronke³ (and others); but it may be pointed out that the idea underlying the imagined journey of the letter to Probus (*Ep.* XVI (XII)) and its intimate confrontation with the great man's features had more point when fired by Ovid's erotic imagination in *Her.* XVII. 15 ff. In the development of the *reditus amantis* theme already referred to, Ausonius halts between imaginary damage to the landscape and climate because of his friend's absence (as in Verg. *Ecl.* 7.53 ff.) and realistic descriptions taken from Horace (*Serm.* 1.1.36) and others. Finally, in his discourse on dreams (III.7.22 ff.: II.8.22 ff.) the poet is uncertain whether to treat the two gates as a *topos* (like Julian, 384 A = *Ep.* 4 W) or refer to Vergil (*Aen.* 6.893 ff.). In the end he compromises, paraphrasing Vergil but introducing the passage with an unnecessary *perhibent*.

In some passages there is a suspicion of misunderstanding the original (but also a danger of criticizing a Milton for his 'Fury with th'abhorred shears'). *Mos.* 32 suggests that Ausonius may have taken *bivio* in Verg. *Aen.* 9.238 as a description of *ponto*: he uses it effectively if unusually with *manamine*.⁴ In *Mos.* 305 'hominumque operumque labores' is an unthinking borrowing of a phrase found in *Aen.* 1.455, 1.507, G. 2.155. Editors have convincingly postulated a misunderstanding of 'carmina quae scribuntur aquae potoribus' (Hor. *Ep.* 1.19.3) in XXV.3.5 ff. (VIII.2.5 ff.); G. W. Williams has suggested to me the possibility that the corrupt text of C. 1.12.31 underlies the unusual scansion of *quia* in *Prof.* 9(8).7, soon after the following lines of that *Ode* have been used (*Prof.* 9(8).1). The phrase 'inclinat ad meridiem' (in a truncated context at III.4.8 (II.4.8), certainly referring to morning), seems a careless use of Horace C. 3.28.5, but the sundial may be responsible. More speculatively I suggest that misunderstandings of *A.P.* 17 may have contributed to *ambitus* (unusual but effective) in *Mos.* 374, and perhaps 'vexisse poemata plaustri' (of Thespis' drama in *A.P.* 276) to the picture of Paulus loading his poems onto his carriage in *Ep.* X.39 (VI.39). In *Ep.* III.77 (*Ep.* XIV.77) there is no indication that Ausonius understands the original of his *nodos*: in *Sat.* 3.11 Persius is referring to a particularly useless kind of pen, while Ausonius borrows the phrase for a humorously bombastic pastiche (the same may be said of the context of the word *sulcus*, to which Thraede⁵ traces a common medieval metaphor). A corrupt text adds to the difficulties in *Ep.* XVI.1.12 (*Ep.* XII.19) for it is hard to reconstruct what was meant in Plautus, *Menaechmi* prol. 13: if on the authority of Ausonius, who usually quotes accurately, we restore 'hoc igitur interim antelogium fuerit' (a line itself not without anomaly, as Dr. A. S. Gratwick has pointed out to me), the prologue writer is using the novel phrase *antelogium* to refer to a prologue before a prologue, whereas Ausonius seems to treat it as 'preface' simply, unless the verse letter that follows is also a 'prologue' to the gift of books he is sending.

¹ This point is made by Posani, p.47 n.2.

² E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Eng. tr., Princeton, 1952).

³ E. P. M. Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1970).

⁴ The reference seen in *munimine* by Görler (pp.106 f.) is out of place in this general summary of the river's qualities.

⁵ K. Thraede, *Studien zu Sprache und Stil des Prudentius*, *Hypomnemata* 13 (Göttingen 1965), pp.109 ff.

Finally, some examples may be noted in which literary echoes, instead of contributing to a text, have marred it by causing the well-known scribal error that arises from the substitution of a familiar phrase from a classical writer.¹ I have noted the following: *Mos.* 93, *maioris* to *melioris* after Verg. *Aen.* 4.221— or perhaps the reverse, after Luc. 1.400; *Mos.* 384 *serena* after Verg. *Aen.* 4.477, where *severa* gives a typical contrast (cf. *Par.* 4(2).5); *Ep.* XIX.34 (*Ep.* XXIII.42) *arctos* for *arces* after Verg. *Aen.* 6.16—17; in *Ep.* XXII.2.5 (*Ep.* XXV.5) perhaps *fulminis* is due to a misunderstanding of Verg. *G.* 1.328/9; *Ep.* XXIII.10 (*Ep.* XXVIII.10) ‘*vocalis imago resultat*’ perhaps stems from Verg. *G.* 4.50; *verba* in Paulinus X.116 (*Ep.* XXXI.116) after Statius *Ach.* 1.960.

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¹ A. Hudson-Williams, ‘Imitative Echoes and Textual Criticism’, *CQ* N.S. 9 (1959), 61–71.