

STILL WATERS RUN DEEP: A NEW STUDY OF THE *PROFESSORES* OF BORDEAUX

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the works in which Ausonius of Bordeaux and Libanius of Antioch, writing within a few years of each other, recall their long and varied careers is that there is so little resemblance between them; the impressions given by these experienced and successful teachers could hardly be more disparate. The reader of Ausonius finds in his *Protrepticus* (Ep. 22 Peiper)¹ a familiar enough picture of the terrors of the schoolroom; his *Professores* offer at first sight a series of bland commemorations apparently deficient in the interesting information which might be expected from such an archive. Libanius' many volumes, on the other hand, compared where appropriate with the *Vitae Sophistarum* of Eunapius, present a situation which is well summarised by the following sentences from Walden's work *The Universities of Ancient Greece* (still valuable seventy-five years after its publication): 'There was, among the sophists of the fourth century... little, if any, of that spirit of brotherhood... that usually exists in a community of scholars at the present day. Instead there were jealousy, spite and often unrelenting hatred'.² This striking divergence between Ausonius and his Eastern counterparts is unlikely to reflect a basic difference between East and West, or between Latin- and Greek-speaking milieux; the complaints of Augustine about his problems in Africa and Rome warn against such a simple answer.³ When one adds the evidence provided seven centuries later by the Frenchman Peter Abelard, whose plaintive *Historia Calamitatum* – an account of the disasters he suffered, not those which he caused – is remarkably similar to the prickly self-justification of Libanius in its account of bitter scheming and almost military manoeuvres in the educational world,⁴ one is forced to consider whether the evidence of Ausonius is not a serious anomaly, and to seek an explanation.

The task of explaining the gulf between the placid retrospect of Ausonius and the spirited apologia of Libanius' autobiography might be approached by invoking the obvious differences in medium and genre, but any such explanation would be inadequate; these literary differences are a symptom and not a cause. To state his case and explain his attitudes Libanius adopts a mixture of rhetorical declamation and personal memoir,⁵ whereas Ausonius' literary purpose, and accordingly his medium, is quite different. The *rhetores* and *grammatici* whom he commemorates are to him *reverenda virorum nomina pro patriae religione*, and he is bound to them by *fama et carae religio patriae, et studium in libris et sedula cura docendi*.⁶ In the final poem he

¹ Although the edition of C. Schenkl (MGH *Auctores Antiquissimi* 5.2 [Berlin, 1883]) is the most convenient of those available, references in this article will be made to the edition of R. Peiper (Leipzig, 1886), whose numeration, followed by H. G. Evelyn White, *Ausonius* (Loeb, 1967), M. Jasinski (*Ausone. Oeuvres en vers et en prose* [Paris, 1934]) and, for the elegies, S. Prete, *Ausonius. Opuscula* (Leipzig, 1978), will be more generally familiar. Schenkl includes the verse preface to the *Professores* in his numeration, the others do not.

² J. W. H. Walden, *The Universities of Ancient Greece* (London, 1912), 152.

³ Augustine, *Conf.* 5.8.14, 5.12.22.

⁴ Edited by J. Monfrin in *Abelard, Historia Calamitatum* (Paris, 1967) and by J. T. Muckle, 'Abelard's Letter of Consolation to a Friend (*Historia Calamitatum*)', *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950), 163–213.

⁵ See *Libanius' Autobiography (Oration I)*, ed. A. F. Norman (Oxford, 1965), xiv ff.

⁶ *Prof.* 16.3/4; *Prof. Pref.* 2/3.

allows all his colleagues to be good and great; and he expresses the hope that he himself will be celebrated in due course by a writer *exemplo cupiet qui pius esse meo*.⁷ Clearly the *pietas* of the *Parentalia* spills over abundantly into the *Professores*. There are indeed certain gradations of tone, to be seen most notably in the two accounts of his nephew Herculanius; what seems a cruel blow of Fate in *Par.* 17 is described as a culpable choice in *Prof.* 11. An embarrassing dilemma was presented by the poet's friend Dynamius, who had left Bordeaux in dubious circumstances (*Prof.* 23), and by Marcellus, whose intellectual promise and reprobate character are given equal prominence in *Prof.* 18. The disappointments of Delphidius' life, which proceeded like a meteor and ended like one, are not spared, but certain matters which caused extreme bitterness at the precise time when Ausonius was writing are treated with great sensitivity.⁸ Exuperius, on the other hand, receives a generous helping of ridicule (and Ausonius chooses continuous hexameters, which he uses nowhere else in these poems, to express his pompous, inane style); either because he had fished in the same waters as Ausonius' beloved uncle Arborius or perhaps, as has recently been suggested, because he had been a rival of the poet himself at one stage.⁹ But to those who remained in Bordeaux, his *patria*, Ausonius is almost entirely loyal: *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Unlike Libanius, he can recollect his colleagues' actions in tranquillity, secure in the unchallenged dignity that derived from his role of imperial tutor and elder statesman.

But was university life in Bordeaux really so placid? Even without the wealth of comparative material available, the general mildness of Ausonius' treatment would have aroused suspicion. Sporadic evidence from Jerome and Sidonius¹⁰ supports Ausonius' claim that there was an abundance of local talent; and what Ausonius tells us of the origins and destinations of certain teachers suggests great ambition. This will have been fanned by the prestige which the profession enjoyed (even before Ausonius' rise to fame) and by the immunities regularly available to teachers, if not by the actual material rewards; publicly, at least, Bordeaux was not a wealthy city, and apparently lacked the imperial patronage that at various times was attracted by Autun, Arles, Trier, and Toulouse.¹¹ We should imagine many aspirants to chairs, both competent and incompetent, and audiences that were discriminating, or at least passionate and impressionable. Supply and demand will have worked upon each other. It would be surprising if the contemporary religious and political conflict at all levels of the Empire was not mirrored in the world of education. Unlike Libanius, Ausonius does not tell us whether students were kidnapped, or their teachers framed or mugged¹²; but we know that in Bordeaux a heretic was stoned,¹³ we hear of municipal conflict,¹⁴ and we meet partisans of rival ideologies.¹⁵ Ausonius' picture of 'la paix des lettres' (as Jasinski translates *Prof.* 5.19) should surely be reconsidered in the light of such a volatile situation. The aim of this article is to re-examine Ausonius' writings for signs of the rivalry between teachers which is frequently the root cause of unrest in the ancient university, and in particular to seek evidence for the existence of rival chairs; an investigation stimulated on the one hand by the nature of the material and on the other by Alan Booth's recent article, 'The Academic Career of Ausonius', to which

⁷ *Prof.* 26.1; *Prof. Pref.* 6.

⁸ *Prof.* 5.35–8; see H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila* (Oxford, 1976), 132ff.

⁹ *Prof.* 17; see A. D. Booth, 'The Academic Career of Ausonius', *Phoenix* 36 (1982), 331/2.

¹⁰ Jerome, *Chron. sub annis* 336, 353, 355; Sidonius, *Ep.* 5.10.3, 8.11.2.

¹¹ C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule* (Paris, 1909–26), 8.260 and, in general, R. Étienne, *Bordeaux Antique* (Bordeaux, 1962); works of scholarship and *pietas*.

¹² Lib. *Or.* 1.16, 1.62, 1.72.

¹³ Prosper, *Chron. s.a.* 385

¹⁴ Aus. *Par.* 15.5–8.

¹⁵ See p. 502.

my debt will be obvious.¹⁶ There is no unequivocal indication of the number of available chairs in Bordeaux, and it will be necessary to make a systematic inquiry into Ausonius' data within the framework offered by analogies from elsewhere.

I

Writers before Booth believed that there were numerous chairs of rhetoric and *grammaticae* at Bordeaux: Jullian, followed by Haarhoff¹⁷ and Bolgar,¹⁸ suggested four and six respectively, Étienne the 'total fort honorable' of five and eight¹⁹ (five Latin and three Greek grammarians). But, as Booth remarks, these figures seem rather higher than the evidence of analogy warrants. In the second century A.D. an edict of Antoninus Pius, preserved in the *Digest* with the comments of Modestinus, laid down that in Asia small cities could allow immunity to not more than three of each, that larger ones should observe a limit of four of each, and that the limit for capitals was five of each²⁰; but in view of evidence closer to the time of Ausonius, which relates to the larger cities of the empire, it would be unwise to rely on that analogy. In A.D. 425 the numbers of Latin and Greek rhetors at Constantinople were fixed at three and five respectively, and the total of *grammatici* at ten in each language²¹; at Athens there seem to have been three rhetors in the time of Libanius.²² From Gaul there are two pieces of evidence. The panegyric in which Eumenius of Autun welcomes imperial help in a time of reconstruction seems to indicate one chair and one assistant, though the latter is described in the phrase *non civitate Atticum sed eloquio*, which could be used of a Latin rhetor.²³ More helpful than this rather obscure evidence is the edict issued from Trier in 376 by Gratian, and probably drafted by Ausonius or under his influence.²⁴ It must be borne in mind that this is the decree of a government highly favourable to the teaching profession, and that the presence of the court at Trier may have increased demand; yet this administration, like all others, was aware of financial constraints, and the provision was intended to apply to the whole of the northern diocese of Gaul (Bonner, 114ff.). In the version of Mommsen and Meyer the text of the edict reads as follows:

Per omnem dioecesim commissam magnificentiae tuae frequentissimis in civitatibus, quae pollent et eminent claritudine, praeceptorum optimi quique erudiendae praesideant iuventuti: rhetores loquimur et grammaticos Atticae Romanaeque doctrinae. Quorum oratoribus viginti quattuor annonarum e fisco emolumenta donentur, grammaticis Latino vel Graeco duodecim annonarum deductior paulo numerus ex more praestetur, ut singulis urbibus, quae metropoles nuncupantur, nobilium professorum electio celebretur nec vero iudicemus, liberum ut sit cuique civitati suos doctores et magistros placito sibi iuvare compendio. Trevirorum vel clarissimae civitati uberius aliquid putavimus deferendum, rhetori ut triginta, item viginti grammatico Latino, Graeco etiam, si qui dignus repperiri potuerit, duodecim praebeantur annonae.

It is clearly stipulated that rhetors and *grammatici* are to receive salaries of twenty-four and twelve *annonae* respectively, with the exception of those in Trier, who are to be

¹⁶ Above, n. 9. Henceforth referred to as 'Booth (1982)'; 'Booth (1978)' will indicate his previous article 'Notes on Ausonius' *Professores* in *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 235-49.

¹⁷ T. J. Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul* (Oxford, 1920), 115.

¹⁸ R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, 1973), 33.

¹⁹ Étienne (above, n. 11), 240, where Numerius is of course not a rhetor, but the governor; the semi-colon and the following comma should not have changed places. There is an awkwardness of expression also, in that 'lui-même' is one of Ausonius' five contemporaries.

²⁰ *Digest* 27.1.6.

²¹ *Cod. Theod.* 14.9.3.

²² See Booth (1982), 334.

²³ *Pan. Lat.* 9.17.4 Mynors (5 Galletier); discussed by Booth (1982), 334.

²⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.11, with S. F. Bonner, 'The Edict of Gratian on the Remuneration of Teachers', *AJP* 86 (1965), 113-37.

paid thirty and twenty respectively. Other things are far from clear, including the punctuation, which will be discussed shortly. No mention is made of the numbers of teachers, although it is likely that these were carefully regulated; but certain inferences may be made. Booth's conclusion (335) from the phrase *grammaticis Latino vel Graeco* is surely inescapable: namely that one of each kind was envisaged for each city (or rather not more than one: it is clear that a Greek *grammaticus* could not always be found at Trier).²⁵ The plural *oratoribus* should indicate with similar precision that there was to be more than one rhetor in each city. This is a conclusion of obvious relevance to Bordeaux, where, as will be seen, it is easier to detect more than one chair in Latin *grammaticae* than it is to detect more than one chair of rhetoric.

The edict does not explicitly forbid the activity of other rhetors besides those whose pay is regulated here; these might have been tolerated as long as they did not claim public money or immunities. As well as such private teachers chancing their arm there may well have been the equivalent of distinguished visiting professors. This, I suggest, may be inferred from the words *deductio paulo numerus ex more praestetur, ut singulis urbibus, quae metropoles nuncupantur, nobilium professorum electio celebretur*. Bonner has argued, convincingly, that these words form a separate sentence, to be clearly divided from what precedes, on the grounds that it is absurd that the sum of twelve *annonae* should be described as 'a slightly smaller number' than the rhetors' twenty-four. One might also argue that it is unlikely that an edict would draw attention to the differential, which is not unusual in some form or other. By creating two sentences Bonner also made it easier to understand *ex more*, which is otherwise problematic: if the purpose of the edict is to set new levels of payment, as it surely is, how can these be described as in accordance with custom? It is in fact on this point that the explanation recently offered by Kaster²⁶ founders, for as his literal translation makes plain, *ex more* is naturally taken to qualify the whole clause *deductio... praestetur* – a possibility that he did not consider. So 'a slightly smaller number' (of *annonae*, it would appear) 'should be awarded in accordance with custom...' – for what purpose? According to Bonner, to enable celebrations to be held in the *metropoleis* when a professor was elected. These doubtless took place, but it would be surprising if they needed to be legitimated or budgeted for in this way, and Kaster sees other difficulties in the operation of the scheme (103/4). Any explanation based on the traditional punctuation must assume a certain amount of redundancy in expression, as Kaster has to admit (108), but another interpretation is possible, based on a common meaning of *celebrare* (one more prominent in *TLL* and *LS* than in *OLD*), that of *exercere, saepius adhibere, facere*, which gives a translation: 'so that the election of distinguished professors may be made frequently'. Provision for this would more easily be made by cutting overall numbers than by reducing salaries, and so I suggest that the intention was to make a smaller number of *appointments*. (The writer who used *praestare* in this way ('supply') assimilated teachers to soldiers in a way entirely understandable in the Later Roman Empire.) The money thus saved could be used to make relatively frequent (and by implication short-term) elections of professors of particular merit in *metropoleis*. It is therefore not necessary to follow Kaster and claim that 'the *civitates* initially alluded to must = the *urbes* subsequently defined (just as, for example, *praeceptorum optimi quique* must = *nobiles professores*)' (108); both phrases now acquire a particular function. Moreover, the emphatic *suos doctores et*

²⁵ At about the same time Ausonius, writing as *quaestor* to Ursulus, a *grammaticus* of Trier, mentions one Harmonius, who evidently had some expertise in Greek (*Ep.* 13.26ff.).

²⁶ R. A. Kaster, 'A Reconsideration of Gratian's School Law', *Hermes* 112 (1984), 100–14. This appeared when my article was virtually complete.

magistros in the next clause gains in significance, indicating that the local teachers are not to be helped by *civitates* which set their own salary levels. (*Compendium* in the *Codex* is more likely to mean 'amount' than 'reduction' or 'economy': Bonner 128/9.) The purpose of the clause which begins *nec vero iudicemus* (or more probably... *iudicamus*) is not merely to reinforce the point that salaries are determined from above but to make clear that if appropriate teachers from outside are not forthcoming the municipal senates must not use the extra money to the advantage of their own established appointees.

If, then, the words *deductior paulo numerus...* refer to the numbers of teachers and not to the amount of their salaries, the interpretation of *oratoribus* above to mean at least one in each city is strengthened, for a smaller number than one could only be zero, which would be impossible. Admittedly, the edict may be thinking in terms of overall numbers in the diocese, which the prefect would have to regulate; the words *ex more* show that there is a context to these provisions which eludes our knowledge. It may, however, be stated with certainty that the edict envisages for each large city in the northern diocese of Gaul a single *grammaticus* in each language, at most, and a larger number of rhetors. It is by far the most apposite of the external evidence and provides a fair guide to what may reasonably be expected in Bordeaux; at least it ensures that the postulation of two chairs of rhetoric and more than one for Latin *grammatici* will not fly in the face of analogy.

II

It is time to turn to the text of Ausonius. Chairs of rhetoric in the plural are mentioned in one passage, outside the *Professores*, but this is not conclusive. In *Ep.* 8.27ff. Ausonius writes to his friend Paulus:

Iam satis, ο φίλε Παῦλε, πόνου ἀπεπειρήθην
 "Εν τε φορῶ causais τε καὶ ingratais καθέδραις,
 'Ρητορικοῖς ludoisι, καὶ ἔπλετο οὐδὲν ὄνειαρ.

Very little is known of Paulus, who was alive when the *Professores* were written: he seems to have lived in Bigorre (*Ep.* 7, *fin.*), and may never have professed at Bordeaux, though he is *rhetor Burdigalensis* in the indices of Peiper and Schenkl.²⁷ Ausonius certainly did, but there is no indication here that the two men held chairs at Bordeaux at the same time. He is looking back on their lives²⁸ and with a mixture of sympathy and mockery seeking points of common interest, as he does when he characterises them both as idle dotards and describes their chairs as 'thankless' (E. White) or unprofitable – a point which will be noted later.

This reference is rightly ignored in this connexion by Booth; the next requires closer attention, for it is on this that Booth founds his belief that there existed at Bordeaux only a single chair. The passage is *Prof.* 1.7/8:

adserat usque licet Fabium Calagurris alumnum
 non sit Burdigalae dum cathedra inferior.

Booth comments (335): 'If in lines 7f. Ausonius asserts that Bordeaux has produced

²⁷ Booth ([1978], 241 n. 20) believes that he taught not at Bordeaux but at Saintes, because of *Ep.* 10.1–4; but Ausonius may there be thinking of his own convenience (cf. *Ep.* 6.17ff.), not his friend's.

²⁸ One of Ausonius' letters to Paulus was written c. 390 (see *Ep.* 5.40), and the whole series may date from this later period of his life.

rhetors so noble as Quintilian, then *Burdigalae...cathedra* means not "a chair at Bordeaux" but "the chair at Bordeaux". Although Ausonius here is actually comparing the birthplaces of Tiberius Minervius and Quintilian, he is indeed by implication comparing the rhetors also. The definite article is certainly preferred by translators, but there are other possible interpretations: Ausonius might be referring to the principal chair among a larger number, or he might mean Tiberius' chair in the sense of Tiberius' professorship (cf. *Prof.* 22.17 *nostrae...cathedrae*); or he might be using *cathedra* as a generalising singular (cf. *Ep.* 29.5, where *charta* is used of four separate letters). None of these possibilities is ruled out by the observation that Quintilian held the famous chair instituted by Vespasian, the only Latin chair of his time in Rome; this does not seem to be an essential part of the comparison.

A third passage is open to interpretation in a way which makes it highly relevant to the question of the number of rhetorical chairs. This is *Prof.* 6.21ff., which reads in Peiper's text *tu Burdigalae | laetus patriae | clara cohortis | vexilla regens*; and in Schenkl's *tu Burdigalae | laetus patriae | postque Paterae | clara cohortis | vexilla regens*. The short lines of this poem are presented in great disorder in our single manuscript, V; the emendation and correct location of *postque paterae* is a continuing problem. It is not necessary to follow the editors of the 1558 edition (the *editio princeps* of these poems) in suppressing it, or Scaliger and Toll in suggesting a lacuna. Schenkl's reconstruction is awkward because *-que* then joins *tu Burdigalae laetus patriae* with *postque Paterae clara cohortis vexilla regens*, and a further objection is that the line breaks up a group of lines which are consecutive in the manuscript and give good sense. This objection is avoided by Peiper, reading Toll's emendation *Paterae* and placing the line earlier, so that it follows *iam genitori | collatus eras* (12f.). But why should Alethius Minervius be *subsequently* compared with Patera, one of the oldest of the *Professores* (below, p. 498)? There is no hint that Patera was better than Tiberius, and Ausonius would not have said so even if it was true; in fact he rather suggests the reverse. There is no hint that as time went on Alethius developed a speciality which linked him with Patera; such things, whatever they might be, are not mentioned by Ausonius. Prete's solution of the textual problem is to read *Postque Pateram* before *tu Burdigalae* and the rest of the phrase; the manuscript grouping of that phrase is retained, but the obvious antithesis between *ille...Romae* and *tu Burdigalae* is ruined. An alternative approach may start from a difficulty that exists in the usual interpretation of *laetus patriae* – 'content with your fatherland/home town of Bordeaux'. Given Ausonius' apparent high regard for the virtue of contentment, this seems a rather tactless criticism of the father, to whom pride of place has been given in the commemoration (*Prof.* 1).²⁹ I suggest that *patriae* should be taken as an adjective qualifying *cohortis*, and that *postque Paterae* should follow *vexilla regens*; this gives the sense 'you at Bordeaux were happy to guide the famous banners of your father's troop, and then that of Patera; you were greater than either' (or 'than both', since *uterque* often means 'both' in Ausonius). It might be objected that Patera did not follow Tiberius, and this seems probable even if Tiberius taught at Bordeaux early in his career, a supposition denied by Booth but defended below (p. 498). (The first line of Patera's own notice [*Prof.* 4] might be thought to support this, but the words *dictos prius* there need not include Tiberius.) The objection may be avoided by supposing Ausonius' meaning to be not that Alethius succeeded Patera directly but that he succeeded to the chair associated with Patera; two chairs which had been separate were amalgamated,

²⁹ For a demonstration that Alethius Minervius is the son of Tiberius Victor Minervius, see Booth (1978), 240ff.

whether as a result of municipal decree, lack of pupils or the fickleness of audiences. Such an honour would give particular point to the final line of the reconstructed sentence *maior utroque*, which, wherever it is placed, is otherwise unsubstantiated and arguably tactless. In this situation the word *cohors* for each 'class' would be highly appropriate; it is used by Gellius in 1.9.12 and 2.18.1 of particular schools of philosophy. Ausonius might conceivably have been thinking of the Greek term *choros*,³⁰ though he never uses it elsewhere, and could have latinised it easily.

III

So far, then, a disappointing Greek remark, a disputed inference from a rhetorical comparison, and a disputable interpretation of a difficult text. The evidence for a single chair has been questioned, and the possibility creeps into view that two chairs of rhetoric existed, which on one occasion brought renown to their single occupant. Evidence of a different kind must now be discussed.

Booth listed eight successive occupants of his single chair, and distributed them, according to such chronological indications as Ausonius gives, over a period of some sixty years, which is, roughly speaking, the period covered by Ausonius' evidence. It is natural to suppose, though this is nowhere stated, that the record begins soon after the date of Ausonius' birth, usually given as *c.* 310³¹; but it should also be noted that Ausonius might have included teachers who died as late as 385, which is the *terminus post quem* of these poems.³² The number of eight is reached by including all rhetors who lived in Bordeaux and are not stated to have taught exclusively elsewhere. It is fair to assume that their assistants, if they had any, are not mentioned, an omission that can easily be explained by supposing that they were much less noteworthy, or that they later became full teachers, or that this humble function was undertaken by relatives or older students. Ausonius should have had no lack of basic information, and it need not be thought that any holders of full chairs fail to appear. Although the evidence of the 'envoi' (*Prof.* 26)³³ is at first sight inconsistent with what has preceded, its references to philosophy and medicine are passing acknowledgements of separate disciplines, while historical knowledge and versification are probably noted as accomplishments of certain of the foregoing teachers which were omitted earlier.

There are, however, various considerations which suggest that the total of eight professors for this period may be too low. In the first place, it could be the case that, unknown to us, a rhetor who served at the end of this period was still alive at the time that Ausonius wrote his obituaries. There is naturally little information on which to judge this matter, but a possible example is Tetradius, to whom Ausonius wrote *Ep.* 11. Tetradius had recently come from Angoulême to work 'amid throngs of famous men and not far hence' (E. White) and may therefore have been a rhetor (though the contents of the letter would be equally appropriate to a *grammaticus*) at Bordeaux.³⁴

³⁰ Walden (above n. 2), 274 n. 3.

³¹ Booth's argumentation ([1982], 329 n. 4) would commend a slightly later date than the usual 310.

³² *Prof.* 5.35–8, with Chadwick (above, n. 8), 132–8.

³³ 'Envoi' is of course a poor translation of *poeta*, the heading given to the poem in the manuscript. *Poeta* may be the interpolation of a scribe unaware that Ausonius was ending the series with a typical polymetric flourish.

³⁴ See Booth (1982), 343 n. 42. Étienne (above n. 11), 251 ascribes him to Saintes, because Ausonius' letter is written from Saintonge; but Ausonius expected visitors (such as Paulus) to come there from a long distance, and may be hoping that Tetradius will find travel from Bordeaux (or near by) more inviting than travel from Angoulême.

All that can be said about the date of the letter is that it was not written before 379, the date of the writer's consulship; it is possible, though perhaps rather unlikely, that Tetradius took up his position before 375. He does, however, serve as a reminder of a type of possible underrepresentation.

A further cause for uncertainty is the assumption that all the rhetors named by Ausonius each enjoyed only one tenure of a chair. One such case is the poet himself: though there is no evidence, it is likely that Ausonius did some teaching during what Peiper called his *otium Burdigalense* after the fall of Gratian; but even if he held a chair then, he falls outside the relevant period. Another teacher of remarkable longevity is Patera: older than Luciolus, who taught Ausonius, he was *senex* when Ausonius was *iuvēnis*; he apparently flourishes at Rome c. 336 but intervenes on his son's behalf in or soon after 365.³⁵ He could have taught in Bordeaux both before and after 336. His son Delphidius taught *florentissime* in Aquitaine c. 355 according to Jerome, and later in Bordeaux at a time when he was hardly flourishing. A more likely case is that of Tiberius Minervius Victor. Ausonius tells us that he taught in Constantinople, Rome and then Bordeaux; Jerome (*Chron. s.a.*) that he flourished in Rome in 353. Since *dehinc* in *Prof.* 1.4. is presumably temporal, he returned to Bordeaux after 353, if Jerome is not mistaken.³⁶ At that time he could not have been the teacher of Ausonius, who would be forty at the very least. Yet Ausonius seems to claim very definitely to have been Tiberius' pupil, in lines 9–11:

mille foro dedit hic iuvenes; bis mille senatus
adiecit numero purpureisque togis;
me quoque:...

It is certainly true, as Booth argues (336 n. 23), that Ausonius' entry to the senate occurred many years after his formal education had ended, but this will surely have been the case for many of the pupils whom Tiberius 'added to the numbers of the senate'. Immediate recruitment to those bodies (the senates of Rome and Constantinople, not local ones, are meant) must have been uncommon. It is probably true also – as the final line seems to hint – that Tiberius' prestige was important for Ausonius' career, but in its context *me quoque* surely implies formal teaching rather than patronage or influence. The probability is that the young Ausonius was taught by Tiberius, who, like Luciolus, was only a few years older than his pupil. In poems as short as these the argument from silence is a dangerous one, especially when, as here, Ausonius is carefully weighing his words so as to present his *patria* in the best possible light (as well as grappling with the difficulties of introducing into verse the word *Constantinopolis*).

Thirdly, there is the specific case of Censorius in *Prof.* 14, who is omitted from Booth's total on the grounds that he was born in Bordeaux but taught at Rome; others have less plausibly thought of Athens. This disagreement is caused by the following lines:

tam generis tibi celsus apex, quam gloria fandi,
gloria Athenaei cognita sede loci;
Nazario et claro quondam delata Paterae
egregie multos excoluit iuvenes.

³⁵ For a discussion of the identity of the usurper supported by Delphidius, see Booth (1978), 237ff., and R. P. H. Green, 'Prosopographical Notes on the Family and Friends of Ausonius', *Bull. Inst. Class. Studs.* 25 (1978), 23, who both reach the same conclusion. For Patera's longevity see Booth (1978), 240 n. 18.

³⁶ See Booth (1982), 337.

The names of Nazarius and Patera, to be discussed shortly, point to a chair of Latin rhetoric, which Athens is unlikely to have enjoyed; and it is rather improbable that a native of Bordeaux, whose family seem to have remained there, taught in Athens. The choice between Rome and Bordeaux is more difficult. There is good evidence that an Athenaeum had existed at Rome since the time of Hadrian³⁷; but the word is used in a general sense in the following century by Sidonius (a frequent imitator of Ausonius) of certain places in Gaul, which resist precise specification.³⁸ It is not beyond dispute that the contemporary Jerome refers in *Ep.* 66.9 to Hadrian's institution, while his reference in *Comm. Gal.* 3 *prol. quasi ad Athenaeum et ad auditoria convenitur* certainly seems generalised. There seems to be no problem in seeing a reference to Bordeaux – the city in general, not a particular institution – as is done by Evelyn White, who translates 'this second Athens', and by Jasinski and Pastorino. The reason for this surprising description is the poet's desire for a pun with *Atticus*, part of the man's name; this feature may well have been inspired by a letter written to Ausonius by Symmachus describing a certain Palladius as *Athenaei hospitis* (*Ep.* 1.15).³⁹

But an explanation must be provided for the names Nazarius and Patera, of whom the latter is associated with both cities, the former, in the extant evidence, with Rome only (*Jer. Chron. s.a.* 324). Information about the origin of Nazarius cannot be found. The contents of his extant speech before Constantine do include Gallic matters but, as Booth remarks, they provide no indication of his homeland; neither does the scant information that we have of his eloquent daughter. If Nazarius did in fact hail from Bordeaux, then, according to Booth ([1978], 244), 'he should have made the deadline for Ausonius' *Professores*'; nothing, however, prevents us from supposing that he taught before or soon after Ausonius' birth, and so did not make it. (Ausonius, let it be recalled, seems a little hesitant about even mentioning the famous Patera.) It is not unreasonable to claim Nazarius for Bordeaux, and so Censorius too; the latter is included by Sidonius among a list of Late Antique rhetors of whom most, and perhaps all, flourished in Gaul (*Ep.* 5.10.3).

If these various considerations are admitted, the number of rhetors to be accommodated in chairs at Bordeaux could well be ten or twelve, for the sixty years: an average tenure of five or six years. This will probably strike modern readers (early retirement or no early retirement) as short; the evidence from the ancient world, which is more to the point, is meagre and conflicting. Libanius' tenure at Nicomedia, like Augustine's at Milan, was brief, but Libanius spent much longer – nearly forty years – at Antioch, and most of it as rhetor. There is little if any useful evidence on this question in the *Professores*: the length of Arborius' stay in Toulouse cannot be determined with accuracy, and his position at Constantinople ended prematurely with a *coup d'état*.⁴⁰ Ausonius himself, as he tells us in the *Praefatio ad Lectorem* (23/4), spent a total of thirty years as *grammaticus* and rhetor. It is not clear how this span should be divided, but some indication may be extracted from his commemoration of Acilius Glabrio (*Prof.* 24), who became *grammaticus* when Ausonius had been appointed rhetor (line 6). Glabrio, we are told, was Ausonius' friend when Ausonius was a boy, and then

³⁷ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 14.3, and various places in the *Historia Augusta*, which are discussed by H. Braunert, 'Das Athenaeum zu Rom bei den *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*' in *Historia Augusta Colloquium 1963* (Antiquitas 4 Reihe, Beiträge zur Historia-Augusta Forschung II [Bonn, 1964]), 9–41.

³⁸ Sid. *Ep.* 4.8.5, 9.9.13. Juvenal had used *Athenas* in a similar way (15.110).

³⁹ Cf. R. P. H. Green, 'The Correspondence of Ausonius', *L'Antiquité Classique* 49 (1980), 200.

⁴⁰ As suggested by R. P. H. Green (above, n. 35), 21; cf. Booth (1978), 248, and (1982), 331.

his pupil⁴¹ (he probably learnt *grammaticæ* from him); it is possible to reconcile this evidence by supposing a gap of about ten years in their ages. If Ausonius became rhetor c. 360, as in Booth's reconstruction, then Glabrio became a *grammaticus* shortly before his own death; but one may wonder whether Glabrio would take up teaching after an apparently successful career as advocate (line 7). His landed wealth may have made it unnecessary for him to seek employment as soon as his studies ended, but it seems preferable to assume that he was *grammaticus* in the earlier part of his life. If so, Ausonius could have become rhetor much earlier than Booth supposed. It is true that in the *Preface* he makes more of his status as *grammaticus*, half-comparing himself to such ancient luminaries as Scaurus and Probus, and that he is rather modest about his activity as rhetor (line 16; and line 27 if *etiam* means 'even'), but these statements indicate his real preference – which can be illustrated by nearly any page of his works – and not necessarily the time which he devoted to each subject.

Suppose that it were the case (as Étienne believed) that Ausonius professed rhetoric for fifteen years (this would make Glabrio become *grammaticus* at about thirty if he was ten years younger than Ausonius), or suppose that another rhetor, such as the long-lived and unambitious Alcimus (*Prof.* 2), occupied the chair for a long period – and the average for the remainder will diminish further. We know why Libanius left Nicomedia, and why Augustine left Milan; it is not absurd to ask what became of the short-lived teachers of Bordeaux. In many cases Ausonius or another source gives a partial answer. Tiberius and Patera taught elsewhere; Alethius and Censorius died prematurely – which means for Ausonius at an age of about sixty or less, as Booth argues⁴²; others entered the world of politics or administration (Delphidius, Nepotianus). But in spite of these varied careers,⁴³ doubts remain. Ill-health may have intervened, or incompetence may have resulted in ejection, as Ausonius hints in the case of at least one teacher; on the other hand, the absence of a fixed retiring age and the likelihood that there was no regular pension⁴⁴ will have militated towards longer tenure. The existence of a single chair only cannot be ruled out by these questions and reservations, but they strengthen the feeling that the rhetors might be more comfortably fitted into two. The same may be said, no less firmly, for Latin *grammatici*, who had inferior career prospects; we have at least twelve of these to distribute within the same period of time, including Ausonius himself, who may have held it for less than ten years, or for fifteen, or for more than twenty, as Booth believes.

Although this article is less concerned with *grammatici* than with rhetors, who are more prominent in the ancient university, it will be convenient here to examine certain evidence for the number of chairs in *grammaticæ*. Greek chairs will not be discussed because it would be surprising if more than one of these existed, in view of the evidence from Trier; and although various names are supplied, Bordeaux was poorly provided during Ausonius' schooldays, to judge from *Prof.* 8.⁴⁵ One particular item seems more

⁴¹ Scaliger, followed by Booth ([1982], 338 n. 32), emended *discipulus* to *discipulo*, but the gradation implied by 'my pal when I was a boy (*puer*) and then when I was a pupil' is unnatural. The present argument, based on the supposition that Glabrio was *grammaticus* relatively early, is not affected by this dispute.

⁴² Booth (1978), 240 n. 19. But it is surely unwise to assume that all rhetors found their greatest maturity at the same age. (Cf. *Lib. Or.* 1.51.)

⁴³ Analysed by M. K. Hopkins, 'Social Mobility in the Later Roman Empire. The Evidence of Ausonius', *CQ* n.s. 11 (1961), 239–49.

⁴⁴ The arrangement mentioned in *HA Hadrian* 16.11 – a trustworthy item (cf. R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* [Oxford, 1971], 115) – was probably an exception to the rule.

⁴⁵ This passage has some bearing on the question of A. C. Dionisotti, 'From Ausonius' Schooldays?...', *JRS* 72 (1982), 83–125.

convincing than anything so far mentioned on this point. In the poem commemorating Leontius Lascivus,⁴⁶ Ausonius writes of his friend *litteris tantum titulum assecutus | quantus exili satis est cathedrae* (7.9–10). Translators here opt for the indefinite article, and an alternative such as 'enough for our poorly paid chair' would be difficult, although the complaint of penury is familiar enough in ancient literature.⁴⁷ For however playfully Leontius' learning may be disparaged here, the expression surely carries unfortunate overtones for other *grammatici*, who include Ausonius himself; the sentence would seem to be a criticism not only of their paymasters but also of the *grammatici* themselves. Such an ill-judged statement would detract from his attempts to praise other *grammatici*, which is his overall aim. The passage is much easier to understand on the assumption that there were a number of chairs, and that Leontius' was a minor one. Other references seem less helpful, and do not require the same conclusion. In *Prof.* 22.17 *exili nostrae fucatus honore cathedrae* Ausonius is not stating that the chair which he adorned was *exilis* or indulging in raillery of any kind, but expressing the hope that Victorius may have gathered some slight prestige from it (cf. *Prof.* 10.51–2). There may be a considerable element of mock-modesty here, but it would be wrong to infer that to Ausonius the chair was always *exilis*, for that adjective does not here qualify *cathedrae*. The phrase *nostrae...cathedrae*, like *scholae et cathedrae...meae* in *Prof.* 11.3, is unhelpful, and *Ep.* 8.27ff. has already been examined. There is certainly a note of disparagement in *Prof.* 10.18–21: *et tu Concordi, | qui profugus patria | mutasti sterilem | urbe alia cathedram*, but this passage could be understood in various ways. Did Concordius leave his fatherland and a poorly-paid chair in another city to come to Bordeaux? Did he leave his fatherland (Bordeaux) and exchange a sterile chair (in Bordeaux) for another city? Did he leave his fatherland (Bordeaux) and exchange it for a sterile chair in another city? The common use of *patria* in Ausonius speaks against the first interpretation, and the awkwardness in expression of exchanging a chair for a city against the second and perhaps the third; but the third is supported by the comment made of Anastasius later in this poem that he left Bordeaux but did not prosper in Poitiers. In any case, the passage could add little or nothing to the present argument. Neither does any other passage where *cathedra* is used (*Prof.* 9.1, 10.29).

IV

An attempt will now be made, on the hypothesis that there were two chairs of rhetoric, to distinguish two factions in Bordeaux. The writer's prevailing *pietas*, already noted, creates an obvious difficulty, and lays the analysis open to the objection that Ausonius regularly attributes virtues open-handedly, and vices sparingly, to those whom he commemorates. It is indeed not possible to detect any distinction in respect of the virtues credited to the various rhetors⁴⁸ (with the significant exception of conviviality, to be mentioned below); the following analysis, without actually condemning Ausonius' praise as conventional or insincere, will concentrate on other criteria.

The first position in such a series was naturally a delicate one; Ausonius realised this when, at the beginning of the *Parentalia*, he affected to hesitate over awarding

⁴⁶ The cognomen is given as Beatus in V, the only MS, but Lascivus was almost certainly part of the name (lines 5ff.). Corruption is usually assumed, but has not been explained. Is Beatus perhaps a scribal euphemism, or a genuine part of the name?

⁴⁷ Martial 1.76.14, Juvenal 7.203. See Booth, *EMC* 20 (1976), 8.

⁴⁸ These are treated by C. Favez, 'Une école gallo-romaine au IV^e siècle', *Latomus* 7 (1948), 223–33, and J. Hatinguais, 'Les Vertus universitaires selon Ausone', *REA* 55 (1953), 379–87.

the first position to his dear father and implied that the claim of his uncle Arborius was almost as great. In the *Professores* Arborius, who though born at Bordeaux taught at Toulouse and Constantinople, has to be postponed, and the same is true of Staphylius of Auch, to whom Ausonius confesses an equal debt. The honour is given to Tiberius Victor Minervius; the poet's praises are generous and warm, as he underlines his personal obligation and amplifies his account with comparisons to Quintilian and a reference to Demosthenes. Tiberius' chair seems to have passed to his son Alethius Minervius – this is the first of two father-son relationships – but the second place in the commemoration goes to Latinus Alcimus Alethius (apparently not related to the aforementioned: the name Alethius was not unduly rare in Gaul). Between the first two notices there is a palpable difference in commitment, as well as in length, and Ausonius seems to distance himself from his eulogy of Alcimus when he says *opponit unum quem viris prioribus | aetas recentis temporis* (lines 5/6) and relies untypically on the judgement of others instead of giving his own direct tribute. The *virī priores* here are, again, probably Quintilian and the ancients – rather than earlier generations of Gallic rhetors, for Ausonius is no *laudator temporis acti se puero*, and Alcimus himself apparently belongs among the earlier generations, as his grandsons or at least sons are known to Ausonius – but the language is notably unspecific and less exuberant than in the first poem. Indeed one may suspect that the opening words *nec me nepotes impīī silentiū reum ciebunt* do not refer in general to posterity (E. White) or to 'our descendants' (so Jasinski and Pastorino), but rather hint at the possibility of genuine acrimony.

Alcimus was a panegyrist of Julian, and the remark *et Iulianum tu magis famae dabis | quam sceptrā quae tenuit brevi* could be taken as a slur against the Apostate; as we would expect from a Christian writer looking back two decades later, it certainly betrays no enthusiasm. The rhetor's support for Julian links him with the pagan Patera and his son Delphidius, towards whom Ausonius is again cool, notwithstanding their high repute in Gaul attested by Jerome.⁴⁹ The writer seems reluctant to include Patera (*Prof.* 4.1–4), but it is a little difficult to believe that he had as little contact with Patera as he implies here. Patera's claim to Druid ancestry is perhaps treated accurately but rather disingenuously by Ausonius with the words *si fama non fallit fidem*.⁵⁰ It would be wrong, however, to see in the reference to *aquilae senectus* in the last line a *double entendre* (Terence in *Heaut.* 521 applied the phrase to a drunkard); such an innuendo would be quite uncharacteristic of Ausonius' stance in these poems.⁵¹ Although the recent calamities of Delphidius are treated gently, his earlier career, which earned a mention from Jerome, meets with disapproval from Ausonius. As has already been seen, Censorius is linked with Nazarius and Patera, and the words discussed above (p. 498) may imply that the chair or school of Nazarius and Patera – which it seems that Delphidius inherited only briefly – passed to Censorius, as well as their *gloria*.

Three names remain: Luciolus, Herculanus and Nepotianus. The first of these was Ausonius' teacher, but there is little to be added in the present context: Ausonius remembers more about his sons than about the father, but prefers not to mention it. Herculanus, Ausonius' nephew, never in fact became a rhetor (according to the title, which may be trusted); he owes his appearance in this review to the fact that his uncle describes him as *particeps scholae et cathedrae paene successor meae* (*Prof.* 11.3).⁵² The

⁴⁹ For speculation about Delphidius and Julian see Booth (1978), 238; and n. 35 above.

⁵⁰ Cf. Booth (1978), 236 n. 8.

⁵¹ But not elsewhere: cf. *Ep.* 31.261ff. (Paulinus' complaint).

⁵² In the following clause *daret* of course refers to the past, like *armaret* and *attolleret* in *Prof.* 5.22 and 24.

natural interpretation of this, assisted by the evidence of the title, is that he had had excellent prospects of taking over from Ausonius when Ausonius went to Trier; it is less likely to mean that Herculanus nearly passed from one chair of grammar to another, evacuated by Ausonius, or that he was not his direct successor but the next holder but one. Ausonius' actual successor may have been Nepotianus. This man was obviously a close friend of Ausonius, and a trusted confidant; it is possible that this relationship gained for him political office during the supremacy of Ausonius.⁵³ It is interesting that he became both *grammaticus* and rhetor, as Ausonius did and Herculanus was expected to do; perhaps the career of Ausonius left its mark on the structure of the profession, though the observation could be put down to a quirk of the writer's memory or his selection of material. In a less prosperous environment, such as Auch, the home of Staphylius (*Prof.* 20), a teacher might be expected to fulfil both functions.

From this survey two schools emerge. Giving their members in rough chronological order, but omitting possible double tenures, we have on the one side Luciolus, Tiberius, Alethius, Ausonius, Herculanus, Nepotianus, and on the other, Nazarius, Patera, Alcimus, Delphidius, Censorius. It is noteworthy that Jerome mentions three of the second group but only one of the first (Ausonius excepted); this at least offers some correction of the poet's implicit assessments. A century later Sidonius (*Ep.* 5.10.3) mentions only names from the second group, but it must be said that elsewhere his high opinion of Ausonius himself is explicit and indubitable, and that only one of the rhetors who flourished in the second half of the century (Nepotianus) is absent from his list. One *grammaticus* is closely linked with the second group, Phoebicius, father of Patera (*Prof.* 10.26–30); Herculanus, Nepotianus, Glabrio, Macrinus and Victorius the *subdoctor* are linked to Ausonius by close bonds of affection, as is Lascivus, brother of Jucundus, and probably Macrinus, his first teacher. Ammonius, Anastasius and Marcellus are mentioned without affection, Sucuro and Thalassus remain obscure. Of these factions one seems strongly pagan, the other includes, in the poet himself, a probable Christian⁵⁴; Tiberius, like Ausonius' uncle, Arborius, taught at the new capital of Constantinople. Another highly relevant fact is that Ausonius mentions conviviality only in connexion with various members of his own group – Luciolus, Tiberius, Nepotianus – and implies that he had enjoyed their hospitality.

The analogies already discussed make it probable that both chairs were municipal, that is, that their holders were selected and paid and perhaps given official auditoria by the city. The possibility that one chair was private should not, however, be ruled out. Ausonius will surely have had no difficulty in discovering the names and at least a bare minimum of information about private teachers; and it is not clear that he would have felt that they were not worth mentioning. Libanius and Augustine may disparage such chairs, but that is only to be expected from them in the circumstances.⁵⁵ In fact Ausonius is prepared to mention a private enterprise in *Prof.* 18.7, where he says of Marcellus, who left Bordeaux: *mox schola et auditor multus praetextaque pubes | grammatici nomen divitiasque dedit*. This suggests that Marcellus was not called to the post, as Arborius (*Par.* 3.11f.) and Exuperius (*Prof.* 17.7) were by the city fathers of

⁵³ G. Caputo, 'Flavius Nepotianus. Comes et Praeses Provinciae Tripolitanae', *REA* 53 (1951), 234–47.

⁵⁴ Nazarius may have been a Christian, according to T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 73, who bases this suggestion on the Christian sentiments noted by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), 289f. Ausonius certainly was: see now on this unnecessarily controversial matter E. Castorina, 'Lo spirito del cristianesimo in Ausonio', *Siculorum Gymnasium* 29 (1976), 85–91.

⁵⁵ Booth ([1982], 337 n. 26) cites *Lib. Or.* 1.37, 101f., *Aug. Conf.* 5.12f.

Toulouse, but that he built up his clientèle after his arrival. From Bordeaux itself certain pieces of evidence, albeit inconclusive, may be noted. Alcimus, we infer, was very generous in waiving the fees of the poor: *te nemo gravior vel fuit comis magis | aut liberalis indigis | danda salute, si forum res posceret | studio docendi, si scholam* (*Prof.* 2.15–18). These could of course be the fees that often supplemented a municipal salary; or they might be those of a private teacher prepared to subsist off the fees of his richer pupils or making a show of generosity in order to attract others.⁵⁶ The second item relates to Delphidius, who when found a chair in Bordeaux is said to have “disappointed the attentions of the fathers” (*Prof.* 5.34). The precise meaning of this is not clear. *Patrum* might indicate the local senate, who elected him, or the fathers of his pupils; the latter would be closely involved whether they paid part or all of the salary, but the word *curam* perhaps is more appropriate to the governing body than the parents. (A reference to his own parents [cf. *Par.* 3.21, *Prof.* 16.16, *Ep.* 22.19] seems less likely than either.) One might note also, perhaps wryly, that the famous Tiberius was poor in spite of a frugal life-style, but it is idle to attempt a close examination of his personal finances, for many causes might be suggested, without any hope of proof; Libanius suffered theft on one occasion (*Or.* 1.61). It is unlikely that Ausonius’ statement *deserui...municipalem operam* (*Pref.* 1.24) is relevant; the contrast is with the capital, and the more usual word *publicus* is not employed. But even if one of the chairs was a private institution, it would be unwise to assume that this remained in the hands of one faction, while the other chair was monopolised by their rivals. We have already considered the possibility that the two chairs were merged under Alethius; later on the presence of Julian probably made itself felt for several years until his departure from Gaul or his death, and he would surely have rewarded his supporter Alcimus if he had had the opportunity. When Ausonius later rose to a position of influence he will in turn have supported his friends in the teaching profession, as he so obviously did when distributing political office.

There is no need here to review the data available for constructing an absolute chronology; Booth has done this with as much precision as the evidence permits, and the postulation of two chairs has the general effect of removing difficulties rather than creating them. But a short summary account may be useful. One faction may be traced back perhaps as far as the beginning of the century, and begins (as far as Ausonius is concerned) with Nazarius. He was succeeded, not necessarily directly, by Patera, who may have professed when Ausonius was absent in Toulouse, or more probably a little later when he was a *senex* and Ausonius a *iuvēnis* (say, 340–350), and conceivably both before and after the time (336, according to Jerome, assuming *Pater* to be a corruption of his name) when he taught *gloriosissime* in Rome. Alcimus probably followed Patera, but not immediately if the amalgamation suggested above actually took place (p. 496). According to Jerome Patera’s son Delphidius, along with Alcimus, taught *florētissime* in Gaul c. 355; but he may not have taught in Bordeaux until 364 or 365. Censorius then took over from Delphidius, and might have been followed by a son or grandson of Alcimus, still alive when Ausonius wrote. The other chair begins in the extant evidence with Luciolus, who taught Ausonius before 330. He was possibly followed by Tiberius, and I would tentatively link Tiberius’ move to Constantinople with the *Augusti pietas* that returned the body of Arborius to Bordeaux soon after 337. Tiberius was succeeded by his son, whose ‘reign’ was short but illustrious, especially if Patera’s chair accrued to him also. Ausonius’ own rhetoric may have followed Alethius’ death or departure; if so, he will have been

⁵⁶ Walden (above n. 2), 182ff., 187f.

a direct rival of Alcimus, the supporter of Julian. The friction that can be imagined in this situation, and the possible loss of the double chair, could be used to explain the outburst made in *Par.* 15.8 against a certain Valentinus, who gained control of Bordeaux on the death of Ausonius' brother-in-law Pomponius at an unspecified time in mid-century.⁵⁷ Then Julian's decree may well have made matters worse for him. But the tables (or rather the chairs) will have been turned on Julian's death in 363, and Ausonius' disappointments will soon have been swallowed up by the news of his appointment as tutor to Gratian. His successor in Bordeaux may have been Tiberius, returning from Rome, or perhaps coming out of retirement when Herculanius made himself unavailable; but Tiberius cannot have lived much longer, for he died at the age of sixty and was probably a little older than Ausonius.⁵⁸ Nepotianus is the last known holder of the chair, but he could have been succeeded by Tetradius, the correspondent of Ausonius mentioned earlier.

In conclusion something must be said about the bearing of this hypothetical reconstruction upon Ausonius' career, the context in which Booth's valuable study was conceived. There are many things that are obscure; like other writers of the time Ausonius knew the wisdom of reticence. In particular, why the sudden rise from the obscurity of Bordeaux to the glory of Trier? Although Ausonius might have approved the phrasing of this question, he offers no answer, beyond gentle reminders of his hard work and merit. Booth ([1982], 333) emphasises his contentment in Bordeaux, and his careful cultivation of valuable connexions, and there is much evidence of both. But Ausonius was also ambitious, and an opportunist; as a young man he left Bordeaux, in the wake of Arborius and perhaps the young Sedatus (*Prof.* 19), possibly because he saw no hope of promotion there, and some fifty years later he took full advantage of Valentinian's death to install himself firmly in power. Thirty years in provincial obscurity would be surprising for such a person; but in fact he was in the presence of world-famous rhetors, facing considerable competition as well as enjoying their prestige, and even after securing an outstanding chair he had to grapple with an unsympathetic administration. When these clouds lifted, and Valentinian was seeking a tutor for his son, various considerations made Ausonius an excellent candidate; as well as his strong and informed Christian faith, his devotion to classical literature, and his pride in his humble birth, there was the recommendation of an influential Christian faction and the renown of an illustrious chair. It may be that Bordeaux has been underestimated. The views of Julian, like those of Ausonius his compatriot, are naturally biased; but perhaps the reaction is too strong in the words of H.-I. Marrou, who wrote in his magisterial work on Education in Antiquity: 'c'est Bordeaux que nous apercevons le mieux, mais c'est peut-être simplement parce que l'oeuvre et la personnalité d'Ausone sont là pour attirer sur elle notre attention'.⁵⁹ Of course, we have virtually no evidence for such other centres as Auch, Angoulême, Narbonne, Poitiers and Toulouse, and enthusiastic *alumni* might have written with similar warmth about their own *patriae*; but almost certainly none of them produced a writer of such

⁵⁷ For another account, see Booth (1982), 342 (where Valentinus is inadvertently called Victorinus).

⁵⁸ There is a chronological problem here which Booth's reconstruction, giving Ausonius a short spell in the chair of rhetoric, did not incur. As an alternative to the account offered in the text, it may be suggested that in the reaction against Julian the chair which the Emperor had favoured was occupied by the rival faction, in the person of Tiberius, until his death or perhaps until Patera pleaded with him to make way for Delphidius. (In the words *donatus aerumnis patris* [*Prof.* 5.32] one can almost imagine the elderly Patera reminding Tiberius of the anguish that both of them had suffered from wayward sons.)

⁵⁹ Marrou, 397.

talent and authority. As far as Ausonius' personality is concerned, it may in fact be the case that his enthusiasm has served not to exalt but to obscure the character of education in Bordeaux. The city may not have been 'a second Athens' or 'une demi-Constantinople', it may not have been 'recognised as the foremost school of rhetoric in the Roman world'⁶⁰; but it seems reasonable to compare it, not only in respect of its facilities and fame, but also in respect of the accompanying acrimony, with the Eastern cities of Nicomedia and Antioch so differently described by Libanius.

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⁶⁰ Étienne (above, n. 11), 240; S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (London, 1899), 409.