

THE OCCASION OF PAUL THE SILENTIARY'S EKPHRASIS OF S. SOPHIA

The 'turgid archaisms'¹ of Paul the Silentiary's style have ensured that his two hexameter *Ekphrases*, describing the Emperor Justinian's sixth-century church of S. Sophia in Constantinople and its *ambo*, have lately attracted little interest, except among art historians who seek to extract nuggets of architectural information.² On the other hand, the eighty or so pagan epigrams by Paul which are preserved in the *Palatine* and *Planudean Anthologies* have received attention in recent years both because of their literary interest and for the social and historical information which they contain.³ In my opinion, the much more substantial *Ekphrases* likewise deserve to be examined as literary and historical documents. The title *Ekphrasis* disguises the historical interest of the works: unlike the majority of the epigrams, these poems are no mere literary exercises, but official, public works, undoubtedly commissioned by Justinian, and delivered on specific and identifiable occasions. Only the central portion of the major poem describing S. Sophia comprises technical architectural *ekphrasis*; this is preceded and followed by panegyric material appropriate to the occasion of recitation which together takes up almost half the total length of the poem (462 lines out of 1029). Here the Emperor Justinian, patron of the church, and Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople, are praised, and the events leading up to the occasion of the poem sketched. This topical part of the work provides evidence for the ceremonial which accompanied the poem's recitation and demonstrates the type of imperial propaganda pertinent to the end of the reign of Justinian.⁴ Moreover, an explanation for a limited number of stylistic flaws in a work which, by contemporary standards at least, is of high literary quality, may lie in the recognition that Paul was obliged to complete his poem in time for a specific occasion. It is with these three occasional aspects of the work that I shall here be concerned.

I

The occasion for which Paul composed his poem on S. Sophia can readily be deduced from internal indications.⁵ The Theodosian church of S. Sophia had been one of the

¹ George Majeska, 'Notes on the Archeology of St Sophia at Constantinople: the green marble bands on the floor', *DOP* 32 (1978), 299, referring to Paul's *Ambo*. Majeska echoes the unfavourable judgement of several earlier critics.

² The standard edition is Paul Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius, Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1912; repr. Olms, Hildesheim and New York, 1969). New edition, using Friedländer's text, ed. O. Veh, in appendix to Procopius *de Aedificiis* (Munich, 1977), adding German translation, and archaeological commentary by W. Pülhorn. English translation of the architectural *ekphrases* only by C. A. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1972), pp. 80–96.

³ Edition of the epigrams, with Introduction, literary commentary and Italian translation, by G. Viansino, *Paolo Silenziario Epigrammi* (Turin, 1963), with review by Averil Cameron, *JHS* 86 (1966), 210 f.; Averil and Alan Cameron, 'The Cycle of Agathias', *JHS* 86 (1966), 6–25, esp. 17–19, and 'Further thoughts on the Cycle of Agathias', *JHS* 87 (1967), 131; R. C. McCail, 'The Cycle of Agathias: new identifications scrutinised', *JHS* 89 (1969), 87–96, esp. 94; J. C. Yardley, 'Paulus Silentiarius, Ovid and Propertius', *CQ* n.s. 30 (1980), 239–43; etc.

⁴ The importance of Paul's poem in these two respects has been recognised by Averil Cameron, 'Images of authority: elites and icons in late sixth-century Byzantium', *Past and Present* 84 (1979), p. 9 and n. 25.

⁵ Cf. Friedländer, pp. 109 f.

victims of the Nika Riot of A.D. 532, when many of the buildings in the central palace area of Constantinople were burned down.⁶ In 537 the Emperor Justinian inaugurated his great new church, whose dome, however, collapsed at the eastern end in May 558, after the severe earthquake which struck Constantinople in December 557.⁷ The church was restored, and re-dedicated on 24th December 562, and some days later, perhaps on the Feast of Epiphany (6th January 563), Paul declaimed his poem as part of an extended series of festivities.⁸

Paul prefaced his poem with two separate prologues in iambic trimeters. By the sixth century, it was regular practice for a hexameter encomium to be preceded by a prologue in iambic trimeters.⁹ But the double prologue which prefaces Paul's poem is unusual, and motivated by the specific circumstances of recitation. The first prologue is a panegyric addressed to the Emperor Justinian (line 5 and *passim*), the second a personal *apologia* by the poet addressed to his audience (line 81). This second *apologia* is the topic more characteristic of the iambic prologue.¹⁰ The first prologue therefore stands as a preliminary piece composed to suit the physical circumstances of the poem's official recitation: this prologue was delivered in the imperial palace and then the poet (and, I believe, his audience) moved to the patriarchal palace, where the remainder of the recitation took place. This is explicitly stated in a lemma between the two prologues and substantiated by Paul's own words in the text.

In concluding his first prologue, Paul appeals to the Emperor to 'grant courage to

⁶ Procopius, *Bella* 1. 24. 9, id. *Aed.* 1. 1. 21; Malalas, *Chronographia* (ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1831), p. 474. 17–19; *Chronicon Paschale* (ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1832), pp. 621. 20–622. 2; Theophanes, *Chronographia* (ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883), p. 181. 27–30.

⁷ Dedication in A.D. 537: Mal. 479. 21–2, Theoph. 217. 17–22. Earthquake of 557: Agathias *Historiae* 5. 3–9 (ed. R. Keydell, Berlin, 1967), Mal. 488. 20–489. 10, Theoph. 231. 14–232. 6. Collapse of dome: Mal. 489. 19–490. 5, Theoph. 232. 27–233. 3. Paul (*Descr.* 186–203) and Agathias (*Hist.* 5. 9. 1–3) both conflate the two last events and imply that the dome collapsed at the time of the earthquake; on Agathias, see Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970), Appendix C.

⁸ Re-dedication in 562: Mal. 495. 9–16, Theoph. 238. 18–24, Paul Sil. *Descr.* 315–49. Extension of festivities until Epiphany: Anon. *Diegesis S. Sophiae* ch. 27 (ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, [Leipzig, 1901–07], t. 105. 9–11), an unreliable source which is, however, in this instance supported by Paul's reference to the double extension of the festivities (*Descr.* 74–80). Friedländer (p. 110) suggested, on the basis of the opening lines of the poem (1 f.), that Paul may have recited on the Feast of Epiphany, but the reference is not conclusive. The opening lines (1–4) of Paul's poem on the *ambo* indicate that it was recited separately, in celebration of the subsequent completion of the *ambo* of S. Sophia.

⁹ Examples of hexameter panegyrics with an iambic prologue are found from the fourth to the sixth centuries. See Friedländer, pp. 119 ff.; T. Viljamaa, *Studies in Greek Encomiastic Poetry of the Early Byzantine Period* (Soc. Scient. Fenn., Comm. human. litt., Vol. 42. 4, Helsinki, 1968), pp. 68 ff.; Alan Cameron, 'Pap. Ant. III. 115 and the iambic prologue in late Greek poetry', *CQ* n.s. 20 (1970), 119 f. A possible precedent for a double prologue is *Laud. Beryt.* II (E. Heitsch, *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit*, 1 (2nd ed., Göttingen, 1963), No. xxxi, pp. 98 f.). Here an iambic prologue is followed by a piece in elegiacs, while a hexameter passage apparently followed; cf. line 40. In imitation of Paul, Corippus prefaced his Latin poem on Justin II with two hexameter panegyrics (one for the emperor and one for Corippus' patron), and Agathias composed a triple preface for his *Cycle* of poems (*A.P.* 4. 3: an iambic appeal for the audience's goodwill, a hexameter encomium of the Emperor and an elegiac piece on the endurance of literary monuments); cf. Flavius Cresconius Corippus *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, ed. Averil Cameron (London, 1976), pp. 118 f. S. Antès, however, argues that Corippus' panegyric of his patron Anastasius was composed independently, before the preface in praise of the Emperor and Books 1–3; see *Corippe, Éloge de l'empereur Justin II* (ed. Budé, Paris, 1981), pp. xvii–xx and ci–cii.

¹⁰ See the examples collected by Friedländer, Viljamaa and Alan Cameron (as cited in note sup.), although *Pap. Ant.* III. 115 is a panegyric.

those who wish to go now to the temple'.¹¹ This might be taken as a standard rhetorical formula indicating transition to a new subject,¹² but the opening lines of the second prologue (81–8) also play upon the move 'from the hearth of the king to the hearth of a King who is the all-greatest...' and from the presence of 'the governor of privileges' (i.e. Justinian) to that of 'the governor of priests/holy offices' (i.e. the Patriarch Eutychius).¹³ From this second passage it is clear that Paul moved from an imperial to an ecclesiastical setting and from the auspices of Justinian to those of the Patriarch. It would appear that the first prologue was delivered in one of the halls of the imperial palace and the second in the new church itself. The lemma between the two prologues, however, while confirming the first assumption, specifies that the remainder of the poem was delivered before Eutychius in the patriarchal palace.¹⁴ This last detail is likely to be authentic: it is not a straightforward inference from the text and was already in the manuscript of the poem by the tenth century.¹⁵ Although S. Sophia was later used for public proclamations such as the reading of a despatch announcing the final triumph of the Emperor Heraclius over Persia,¹⁶ the recitation of Paul's poem is likely to have been a rather more select occasion, of no immediate popular interest, and hence perhaps best envisaged as taking place before an invited audience of dignitaries in the patriarchal palace.¹⁷ Paul's references in the text must then be taken to denote generally the ecclesiastical buildings associated with S. Sophia, rather than precisely the church itself.¹⁸

¹¹ Lines 66 f. *πρὸς δὲ τὸν νεῶν | ἤδη βαδίζειν βουλομένους θαρρεῖν δίδου*. As a classicising writer, Paul naturally avoided explicitly Christian terminology and so called S. Sophia a 'temple': cf. Averil Cameron, 'Procopius and the church of S. Sophia', *Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965), 161–3, and *Agathias*, pp. 75–88.

¹² Cf. line 134 *οὐκοῦν ἐπάνειμι πρὸς βασιλέα τὸν μέγαν*, pointing the transition to Paul's praise of Justinian in the opening hexameters (135 ff.). Similar phrases using a verb of motion commonly mark the sequence of development in prose rhetoric.

¹³ Lines 81 ff. *ἐκ τῆς ἐστίας | τῆς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐς βασιλέως ἐστίαν | τοῦ παμμεγίστου; 85 τῶν γερῶν ὁ προστάτης*, 88 *τῶν ἱερῶν τὸν προστάτην*. Justinian is called *τῶν γερῶν ὁ προστάτης* for the sake of the pun (achieved by the softened pronunciation of the gamma of *γερῶν*) with the appellation of Eutychius. Linguistic play is a common feature of the iambic prologue, which was written in a lively style so as to enlist the audience's goodwill for the serious poem to follow; see Viljamaa, *op. cit.* in n. 9, pp. 82 f.

¹⁴ The lemma reads: *τούτων λεχθέντων ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ διηρέθη ἡ ἀκρόασις, καὶ ἐλέχθη τὰ λοιπὰ ἐν τῷ ἐπισκοπείῳ, ἐπὶ Εὐτυχίου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου πατριάρχου, προλεχθέντων τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἱάμβων*.

¹⁵ The poem survives only in one manuscript, the tenth-century Heidelberg *cod. gr.* 23 (the source of the earlier books of the *Palatine Anthology*). This lemma does not appear as a marginal note, but is inserted into the main body of the ms. in the first hand. This suggests that it was already in the exemplar from which the tenth-century scribe was copying. A lemma at the beginning of Paul's *Ambo* refers to the performance of the poem in the patriarchate (*ἐν τῷ πατριαρχείῳ*). It may be significant that our lemma uses the term *ἐπισκοπεῖον* rather than the more correct *πατριαρχεῖον*: if the motive was stylistic, that is to avoid the repetition of *ἐν τῷ πατριαρχείῳ, ἐπὶ Εὐτυχίου τοῦ... πατριάρχου*, it may be that the lemma was written by the fastidious Paul himself.

¹⁶ *Chronicon Paschale* (ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1832), p. 727. 7 ff.

¹⁷ For a more popular poem composed for the re-dedication of S. Sophia, see C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (Wiener byz. Studien, Band V, Vienna, 1968), No. xii, pp. 139–47.

¹⁸ *Contra* W. R. Lethaby and H. Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia Constantinople* (London and New York, 1894), p. 34. The precise location of the patriarchal palace in A.D. 562/3 is uncertain. According to the contemporary Syriac historian John of Ephesus (*Ecclesiastical History* 2. 34, trans. R. Payne Smith [Oxford, 1860], p. 145), the palace was magnificently rebuilt by the Patriarch John Scholasticus (A.D. 565–77) after it had been destroyed by fire. John's palace has now been identified with a suite of rooms, decorated with mosaic, which survives above the south-west vestibule of S. Sophia. See Robin Cormack and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, 'The mosaics

The precise venue for the main recitation is less important, however, than the fact of the move itself. The most plausible explanation for this break in the delivery of the poem seems to be in terms of ceremonial, a ceremonial deliberately organised to stress the combined imperial and ecclesiastical importance of the occasion. We may suppose that the secular dignitaries assembled in the imperial palace to hear Paul's first prologue; then Emperor and company moved in ceremonial procession¹⁹ to the patriarchal palace to join the assembled ecclesiastical dignitaries, headed by the Patriarch Eutychius, who presided over the proceedings from this point.²⁰ Paul addressed his second prologue to this new audience and then embarked on the poem proper, celebrating the building of S. Sophia and giving an account of the events which led up to the present occasion, before turning to detailed architectural *ekphrasis* (at line 353). To balance the opening double prologue, the poem concludes with two passages of panegyric, the first for Justinian (lines 921–66) and the second for Eutychius (978–1029). In turning from Justinian to Eutychius, Paul devotes ten lines (967–77) to elaborate apology to the Emperor, explaining that praise of Eutychius is really praise of the Emperor since Justinian's choice of Eutychius as Patriarch was a great peacetime victory (like the building of S. Sophia) which resulted in the immediate collapse of the Devil and rout of the passions in face of Eutychius' holiness. This suggests that both Emperor and Patriarch were present in the audience and Paul was at pains to accord due honour to each.

The organisation of Paul's recitation as a joint imperial and ecclesiastical occasion is an early manifestation of a trend towards the integration of secular and religious elements in Byzantine culture in the late sixth century.²¹ The panegyric framework in which Paul's architectural *ekphrasis* is set belongs to the secular classical tradition of imperial panegyric, but it was delivered in an ecclesiastical setting under the auspices of the Patriarch rather than the Emperor. While it is no surprise to find the classical hexameter used as a vehicle for imperial panegyric, Paul is treading new ground when he uses the same medium for an encomium of the Patriarch.²² Moreover, the prominence accorded to the Patriarch is remarkable in view of the fact that there is no evidence that he played any personal role in the rebuilding of his patriarchal church, which is accredited to the Emperor alone by ancient sources.²³ Paul's panegyric of Eutychius makes no reference to any such participation, a theme which would

of St Sophia at Istanbul: the rooms above the southwest vestibule and ramp', *DOP* 31 (1977), 175–251. (I am grateful to the *CQ* reader for this reference.) Cormack and Hawkins suggest (pp. 199–202) that the fire mentioned by John of Ephesus is probably that of December 563 (not that of the 532 Nika Riot as previously postulated), and they discuss the possible location of the palace in the period 532–63, noting that a Latin version of the *Acts* of the Second Council of Constantinople in May 553 specifies that the 168 bishops met *in secretario venerabilibus Episcopis huius regiae civitatis*, which indicates that the Patriarch did not lack official apartments at this time. Paul's words (see nn. 11 and 13 sup., and cf. *Descr.* 414) suggest that they were located close to S. Sophia.

¹⁹ As suggested by Friedländer, p. 110. I agree with Fr.'s reconstruction of the occasion.

²⁰ As stated in the lemma; see n. 14 sup. It is Eutychius' goodwill which Paul seeks in the second prologue; cf. line 89 *ἔστω δὲ καὶ τὸς εὐμενής*.

²¹ See Averil Cameron, art. cit. in n. 4 sup.

²² But see Friedländer, pp. 99–101, for prose panegyrics of bishops responsible for founding new churches. In the seventh century, George of Pisidia praised the Patriarch Sergius (A.D. 610–38), his patron, in iambic verse, e.g. *de Vanitate Vitae* 231 ff. (ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 92. 1598); cf. *Hexaemeron* 1 ff. (*PG.* 92. 1425 ff.) and 1869 ff. (col. 1576 ff.; here in conjunction with reference to the Emperor Heraclius, lines 1845 ff., col. 1575 f.).

²³ E.g. *Proc. Aed.* 1. 1. 22 f., Agath. *Hist.* 5. 9. 2, Paul Sil. *Descr.* 110 f. The anonymous *Diegesis* 28 (p. 105. 15 ff. Preger; see n. 8. sup.) puts the collapse and rebuilding of S. Sophia in the reign of Justin II, but this is erroneous.

undoubtedly have been exploited had there been any justification for it. On the contrary, the panegyric of the Patriarch is remarkable for the vacuity of its content. But the whole occasion of the recitation was organised so that a traditional expression of pagan classical culture acquired a religious veneer. The synthesis achieved by Paul, whose many pagan epigrams testify his devotion to the classical past, is unique in its adaptation of Christian elements to an Hellenic mould. Subsequently, indeed within a few years, the balance swung in the opposite direction and the Christian element became predominant, while classical culture was lost.²⁴ Paul's poem marks the end of an era, the last in the line of classical Greek epics.

II

The Emperor and Patriarch who sat before Paul certainly expected to hear a poem of celebration, above all celebration of the rebuilt S. Sophia. Justinian would not have been disappointed when he heard his church heralded as the climax of the many triumphs of his reign. Ignoring the realities of the contemporary situation,²⁵ Paul brushes aside 'victory western or Libyan' and 'the glories of Mede-slaying works' to hail the church as a peacetime triumph 'which surpasses every most glorious contest, beneath the majesty of which alone every divinely-inspired, glorious, high-roofed work has cowered low'.²⁶ But although he presents a generalised, rosy view of the reign as a whole,²⁷ Paul does also deal with some more delicate topics. He does not shirk the fact that the present joyful occasion has arisen from a disaster, when the dome of Justinian's original church collapsed. He twice apologises (177 ff. and 205 ff.) for recalling that time, seeking justification in the platitude that an increased joy arises out of sorrow. The opportunity is taken to stress the universal consternation caused by the collapse (204, 208–13), a consternation which extends even to the goddess Roma (i.e. New Rome or Constantinople), who is depicted as appearing in person to Justinian and delivering to him an impassioned appeal to save the church which is the most brilliant symbol of his throne (219–42).²⁸ Raising her up from obeisance, Justinian assents with regal serenity (243–54)²⁹ and at once hastens to the task of restoration (255 ff.; cf. 214–18).

²⁴ The Christian emphasis is already marked in Corippus' panegyric on Justin II, composed soon after the latter's accession in A.D. 565; see Averil Cameron, art. cit. in n. 4 sup., pp. 10 ff. The change is illustrated by the following contrast: in Paul, the goddess Roma appears to Justinian and urges him to rebuild S. Sophia (lines 219 ff.); in Corippus, the Christian Virgin appears to Justin in a dream and presses him to assume the imperial throne (*Laud. Just.* 1. 32 ff.).

²⁵ Sources written after Justinian's death (in A.D. 565) comment on the neglect of his later years, particularly in military and financial matters; cf. *Cod. Just.* Nov. 148 (A.D. 566) praef.; *Cor. Laud. Just.* 2. 260 ff.; Agath. *Hist.* 5. 13. 7–14. 4. The great military victories in Italy and North Africa came before the last decade of the reign, while in A.D. 561 a Fifty-Year Peace was agreed with Persia, over whom Justinian had failed to achieve a decisive victory; see E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ii (Paris, 1949), 516 ff.; J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, A.D. 395–A.D. 565, ii (London, 1923), 120 ff. Surveys of Justinian's last years: Stein, op. cit. ii. 777 f., A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, i (Oxford, 1964), 298 ff., esp. 301 f.

²⁶ Lines 135 f. οὐδ' ἐπὶ νίκην | ἔσπερον ἢ Λιβύσσαν ἐπείγομαι; 138 Μηδοφόνων ἀβόητα μένου κλέα σήμερον ἔργων; 142–4 παντὸς ὑπερκύδαντος ὑπέρτερον οἶκον ἀγώνος | . . . , ᾧ ὑπο μούνῳ | πᾶν κλέος ὑπορόφοιο κατώκλασε θέσκελον ἔργον.

²⁷ Like other poets of the period; cf. *A.P.* 4. 3B. 1 ff., 9. 641. 1 f. (both Agath.), ib. 16. 72. 1 ff. (Anon.); *Cor. Laud. Just.* praef. 27 ff., with Cameron's n. on 30 f.

²⁸ The scene is reminiscent of Claudian, *de bello Gildonico* 17 ff. and its imitation in Sidonius Apollinaris, *Panegyricus Aviti* 45 ff., where a distraught Roma appeals to Jupiter.

²⁹ Cf. Cameron on *Cor. Laud. Just.* 3. 309.

Paul's handling of these background events gives some indication of the manner in which he turns potentially unpromising material to panegyric advantage. But he was dealing with a yet more delicate subject when, at the very beginning of the poem in the first iambic prologue addressed to Justinian, he treated at some length (22–58) a conspiracy to assassinate the Emperor which had taken place as recently as November 562 and which was, indeed, not fully resolved when Paul spoke. It is not unusual for an imperial panegyrist to refer to an unsuccessful conspiracy or usurpation, treating these themes as evidence of the divine protection of the Emperor and his clemency to offenders, as Paul does here.³⁰ But the extent of Paul's development of the theme is significant: it is the centrepiece of his opening panegyric of the Emperor and the only topic accorded an extended treatment.³¹ The events were too recent to be passed over in silence³² and so instead Paul used the occasion to present a version flattering to Justinian. His treatment deserves closer analysis.

Paul's account of the conspiracy is prefaced by two lines in praise of the Emperor (22 f.):

ἀγαμαί σε, παγκράτιστε, τῆς εὐψυχίας,
ἀγαμαί σε τῆς γνώμης τε καὶ τῆς πίστεως.

These summarise the virtues which characterised Justinian's behaviour at the time of the plot and mark a change to a tense and dramatic tone, with their asyndeton, anaphora of ἀγαμαί σε and use of the intensive adjective παγκράτιστε, in preference to the κράτιστε of earlier lines (5, 19). This dramatic tone is maintained in the ensuing narrative (24–9), in which Paul abruptly leaps to the moment when the conspirators struck:

ὁ λόχος συνέστη, καὶ παρεσκευασμένον
τὸ ξίφος ὑπήρχε, καὶ παρῆν ἡ κυρία, 25
καὶ τῶν βασιλείων ἐντὸς οἱ ξυνωμόται
ἤδη παρήλθον, τῆς πύλης τε τῆς ἔσω,
μεθ' ἣν ἔμελλον προσβαλεῖν τοῖς σοῖς θρόνοις,
ἥπτοντο.

All the emphasis is put on the maturity of the plot and the imminence of Justinian's danger. The drama is expressed stylistically by the opening asyndeton (24) and the following short clauses linked by καί (24 f.), building up to a longer period (27–9) which culminates in the vivid and emphatically placed imperfect ἥπτοντο. In addition, a tone of excitement is suggested by different resolutions in the opening metron of lines 24, 25 and 26.³³ With this is contrasted (29–32) Justinian's supreme calm and confidence in God as his defender:

ταῦτα γνοὺς δὲ καὶ μαθὼν πάλαι
ἐκατέρησας καὶ πεπίστευκας μόνῳ 30
τῷ σου προασπίζοντι, τὸν θεὸν λέγω,
ὃ πάντα νικᾷς.³⁴

³⁰ Contemporary examples are Proc. *Aed.* 1. 1. 10, 16, on Justinian's clemency to the conspirators Arsaces and Artabanes in A.D. 548; Cor. *Laud. Just.* 1. 60 f., 4. 348 ff. and *A.P.* 4. 3B. 53 f. (Agath.), probably all referring to the conspiracy of Aetherius and Addaeus in A.D. 566; see Cameron on Cor. loc. cit., and *Agathias*, pp. 14 f.

³¹ The panegyric concludes with 7½ lines (58–65) of compliment to the dead Empress Theodora. The opening passage (3–21) is a survey of Justinian's achievements in partnership with Christ, the last few lines of which (18 ff.) prepare for the extended treatment of the conspiracy. Paul reverts to the theme of conspirators and Justinian's clemency in more general terms in his concluding panegyric of the Emperor (937–58). ³² Cf. Cameron on Cor. *Laud. Just.* 1. 60 f.

³³ Iambic prologues are written in the resolved trimeters of Attic comedy; see P. Maas, *Greek Metre* (trans. H. Lloyd-Jones, Oxford, 1962), sec. 114.

³⁴ The dative ᾧ in this phrase is vague and ambiguous. I favour the interpretation proposed to me by Dr J. D. C. Frendo: observing that the verbs of 29–30 correspond to the three virtues attributed to Justinian in 22–3 (γνοὺς and μαθὼν recalling γνώμη, ἐκατέρησας recalling

In these lines the trimeters are unresolved and the long verbs of line 30, together with *προασπίζοντι* (31), further reinforce the effect of smoothness and calm. Paul then rapidly concludes his brief narrative of the conspiracy (32–5), adding only the detail that the leader of the plot committed suicide,³⁵ but devoting several lines (35–9) to an explanation of the suicide which sets Justinian's clemency in a favourable light against the uncompromising harshness of the goddess Dike: it is argued that Dike was unwilling to save the ringleader because She knew from repeated experience that if he came into Justinian's hands alive, the Emperor would undoubtedly exercise mercy, an attribute with which he was endowed to a superhuman degree. The next fourteen lines (40–53) are devoted to general illustration of Justinian's compassion and mercy, before the passage is concluded (54–7) with an indignant rhetorical question expressing the well-worn sentiment that fighting against the king is like fighting against God,³⁶ which again provides Paul with the opportunity for a couple of lines on Justinian's philanthropy.

Paul's version of events is clearly highly selective and biased: the climactic moment of the conspiracy is given an extended dramatic treatment in order to set off Justinian's foreknowledge, serenity and faith in God, while the theme of the Emperor's clemency is elaborated out of all proportion to the narrative of events. Comparison with the detailed notices of the chronographers on the conspiracy³⁷ is illuminating: the few facts given by Paul are corroborated, but much has been omitted, and the additional information provided in the chronicles suggests an explanation for Paul's extended treatment of the theme of clemency.

The chronographers name the chief conspirators as Ablabius, Marcellus *ὁ ἀργυροπράτης*,³⁸ and Sergius, Ablabius having been bribed by Marcellus to assist. The plan was to assassinate Justinian as he sat in the *triclinium*³⁹ in the evening. Paul omits to mention that Ablabius betrayed the plot in advance, although it was allowed to proceed and Marcellus and Ablabius were caught red-handed entering the palace with arms, whereupon Marcellus used his weapon to commit suicide. Marcellus is said to have been caught in the *triclinium*,⁴⁰ so Paul may be justified in referring to the proximity of the conspirators to the Emperor, but Justinian's foreknowledge and escape must be attributed to the human weakness of Ablabius as much as to divine protection.⁴¹

εὐψυχία and *περίστευκας πίστις*), he suggests that *ᾧ* is a neuter referring back generally to the combination of these three virtues, which together secure victory for Justinian in all things.

³⁵ He is not named, the usual practice in panegyric; cf. Cameron, *Agathias*, p. 15. The suicide is mentioned again, *Descr.* 937–9; cf. note 31 sup.

³⁶ Cf. Call. *Ap.* 25 ff.; also *Il.* 17. 98 f., *A.P.* 10. 91 (Palladas), Nicephorus, *Hist. Syn.* (ed. de Boor, Leipzig, 1880), p. 6. 11–13.

³⁷ Fullest account, Malalas, *Excerpta de insidiis*, fr. 49 (ed. de Boor, Berlin, 1905, p. 173. 30 ff.); also Malalas, pp. 493. 1–495. 5 Bonn, Theophanes, pp. 237. 15–238. 18 de Boor.

³⁸ Others later implicated in the plot are called *ὁ ἀργυροπράτης*. On this basis, Averil Cameron (on Cor. *Laud. Just.* 2. 361 f.) suggests that this was a bankers' plot, reflecting the financial crisis at the end of Justinian's reign and consequent strained relations between government and bankers.

³⁹ Great Hall or state room, probably the 'Triclinium of the Nineteen Couches'. The grand new Chrysotriclinium is attributed by the sources to Justin II; see most recently Averil Cameron, 'The artistic patronage of Justin II', *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 76. Bury, however, suggested that Justinian may have designed the Chrysotriclinium buildings as part of the rebuilding of the palace area after the destruction of the Nika Riot (op. cit. in note 25 sup., ii. 54, n. 4).

⁴⁰ Mal. *Exc. de ins.* p. 174. 19; cf. Theoph. p. 238. 3 f.

⁴¹ It is, of course, indirectly attributable to God's protection of Justinian, since the hand of God may be seen in Ablabius' revelation of the plot. The chronographers prefix the reference to Ablabius' betrayal with the phrase *τοῦ θεοῦ [οὕτως] εὐδοκήσαντος* (Mal. *Exc. de ins.* p. 174. 9, Mal. p. 493. 12, Theoph. p. 237. 25).

Moreover, although Paul's narrative of the conspiracy ends with the dramatic suicide of Marcellus, this by no means marked the end of the affair. The chronographers add that the third ringleader, Sergius, escaped to the church of the Theotokos in Blachernae, but was subsequently dragged from his sanctuary and interrogated; he made a confession which implicated members of the household of Justinian's ageing general Belisarius. Further arrests were made and confessions elicited and Belisarius himself came under suspicion. On 5th December 562, Justinian summoned a meeting of the consistory and senate in the *triclinium*, at which the Patriarch Eutychius was among the dignitaries present. The various depositions were read out and Belisarius was disgraced: his retainers (*bucellarii*) were removed and the general himself placed under house arrest while the conspirators were interrogated. Theophanes records⁴² that Belisarius was restored to favour in the following July; he was therefore still in disgrace at the time when Paul delivered his poem.

In view of the seriousness of the offence, Justinian's action may be considered restrained: we are not told of any other penalties on the conspirators. But it is likely that Paul's long excursus on Justinian's clemency is intended as a public defence of the handling of the case and in particular his treatment of Belisarius. The old general was a popular figure: as recently as 559, when the Cotrigur Huns were attacking the Long Walls of Constantinople, he had been summoned from retirement.⁴³ Credit for their repulse lay entirely in his hands, at least in the people's view, although those in power were jealous of the general's popularity and spread rumours that he had his eye on higher things (such as the throne).⁴⁴ Clearly intense emotions were aroused where Belisarius was concerned and Justinian needed to tread with the utmost care in order to avoid a public outcry.⁴⁵ Paul is treading with equal delicacy here in presenting an accurate and recognisable, but selective, account of the affair, suitable for recitation before the Emperor on a grand ceremonial occasion.

III

There can be no doubt that the first iambic prologue was composed only shortly before the poem was delivered, both because of its account of the recent conspiracy and because the concluding lines (74–80) refer to Justinian's extension on two occasions of the festivities connected with the re-dedication of the church, in response to the combined petition of influential groups in Constantinopolitan society.⁴⁶ Paul would probably have had little difficulty in composing such a passage in straightforward

⁴² P. 239. 17 f.

⁴³ Agath. *Hist.* 5. 15. 7 ff., Theoph. p. 233. 18 ff.

⁴⁴ Agath. *Hist.* 5. 20. 5. On the bias of Agathias' whole account of this episode, maximising Belisarius' role, see Cameron, *Agathias*, pp. 49 f.

⁴⁵ Belisarius' disgrace at the end of his life (he died in March 565, Theoph. p. 240. 24–6) is reflected in medieval legend, according to which the great general ended his days as a blind beggar in Constantinople; cf. W. Wagner, *Medieval Greek Texts* (London, 1870, repr. 1972), pp. 116 ff.; Bury, op. cit. in note 25 sup., ii. 69; Stein, op. cit. in note 25 sup., ii. 779 f., n. 5.

⁴⁶ Enumerated in lines 75 f.: *ἅπας ὁ δῆμος εὐθύς, ἡ γερουσία, | οἱ τὸν μέσον ζηλοῦντες ἀσφαλῆ βίον*. . . . The second group is the senate. The first could be either technical 'circus factions' or general 'plebs'. The third expression perhaps has more point if *δῆμος* is taken to refer to the circus factions; then 'those who pursue the safe middle life' would be the clergy, who, as a result of Justinian's ecclesiastical legislation, were 'strictly forbidden to indulge in the pastimes of attending horse-races or visiting the theatres' (Bury, op. cit. in note 25 sup., ii. 361), and hence could be termed 'secure from' the passions generated in the Hippodrome. I am indebted to Dr J. D. C. Frendo for this suggestion.

trimeters⁴⁷ in a relatively short time, even though it involved a topic which needed to be handled with discretion. But the hexameters which comprise the bulk of the poem could not so easily be put together in haste: the form of hexameter evolved by Nonnus and imitated by Paul was controlled by rigorous rules which limited the permutations of dactyl and spondee in the line and regulated the position of accent as well as syllable length.⁴⁸ The difficulties of composition within this formal straightjacket are illustrated by the laborious efforts of Paul's provincial contemporary, the Egyptian Dioscorus of Aphrodito, which survive on papyrus in the author's working copy.⁴⁹ Paul's poem is in an altogether different class: he adheres closely to Nonnus' metrical principles, but avoids the wholesale borrowing from the master to which lesser imitators resorted,⁵⁰ demonstrating instead his familiarity with earlier Greek poetry and usage, above all that of Homer and the Alexandrian poets, whom Paul exploits with originality and scrupulous regard for classical correctness. His poem is a learned work of scholarship in the Alexandrian tradition, the more remarkable because it was written in an age when classical scholarship was fast declining.⁵¹ Its composition must have occupied a considerable period, and much of the ekphrastic description and preliminary account of the earthquake which destroyed Justinian's first church would have been written at leisure in the months before the re-dedication of the church.

However, in contrast to the studious precision of Paul's normal style, his grammatical classicism, and careful choice and deployment of language, there are a few passages in the hexameters which fall short of these high standards. It is striking that many (though not all) of these instances are clustered in the epilogue of the poem, and the suggestion naturally arises that the deadline of the official ceremony at this point began to impose limitations on Paul's scholarly ideals, while weak passages earlier in the work might have been revised had time allowed. This view is inevitably subjective and open to the criticism that Paul was simply not so punctilious a poet as I have suggested. Nevertheless, the paucity of this weak material encourages me in the belief that it may be attributable to temporal pressures upon composition, and I have thought it worth while to discuss these passages in this context.

Grammatical weaknesses

- (i) 265
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ κατὰ νηὸν ἐδύσατο καὶ βάσιν ἔγνων
 δώματος ἀστυφέλικτον, ὅλην ἔτρεψε μενοινὴν
 ἐς κορυφὴν περίμετρον, ἐπευφήμησε δὲ τέχνην
 καὶ νόον Ἀνθεμίῳ κεκασμένον ἔμφρονι βουλῇ.

⁴⁷ See note 33 sup. The accentual Byzantine dodecasyllable, a standard metre of later poetry, is based on the iambic trimeter.

⁴⁸ For example, proparoxytone words are avoided at the line-end. For detailed analysis of Nonnus' metrics, see R. Keydell's edition of the *Dionysiaca*, I (Berlin, 1959), 35*-42*; summary in F. Vian's Budé edition, I (Paris, 1976), pp. I-IV. Paul admits only six of the nine permutations of the hexameter found in the *Dionysiaca* and never writes two consecutive spondees. See Friedländer, pp. 117-19; J. Merian-Genast, *De Paulo Silentiario byzantino* (Diss., Leipzig, 1889), pp. 41-86; Carla Caiazzo, 'L'esametro in Paolo Silenziario', *JÖB* 32(3) (1982; = Acts of 16th Intern. Byz. Congress, Vol. II (3)), pp. 335-43.

⁴⁹ Ed. Heitsch, op. cit. in note 9 sup., pp. 127-52.

⁵⁰ For example, John of Gaza; see Friedländer, p. 112.

⁵¹ Viansino has explored the literary affinities of the epigrams, and Yardley stresses Paul's knowledge of earlier Greek literature (loc. cit. in note 3 sup.), but the high literary quality of the *Descr.*, although recognised by Friedländer (pp. 123 f.), has hitherto been insufficiently explored and appreciated. It is punctilious, for example, in the correct use of particles. For an instance of recherché Homeric scholarship, see R. C. McCail, 'ΛΑΩ: two testimonia in later Greek poetry', *CQ* n.s. 20 (1970), 306-8 and, for an Aristophanic allusion in the iambic prologue, 'Κυαμοτρῶξ Ἀττικός in Paulus Silentiarius, *Descriptio* 125: no allusion to Simplicius', *PCPS* n.s. 16 (1970), 79-82.

κείνος ἀνὴρ τὰ πρῶτα θεμέλια πῆξато νηοῦ⁵²
 εὐκαμάτων βουλῇσιν ὑποδρήσων βασιλῆων, 270
 δεινὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ κέντρον εἶλεν καὶ σχῆμα χαράσαι,
 ὃς τοίχοις ἐνέηκε τόσον σθένος ὅσον ἐρίξειν
 δαίμονος ἀντιβίου βαρυτλήτοισιν ἔρωαῖς.
 οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμηγέντος ἐρικνήμιου καρήνου
 ὤκλασεν, ἀλλ' ἀδόνητον εὐκρήπιδι θεμίλω⁵³ 275
 ἶχνος ἐπεστήριξεν·

Justinian has hurried to S. Sophia to inspect the damage after the collapse of A.D. 558; on seeing that the foundations are unshaken, he praises the skill of the architect Anthemius.⁵⁴ Lines 269–73 are a parenthetical encomium of the architect, and there is some unease in the return to the topic of the collapse in line 274. First, the reference of γὰρ (274) is ambiguous. Friedländer assumed (*ad loc.*) that the main thread of the narrative is resumed in 274 after the digression on Anthemius and that consequently γὰρ refers back to the expression of 267 f. ἐπευφήμησε δὲ τέχνην, κτλ. But lines 274–6 can be simply and naturally taken as explanatory of 272 f.: the walls were strong enough to resist the destructive forces which caused the dome to collapse, for the main church remained unshaken. At the same time, however, the idea expressed in lines 272 f. is very similar to that of 265 f. βάσιν ἔγνω | δώματος ἀστυφέλικτον, so that there is an element of repetition: Justinian saw that the foundations remained unshaken and so praised Anthemius (265–8)... who had made the walls strong enough to remain firm (272 f.). Hence the γὰρ-expression of 274–6 can be regarded as being at once a clarification of 272 f. and an explanation of Justinian's praise of Anthemius (267 f.). Second, the two verbs ὤκλασεν (275) and ἐπεστήριξεν (276) have no immediate subject. No doubt Friedländer is correct in suggesting (*ad loc.*) that the subject must be νηός,⁵⁵ as in the similar passage at lines 198 f., οὐδὲ μὲν εὐρύστερνους ὑπώκλασε μέχρι θεμέλων | νηός. But the word itself has not occurred since 265 and 269. These two difficulties give the passage an uncharacteristic clumsiness and suggest that the digression on Anthemius is not altogether well knit into the context. Moreover, it is partially echoed in a subsequent briefer parenthesis in praise of Anthemius and his associate Isidorus, lines 553–5:

ἀμφότεροι γὰρ
 καλλιπόνων βουλῇσιν ὑποδρήσσαντες ἀνάκτων
 νηὸν ἐδωμήσαντο πελώριον·

⁵² Cf. Call. *Ap.* 58 τετραέτης τὰ πρῶτα θεμέλια Φοῖβος ἔπηξε. This imitation of Callimachus is the only instance in the *Descr.* of the lengthening of a monosyllable (τὰ) by mute and liquid; see Merian-Genast, *op. cit.* in note 48 *sup.*, pp. 68 f.

⁵³ I tentatively retain Du Cange's conjecture, accepted by all editors, for the manuscript's metrically defective reading ἀδόνητον κρηπίδι θεμίλω. But Arthur Ludwich, *Textkritische Noten zu Paulus Silentiarius* (Königsberg, 1913), pp. 10 f., correctly objected that Paul does not elsewhere use εὐκρηπισ and that he uses θεμίλων elsewhere in the plural only. These objections can be countered, but Ludwich's conjecture ἐπὶ κρηπίδι θεμίλων (or ἐνὶ κρηπίδι θεμίλων) is none the less attractive.

⁵⁴ Anthemius of Tralles, judged by Procopius (*Aed.* 1. 1. 24) to be superior in his profession not only to his contemporaries but also to his predecessors. In the building of S. Sophia, he collaborated with Isidorus of Miletus, as Paul mentions, line 552 f.; cf. *Proc. Aed.* 1. 1. 24, 50, 70.

⁵⁵ Other suggested subjects are unsatisfactory. Du Cange extracted οἱ τοίχοι from τοίχοις (272) as the subject of ὤκλασεν, but the plural subject does not marry with the singular verb; he found a subject for ἐπεστήριξεν by combining the expression from ἀλλ' (275) with the one which follows in lines 276–8, but this entails other difficulties. Meineke (in notes to C. W. Kortüm's German translation of Paul's poem, appended to W. Salzenberg, *Altchristliche Bau-denkmale von Constantinopel*, Berlin [1854], p. xi n. 16) proposed σθένος (272) as the subject of both verbs, but its use with ἶχνος ἐπεστήριξεν would involve an unlikely personification.

The similarity between lines 270 and 554 provokes the suggestion that these two encomia were alternatives, one of which Paul might have deleted had the text been revised.

- (ii) ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ σκίοεσαν ἀναστείλασα καλύπτρην 337
οὐρανίας ῥοδόπηχυν ὑπέδραμεν ἄντυγας αἴγλη,
δὴ τότε λαὸς ἅπας συναγείρετο, πᾶς τε θωώκων
ἄρχος ὑποδρήσων σθεναροῦ βασιλῆος ἔφετμαῖς,⁵⁶ 340
καὶ Χριστῷ βασιλῇ χάρις δῶρα κομίζων,
ἱκεσίοις στομάτεσσι θεουδέας ἤπνευ ὕμνους,
ἄργυρον εὐκαμάτοις ὑπὸ χεῖρεσι κηρὸν ἀνάπτων.

The passage describes the assembly of people in preparation for the re-dedication of the church on Christmas Eve. This section may therefore have been one of the last parts of the poem to be composed, although it is arguable that it contains little precise detail which Paul could not have inferred from similar occasions in the past, for example the first dedication of S. Sophia.⁵⁷ Here there is some anomaly in the use of the present participles: the phrase ὑποδρήσων . . . ἔφετμαῖς (340) describes the function of the θωώκων ἄρχος, the secular official 'who discharges the behests of the mighty king', but the subsequent participles κομίζων (341) and ἀνάπτων (343) and the verb ἤπνευ (342) refer to the activities of the λαὸς and θωώκων ἄρχος together on the occasion of the dedication ceremony. Thus the καὶ of 341 follows on from συναγείρετο (339) and continues the narrative, while the weaker τε (339) merely adds a second subject to the sentence.⁵⁸ The two participles and the verb of 341–3 can be singular because the two individually-expressed subjects are each singular,⁵⁹ and because the initial verb συναγείρετο is singular. The expression of 340 ὑποδρήσων . . . ἔφετμαῖς is similar to phrases used by Paul elsewhere (270, 554, see (i) sup.) and even closer to a line in an epigram preserved in a fourth-century context by Malalas, p. 326. 3, *Κωνσταντίου* (or *Κωνσταντίνου*) ἀνακτος ὑποδρήσσοντος ἔφετμαῖς, and to Gregory Nazianzus, *Carmina* 1. 1. 27. 25 (PG. 37. 500A) *Χριστοῦ βασιλῆος ὑποδρήσσοντες ἔφετμαῖς*. Paul has here adapted a familiar phrase to describe the θωώκων ἄρχος without observing that the participle ὑποδρήσων in this context appears to be parallel to κομίζων and ἀνάπτων, which refer to the θωώκων ἄρχος and λαὸς together. Such imprecision is unusual and may be a sign of hasty or unrevised composition.

Uncharacteristic repetition

Paul frequently uses anaphora as a rhetorical device, but in one or two cases repetition occurs without apparent point. The clearest examples occur near the end of the poem.

- (i) αὐτίκα γὰρ καθαροῦ νόου θημῶνα πετάσας 1011
Λυδὸν ἐριχρῦσσοι παρέδραμες ὄλβον ἀναύρου,
ἔκχυτον ἐκ παλάμης ποταμήρρυτον ὄλβον ὀπάζων.

The passage concerns the generosity of the Patriarch Eutychius to the needy. The repetition of ὄλβον in *eadem sede* in lines 1012 f. is clumsy. The possibility of textual

⁵⁶ I have emended Friedländer's punctuation of this line.

⁵⁷ The brief notices of the chronographers for the two *encaenia* of S. Sophia suggest that both involved similar processions headed by the Patriarch; cf. Theoph. p. 217. 16–20 and ib. 238. 18–24. Paul does, however, specifically recall (in lines 350 f.) the psalm which the chronographers record was sung at the second *encaenia*.

⁵⁸ See Ludwig, *op. cit.* in note 53 sup., pp. 14 f., on Paul's sparing and discriminating use of the particle τε.

⁵⁹ Cf. line 2 *θεός τε καὶ βασιλεὺς σεμνύνεται*.

corruption cannot be excluded, but the use of ὄλβον in each of the two lines can be paralleled. Line 1012 refers to the Lydian river Pactolus, associated with wealth on account of the gold washed down in its streams in ancient times. The noun ὄλβος is found elsewhere in this context,⁶⁰ while the expression ὄλβον ὀπάζειν (1013), on the other hand, is Homeric.⁶¹ It may be that Paul intended lines 1012 and 1013 as alternatives, one of which would have been deleted on revision, since 1013 could stand instead of 1012 if ὀπάσεις were written instead of ὀπάζων.

(ii)	πάντα μὲν ὑλαίων ἀπεσείσαο πῆματα μόχθων,	1007
	πάντα μὲν ὠγυγίων τε καὶ ὀπλοτέρων κλέα μόχθων	1014
	ἐξεδάης.	1015

These lines also refer to Eutychius. Their similarity of language and structure is striking, but has no apparent rhetorical point. Both lines mark the opening of a new theme, and it may be that Paul here inadvertently repeated a convenient combination in close proximity. These lines frame the passage discussed above (i): the two blemishes together may be taken as an indication that this section towards the end of the poem was not fully polished.⁶²

(iii)	... εὐπτολέμων σέθεν ὕμνων	967
	εὐπτολέμοις καμάτοις καὶ ἀστυόχοις ἐπὶ μόχθοις	971
	... ἐπ' ἀστυόχοις καμάτοις...	977

These lines all come from the elaborate rhetorical passage (967–77) in which Paul justifies his transition from praise of the Emperor to praise of the Patriarch. In theme and style the passage as a whole has many similarities with the opening hexameters (135–67, especially 135–44): in both passages Paul draws a distinction between Justinian's military and his civil victories and applauds the surpassing achievement of the latter, as exemplified in the one case by the building of S. Sophia (135–44) and in the other by the appointment of Eutychius as Patriarch (967–77). Both passages allude to Justinian's garland of victory (146; 972, 977) and to his defeat of hostile powers (Phthonos 160–3; the Devil and the passions 975–6). Both passages are high flown and rhetorical and clearly intended as stylistic *tours de force*, using tricolon expressions (135–7, 147–51; 975–7) and elaborate compound epithets (e.g. τυραννοφόνους 137, πολύολβε 139, εὐπήληκος 140, πολιτισσούχοισιν 141; τροπαιοφόρων 967, βιοδώτορι 973, ἀλιτρονόοιο 975). Both passages begin boldly with a rollicking dactylic line (135, 967; cf. also 136–8, 144, al.; 971, 975, 977). Paul has here adapted his opening passage in an abbreviated form to suit his new context, where it fits less happily, since the election of a good Patriarch⁶³ is a far less cogent 'peacetime victory' than the building of a great church.⁶⁴ That Paul repeats two of his epithets

⁶⁰ E.g. *A.P.* 9. 423. 4 (Bianor) ὄλβον Πακτωλοῦ ρεύματι δεξάμεναι; Nonn. *D.* 34. 213 *Λυδῶν ἄσπετον ὄλβον, ὅσον Πακτωλὸς ἀέξει*, al.

⁶¹ *Od.* 18. 19; cf. Hes. *Th.* 420, Manetho 2 (1). 221, Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 1. 1. 4. 83 (*PG.* 37. 422A), etc.

⁶² There may be a further example of inadvertent repetition earlier in the poem. At *Descr.* 286 and 289, the noun ὄμμα is reiterated in *eadem sede*, and likewise the verb ἰδὼν/ἰδεῖν (284, 288, 290). These repetitions do not appear to have any stylistic purpose, although they do occur within an elaborate *synkrisis* which is framed by the parallel expressions *pās βροτὸς* (286) and *pās κόρος* (299).

⁶³ In Paul's poem, there is no shadow of the events of A.D. 565, when Eutychius was deposed by Justinian for refusing to sign the Emperor's aphthartodocetist edict; see Stein, *op. cit.* in note 25 sup., ii. 687 with 688 n. 1.

⁶⁴ Building achievements are a standard element of imperial panegyric in the category of 'peacetime achievements', e.g. Vell. Pat. 2. 130, Pliny, *Pan.* 51, Prisc. *Pan.* 184 f., Proc. *Gaz. Pan.* 17–21, Proc. *Aed.* 1. 1. 12, 17 ff., and *passim*.

within the brief compass of the second passage seems a clear indication that it was put together in some haste.

Uncharacteristic style

Paul's hexameters are composed in the elaborate and rhetorical style characteristic of Nonnus.⁶⁵ Epithets and poetic forms abound and the syntax reflects epic models, from Homer through the Alexandrian poets to Nonnus. Occasionally a term or expression derived from late prose usage is admitted.⁶⁶ I therefore tentatively include in this discussion of examples of less than perfect craftsmanship a passage from the epilogue whose style is unusually plain and direct and where several concessions to contemporary usage are found clustered together.

κερδαίνεις δ' ὅσα τύμβος ἀμείλιχος εἶχε καλύψαι 950
 γνῖα τεοῦ θεράποντος· ἀφ' ὑμετέρης δὲ γαλήνης
 νικηθεὶς, τρισέβαστε, πολὺ πλεον ἢ σιδήρω
 εἰς σέ μεταστρεφθεῖσαν ὅλην φρένα δέσμιος ἔλκει,
 ἐκ δὲ φόβου πρὸς ἔρωτα τεὸν καὶ πίστιν αἶξας
 ὑμετέροισι ἐθέλοντα λόφον δούλωσε λεπάδνοισι· 955
 οἶσθα γὰρ ὅσσον ἔρωσ κρατερώτερός ἐστιν ἀνάγκης,
 οἶσθα καὶ ὡς νομίοισιν ἐν ἄνθεσι πολλάκι ταῦρος
 πειθόμενος σύριγγι καλαύροπος ἤχον ἀλύσκει.

Paul here expounds the wisdom of Justinian's policy of clemency with sentiments which reflect the ideas of late Greek political philosophy.⁶⁷ The passage follows a discussion of the inevitable frustration of those who plot against the emperor, which opens with an explicit reference to the conspiracy of A.D. 562 (937–49). The whole section is closely parallel in theme to the central passage of the first iambic prologue and so, like that, was probably one of the last parts of the poem to be composed.⁶⁸ The relative starkness of these lines by comparison with Paul's normal manner is striking: the only characteristic line is 955, and this is modelled on earlier lines in the poem;⁶⁹ ἀμείλιχος (950) and νόμιος (957) alone can be considered poetic epithets; the concluding *synkrisis* (957 f.) is jejune when set against examples of this device earlier in the poem⁷⁰ and, indeed, appears to have been adapted by Paul from an anonymous epigram (*A.P.* 16. 74) on the related theme of advising an official to temper a policy of mildness with a little terror.⁷¹ The expression *κερδαίνεις ὅσα* in 950 is unusually inelegant, while

⁶⁵ Cf. Friedländer, p. 124, who quotes (n. 1) the judgement of Joseph Scaliger on Paul (in a letter to Salmasius),... 'Silentiarius, vitio saeculi sui, quae tum virtus erat, usus est. Strepitus verborum, ambitus sententiarum, compositio Dithyrambis audacior... Quod uno verbo exponere poterat, maluit binis, trinis versiculis producere'.

⁶⁶ Cf. Viansino, op. cit. in note 3 sup., p. xvii.

⁶⁷ Cf., for example, Themistius, *Or.* 19 (i. 337. 7 ff. Downey), al.; Agapetus, *Cap.* 35 (*PG.* 86. 1176A), al.

⁶⁸ See section II above.

⁶⁹ 158 f. *ῥινοτόρῳ δούλωσεν ἀπείρονα βάρβαρον αἰχμῇ, | ὄφρα τεοῖς ἀδμήτα λόφον κλίνειε λεπάδνοισι.*

⁷⁰ E.g. lines 208–13. This *synkrisis* is preceded by a gnomic statement (207), parallel to that of 956.

⁷¹ The epigrammatist illustrates his point by three analogies, the sting of the bee, the whip which directs the proud horse and the staff which controls the herd of swine. The last concludes with the same half-line as Paul's 958. The resemblance is unlikely to be accidental. There is no means of dating the epigram, beyond the fact that its style and language are in the manner of Nonnus. I am inclined to believe that Paul is adapting the epigram (rather than vice versa) because Paul's argument, that the bull is more amenable to persuasion than to force, is less obvious than that of the epigrammatist, and might have been intended as a refutation of the latter. The fierce and belligerent bull is a better analogy than the swine for the rebel, to whom Paul's *synkrisis* refers, its seduction by the pipe being as surprising and apparently uncharacteristic as the rebel's conversion to allegiance.

the locution *εἶχε καλύψαι* as equivalent to *ἐκάλυψεν ἄν* is a late usage.⁷² Likewise the use of *ἀπό* in 951 after a passive verb, where *ὑπό* might be expected, is a practice which is increasingly common in later prose, although similar cases are found in Nonnus.⁷³ Finally, the compound *τρισέβαστος* (952), which occurs only here (it is probably a 'translation' of the Latin-derived *τρισαύγουστος*), finds its best parallels in the language of the hymnographer Romanos and medieval Greek literature.⁷⁴ Individually these points may appear trivial; in close proximity they assume a greater significance.

My contention that the foregoing passages testify that Paul completed his poem in haste is not susceptible of proof, but this material does at least suggest, albeit in a negative way, the kind of care and scholarship which underlie the greater part of the poem. There can have been few in late sixth-century Constantinople with the skill, patience or knowledge to compose a major poem in the classical manner. As a man of wealth and aristocratic background, Paul presumably had the advantage of a good education, but there is no reason to doubt the testimony of his friend the historian Agathias, that Paul's enthusiasm for 'learning and the practice of words' was his main pride.⁷⁵ In arranging the ceremonial to stress the ecclesiastical significance of the occasion celebrated by Paul, Justinian was acknowledging a change which was taking place in late sixth-century society, but in choosing Paul to compose the celebratory oration for that occasion, the old Emperor betrayed his earlier ambition to link his city and his reign with the splendours of the classical past.*

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⁷² See A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar* (London, 1897), sec. 2092, p. 488 and Appendix iv, sec. 7, pp. 554 f.; cf. K. Mitsakis, *The Language of Romanos the Melodist* (Byz. Archiv Heft 11, Munich, 1967), sec. 284, p. 143.

⁷³ The use of *ὑπό* + dative instead of a simple *dat. instr.* originates in Homer; see Friedländer, p. 115, and cf. P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, ii (Paris, 1953), 140 f., sec. 208; it is not uncommon in post-classical poetry, e.g. A.R. 2. 26, A.P. 5. 74. 2 (Rufin.), Nonn. D. 34. 137, al. For the use of *ἀπό* instead of *ὑπό* in late prose, see LSJ s.v. *ἀπό* III. 4, F. Blass, A. Debrunner and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (14th ed., Göttingen, 1976), sec. 210. 1 & 2, p. 171, Jannaris, op. cit. in note sup., sec. 1507 f., pp. 369 f. Paul's expression does, however, include an idea of cause or means, a context in which *ἀπό* is regularly used; see LSJ s.v. III. 6. For Nonnus, see W. Peek, *Lexikon zu den Dionysiaka des Nonnos* (Berlin, 1968–75), s.v. *ἀπό* II. 1, col. 159 f., Keydell, op. cit. in note 48 sup., i. 63*. Paul uses a similar *ἀπό* in line 988.

⁷⁴ See Mitsakis, op. cit. in note 72 sup., sec. 67, p. 37. I am indebted to Dr J. D. C. Frendo for both this point and that of note 72. Paul uses similar compound superlatives in his *iambics*, e.g. *παγκράτιστος* (22), *παντάριστος* (60), *παμμέγιστος* (83, 101, 111).

⁷⁵ Agath. *Hist.* 5. 6. 7 ... γένους τε κοσμούμενος δόξῃ καὶ πλοῦτον ἄφθονον ἐκ προγόνων διαδεξάμενος, ὁμῶς παιδεία γε αὐτῷ καὶ λόγων ἄσκησις διεσπούδατο, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε μᾶλλον ἡὔχει καὶ ἐσεμνύνετο.

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