

PAULINUS POEM 11, VIRGIL'S FIRST *ECLOGUE*, AND THE LIMITS OF *AMICITIA**

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Paulinus Poem 11 is a verse epistle, the final letter in the correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus,¹ a correspondence often cited as dramatic evidence of the tensions and social realignments among the Gallo-Roman cultural élite caused by the new spirit of Christian asceticism associated in Gaul with the name of Martin of Tours.² Despite the broad familiarity of this correspondence, the letters pose problems of interpretation that have still finally to be resolved, and may yet involve some reassessment of the received picture of the break between Paulinus and Ausonius. One such problem is the tone of Poem 11. Fabre describes this poem as cold and unsympathetic, displaying a distressing “sécheresse de coeur.”³ Chadwick, on the other hand, speaks of “a letter full of tender affection, and of generous sympathy.”⁴ The contrast could hardly be more marked. The intention of this paper is to show that Chadwick's opinion is closer to the truth; that Poem 11 is more subtle than has previously been appreciated, and at the same time a more satisfactory conclusion to the correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus.

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¹ I follow Pierre Fabre, *Essai sur la chronologie de l'oeuvre de Saint Paulin de Nole*, Publications de la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg 109 (Paris 1948) 100–107, for the chronology and the sequence of the letters. No substantial objections have been raised to Fabre's chronology since, although Charles Witke, *Numen Litterarum: The Old and the New in Latin Poetry from Constantine to Gregory the Great*, *Mittelalters Studien und Texte* 5 (Leiden 1971) 37 and 48, and W. H. C. Frend, “The Two Worlds of Paulinus of Nola,” *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, ed. J. W. Binns (London 1974) 109, both reverse the sequence of Paulinus' letters (i.e. they make 11 the earlier), perhaps because 10 is a fuller statement of Paulinus' position, and therefore might be thought to be later (but see the arguments of Fabre 102, note 9, which seem to me decisive).

² For instance, John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425* (Oxford 1975) 151–53.

³ Pierre Fabre, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 167 (Paris 1949) 165–66.

⁴ Nora K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London 1955) 68.

That correspondence is now represented by nine letters, seven of Ausonius and two of Paulinus. The first four letters (Ausonius *Epp.* 23–26 Peiper)⁵ were written in the 380s, before Paulinus began to move away from his former tutor.⁶ They contain the usual exchange of courtesies; but they also reveal an engaging sense of humor (especially in the description of the corn-factor Philo, *Ep.* 26) and an effortless assumption of unanimity of feeling and taste. In the fall of 389, however, Paulinus moved from his native Aquitaine to Spain, where his wife Therasia had her ancestral estates.⁷ Physical separation was a symptom of the spiritual alienation that began to divide the two correspondents. For almost four years Ausonius heard nothing. His letters—four were written between 390 and 393, two (28 and 29) survive—went unanswered.⁸ And the answer, when it came in the summer of 393, was very different from any of the letters that had previously passed between the two friends.

It is possible to exaggerate the extent of the break between Paulinus and Ausonius up to this point. Ausonius clearly had his suspicions about the change of heart his friend was experiencing (e.g., “vertisti, Pauline, tuos dulcissime mores?” *Ep.* 29.50), but he had maintained a civilized geniality in his complaints (*blanda obiurgatio*, *Ep.* 28.3; *blanda querella*, *Ep.* 29.65),⁹ which ensured that any alienation need only be temporary. Moreover, Paulinus had an excuse for his silence. He had received no word from Ausonius since at least 390.¹⁰ Three letters eventually arrived together in 393, including our *Epp.* 28 and 29; the first letter sent by Ausonius apparently never reached its addressee. Paulinus replies to the three letters in Poem 10.

Paulinus’ letter makes no use of any excuses. It directly confronts the issue that divides the two men: Paulinus’ new-found commitment to ascetic Christianity. In the light of his new faith the traditional grammat-

⁵ I quote Rudolf Peiper’s text of Ausonius, *Decimi Magni Ausonii Burdigalensis Opuscula* (Leipzig 1886), and W. von Hartel’s text of Paulinus, *Sancti Pontii Paulini Nolani Carmina*, CSEL 30 (Vienna 1894) except for Paulinus C. 11.41, where I follow Peiper.

⁶ For the chronology of Paulinus’ earlier years see now Alan D. Booth, “Sur la date de naissance de Saint Paulin de Nole,” *EMC* 26 (1982) 56–62.

⁷ For the possibility that during at least some of his time in Spain Paulinus was staying on his wife’s estates see Jacques Fontaine, “Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IV^e siècle occidental,” in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris 1972) 580–81, reprinted in Fontaine’s *Études sur la poésie latine tardive d’Ausone à Prudence* (Paris 1980) 250–51.

⁸ It is likely that Ausonius wrote one letter a year. Fabre, *Essai* (above, note 1) 106, dates *Ep.* 28 to 391 and *Ep.* 29 to spring 393.

⁹ *Ep.* 29.2, *blando residem sermone lacessit*; cf. Paulinus C. 10.9–12 and 106–8.

¹⁰ Paulinus C. 10.1–3 and 7–8. J. F. Matthews, “The Letters of Symmachus,” in Binns (above, note 1) 81, describes a similar situation in the correspondence of Symmachus; two letters from the same correspondent arrive simultaneously.

ical and rhetorical culture is denounced as empty and false (C. 10.33–42) and prayer to the Muses as blasphemy (C. 10.19–28 and 109–18)—Ausonius had ended Letter 29 (73–74) with a prayer to the Muses for Paulinus' change of heart. All that counts is a life turned towards God. The poem ends with an ultimatum: "if you approve of this, rejoice in the rich expectation of your friend; if not, leave me to win the approval only of Christ" (330–31; cf. 101–2). As an expression of the motives behind Paulinus' conversion the poem is effective and even moving; as a response to the human concerns of a devoted friend it is less adequate.¹¹ It is hardly surprising that Ausonius begins his reply (*Ep.* 27.1), "we are throwing off a yoke, Paulinus," and lays the blame squarely on the younger man's shoulders ("nec culpa duorum / ista, set unius tantum tua," 20–21, cf. 103).¹² Paulinus' first letter had failed to do justice to the long-standing ties of affection and *amicitia* that bound the two men. What was the place of human *amicitia* in Paulinus' new, God-oriented way of life? Poem 11 answers this question.

The poem is made up of 48 hexameters, followed by 20 iambic lines, trimeters alternating with dimeters. The iambic passage need not concern us here. It is a lyric expansion on the concept that Paulinus' devotion to Ausonius will be eternal, as expressed in the last three verses of the hexameter section. The hexameter passage falls into two parts, 1–29 and 30–48, each of which begins with a recital of charges or complaints brought by Ausonius against the younger man.¹³ In the first part Paulinus defends himself against complaints made in Ausonius' earlier letters (28 and 29), evidence for Fabre that Ausonius' criticisms still rankled.¹⁴ But a new note is sounded. For the first time Paulinus addresses the charge that he had neglected his duty as a friend (*neglectae . . . / crimen amicitiae*, 11.3–4).¹⁵ The word *amicus* is used only twice in the 331 verses of Poem 10 (276 and 330), and in both cases it is a question of what Ausonius owes to Paulinus. In Poem 11 Paulinus stresses his continual care to observe all the obligations of affection to Ausonius,

¹¹ This explains the inconsistency in Fabre's judgements of Poem 10. He admires it as an expression of Christian devotion (*Essai* [above, note 1] 104), but is uncomfortable with the poem in the context of human friendship (*St. Paulin* [above, note 3] 161–62).

¹² The manuscript tradition of *Ep.* 27 shows evidence of a longer and a shorter version of this poem, which have been conflated in Peiper's edition. Our argument is not affected, however, as both versions put the blame on Paulinus for the break, and both conclude by quoting Virgil, *Ecl.* 8.108.

¹³ As evidenced by the verbs *memoras*, *exprobras*, *addis crimen*, *obicis*, *iacis* (1–5), and *quereris* (30). Paulinus' procedures in this poem are somewhat akin to the *refutatio* of forensic oratory.

¹⁴ Fabre, *Saint Paulin* (above, note 3) 164; cf. *Essai* (above, note 1) 103, note 1, for the parallels with Ausonius, *Epp.* 28 and 29.

¹⁵ Ausonius, *Ep.* 28.31, had already used the phrase *crimen amicitiae*.

cura mihi semper fuit et manet officiis te
omnibus excolere, adfectu observare fidei; (8-9)

he speaks of the love of his whole household (presumably including his wife) for his *sanctus parens*,

inque tuum tantus nobis consensus amorem est. (18)

His choice of language leaves no doubt that at least in his own mind he has maintained the duties of friendship. *Officiis excolere, adfectu observare fidei, amorem*; this is the traditional vocabulary of Roman *amicitia*.¹⁶ The contrast is marked with Poem 10, where there are no similar protestations of affection. If Paulinus was to some extent dissatisfied with his first letter, he may have reminded Ausonius of the complaints made by him in *Epp.* 28 and 29 for apologetic reasons. He wished to excuse his own disregard of his friend's sensitivities in Poem 10 by emphasizing the pain he had felt at Ausonius' criticisms. This point is made both at the beginning (5, *durum iacis in mea viscera versum*) and at the end (28-29) of the first part of Poem 11:

(pietas) gravius violatur iniquo
vulnere tam tenera offensae quam libera culpa.

Paulinus must now make amends. He claims that his friendship towards Ausonius is unchanged. He must show how this is compatible with the new life of Christian asceticism he has chosen for himself.

This he does in verses 30-48. This part of the poem falls almost exactly into two halves; 30-39 *iugum*, and 39-48. It takes its point of departure from the complaint of Ausonius in *Ep.* 27 (1 and 20), "we are throwing off a yoke." Here are verses 30-39:

Discussisse iugum quereris me, quo tibi doctis
iunctus eram studiis. Hoc nec gestasse quidem me
adsero; namque pares subeunt iuga, nemo valentes
copulat infirmis, neque sunt concordia frena,
si sit compulsis mensura iugalibus inpar.
Si vitulum tauro vel equum committis onagro,
si confers fulicas cygnis et aedona picae,
castaneis corylos, aequas viburna cupressis,
me conpone tibi; vix Tullius et Maro tecum
sustineant aequale iugum.

Paulinus' argument is carefully organized and conforms closely to the precepts given in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (2.18.28) for the disposition of the *absolutissima et perfectissima argumentatio*: "in quinque partes est distributa: propositionem, rationem, rationis confirmationem,

¹⁶ See David O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1969) 80-95, on *fides* and *officia*, and Fabre, *St. Paulin* (above, note 3) 142-44 on *adfectus*.

exornationem, complexionem.”¹⁷ Paulinus’ argument is constructed as follows:

Propositio: Hoc nec gestasse quidem me / adsero.

Ratio: namque pares subeunt iuga.

Rationis confirmatio: nemo . . . impar.

Exornatio: si vitulum . . . cupressis.

Complexio: me conpone . . . iugum.

Only the *complexio* deviates slightly from the standard form of *argumentatio*, by leaving the conclusion to be inferred from an implied *argumentum a maiore* (“if Cicero and Virgil could scarcely bear an equal yoke with you, how could I, who am so much their inferior?”). And indeed the *Auctor ad Herennium* recognizes that the *complexio* may be omitted when the argument is short and the listener does not need to be reminded of the point that is being made (2.19.30).¹⁸

The *exornatio* of Paulinus’ argument is a poetic topos, *parvis componere magna*, derived from Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.22–25.¹⁹ The poet clearly has the Virgilian original in mind, for he quotes directly from it in verse 37 (cf. *lenta . . . inter viburna cupressi*, *Ecl.* 1.25). Literary reminiscence establishes the comparative valuation of the low-growing wayfaring tree (*viburna*) and the tall cypresses as much, I suspect, as experience. Similarly the status of hazels (*corylos*) and chestnuts (*castaneis*) recalls the world of the first *Eclogue*. There a pair of new-born goats are abandoned *inter densas corylos* (14), while Tityrus in his pastoral retreat will feed on *castaneae molles* (81).²⁰

This display of rhetorical and poetic learning is surprising, as the ostensible point of Paulinus’ argument is that he is not Ausonius’ yoke-fellow in *docta studia*. While arguing his inferiority to Ausonius, he demonstrates his mastery of the literary tradition, a mastery that he can be assured Ausonius will appreciate. The very nature of the passage contradicts the assertion that there is no literary bond between the correspondents; its understanding depends on a shared cultural heritage. After Paulinus’ dismissal of secular literature in Poem 10, his deployment of rhetorical and poetical learning in the later poem apparently contains an element of self-correction, a delicate admission that his

¹⁷ I quote Harry Caplan’s Loeb edition, [*Cicero*] *ad C. Herennium De Ratione Dicendi* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968).

¹⁸ On the omission of the *conclusio* from *enthymemata* see C. Julius Victor, *Ars Rhetorica* 10 (411.1–32 Halm).

¹⁹ Witke (above, note 1) 41 notes that Paulinus is using a topos here, but does not discuss it further. The imitation of *Eclogue* 1 is noted by Hartel in his edition (382).

²⁰ But no doubt other passages contributed to the valuation of the two trees. Virgil (*G.* 2.14–15) speaks of *altae castaneae*, and it is likely that height is the primary distinction between *castaneae* and *coryli*, as it is, according to Servius (ad 1.22), between *viburna* and *cupressi*.

condemnation of secular letters had been too sweeping, or at least one-sided.²¹ Commentators,²² in fact, have generally been perplexed by Paulinus' introduction of the subject of *docta studia* here. It has seemed to them an evasion of Ausonius' arguments, since the *iugum* he is talking about is the *iugum amicitiae*. In the *exornatio* they have seen nothing but a tired cliché, trotted out to veil Paulinus' indifference to Ausonius. But shared intellectual pursuits were an important aspect of the ancient idea of *amicitia*.²³ Furthermore, my argument would see in the very literariness of the passage evidence of Paulinus' continued affection. The subtlety of response required of Ausonius—the argument is after all a sort of literary joke, a parody of rhetoric in which the poet's point turns out to be quite the reverse of what he is ostensibly arguing—is in itself a yardstick of the continued cultural unanimity of the correspondents. We seem, in fact, to be back in the world of studied exaggeration and elegant compliments, flattery of one's addressee and self-deprecation, that characterize Ausonius' letters before Paulinus' retreat to Spain. Verses 39–48 give the lie to this. All is not as it was.

Si iungar amore,
hoc tantum tibi me iactare audebo iugalem,
quo modicus sociis magno contendit habenis.
Dulcis amicitia aeterno mihi foedere tecum
et paribus semper redamandi legibus aequa.
Hoc nostra cervice iugum non scaeva resolvit
fabula, non terris absentia longa diremit
nec perimet. Toto licet abstrahar orbe vel aevo,
numquam animo divisus agam; prius ipsa recedet
corpore vita meo quam vester pectore vultus.

The key words here are “love” (*amore*, 39; *redamandi*, 43) and “friendship” (*dulcis amicitia aeterno . . . foedere*, 42).²⁴ Although Paulinus leaves no doubt that he does not intend to visit Ausonius at Saintes (45–46), as the latter had fondly imagined in *Ep.* 27, even this is quite consistent with the ancient idea of friendship, which was believed to transcend physical absence.²⁵ The passage ends with an avowal of Paulinus' devotion to Ausonius which echoes the language of

²¹ Cf. K. Kohlwes, *Christliche Dichtung und stilistische Form bei Paulinus von Nola* (Bonn 1979) 68–69.

²² E.g., Fabre, *St. Paulin* (above, note 3) 165, Witke (above, note 1) 41.

²³ See P. A. Brunt, “‘Amicitia’ in the Late Roman Republic,” *PCPS* 11 (1965) 2, note 2.

²⁴ For friendship as a *foedus* see Ross (above, note 16) 80–95. Paulinus' language bears a close resemblance to Catullus 109.6, *aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae*, of the poet's love for Lesbia.

²⁵ So Cicero, *De Amicitia* 7.23: “Verum enim amicum qui intuetur, tamquam exemplar aliquod intuetur sui. Quocirca et absentes adsunt. . . .” For the concept in Paulinus' letters see Fabre, *St. Paulin* (above, note 3) 139, note 5.

Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1.61–63, as he expresses his gratitude to his divine benefactor.²⁶

Ante pererratis amborum finibus exul
aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,
quam nostro illius labatur pectore voltus.

This is the second reference to *Ecl.* 1 in the second half of Paulinus' poem. In both cases Virgilian language is enlisted by the poet to express his admiration of and devotion to Ausonius. Virgil's poem provides a model to which his own feelings can be assimilated. Paulinus' vow of eternal friendship, like his earlier expression of admiration for Ausonius' learning, gains in resonance by invoking the Virgilian parallel. It is the relationship between Tityrus and Octavian that Paulinus finds repeated in his own experience; the two situations are alike in the degree of devotion Paulinus/Tityrus feel to their benefactors. But it is important to emphasize that this need not imply further correspondence between the details of the two texts; the Virgilian text provides a model for human relationships which has general applicability, irrespective of the particular individuals involved.²⁷ This is one level at which Paulinus appropriates and reinterprets the situation of the first *Eclogue* to fit his own circumstances. But it is the contention of this paper that the first *Eclogue* is relevant to the situation between Paulinus and Ausonius at another, more fundamental, level, which must be understood if the full subtlety of Paulinus' position is to be appreciated.

Paulinus Poem 11 is a response to Letter 27 of Ausonius. But that letter, like Paulinus' answering poem, had ended with a quotation from Virgilian pastoral, the penultimate line of *Eclogue* 8:

credimus an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?
(*Ep.* 27.132 = *Ecl.* 8.108)

The Virgilian context is relevant to Ausonius' situation. Ausonius is the rejected lover,²⁸ attempting to win back his beloved with *carmina* as the anonymous woman tries to lure Daphnis back to her in *Eclogue* 8. Under these circumstances Paulinus' decision to end Poem 11 (at least its hexameter section) with a quotation from the first *Eclogue* takes on additional significance. It looks like a deliberate response to Ausonius' gambit in *Epistle* 27. The implication is that the situation of the first *Eclogue* is relevant to Paulinus' view of the relationship between the two correspondents in the same way that *Eclogue* 8 was to Ausonius'. A

²⁶ The parallel is noted by Hartel 382.

²⁷ This argument will be supported more fully below.

²⁸ So Luigi Alfonsi, "Ausoniana," *Aevum* 37 (1963) 117; cf. *Ep.* 27.103 *Ponti dulcissime, 119 mea maxima cura*.

comparison between the situation of the two poems will reveal what Paulinus had in mind.

Consider the following parallels. Paulinus, like Tityrus, has had his life changed by his experience of the divine. Paulinus will live a life of ascetic retreat (*otium/otia*),²⁹ Tityrus of pastoral retreat ("deus nobis haec otia fecit," *Ecl.* 1.6). Paulinus must part from his friend Ausonius, just as Tityrus will be separated from Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 1.1–5). The two contexts (Virgilian and Paulinian) show remarkable coincidence. This in itself is convincing evidence that Paulinus intends his correspondent to see their own relationship in terms of that between Tityrus and Meliboeus, especially in the light of Ausonius' use of Virgilian pastoral in *Ep.* 27. But further arguments can be adduced. The reading of the first *Eclogue* as a personal allegory would be familiar in late antiquity. Servius records that Tityrus should be taken to represent Virgil (e.g., "hoc loco Tityri sub persona Vergilium debemus accipere," ad *Ecl.* 1.1), and that in some passages the *Eclogues* express the poet's thanks to Augustus for the restoration of his property: "intentio poetae haec est ut . . . aliquibus locis per allegoriam agat gratias Augusto vel aliis nobilibus, quorum favore amissum agrum recepit" (in *Verg. Buc. Proem.* 2.14–19 Thilo). Sidonius Apollinaris in the fifth century was to appropriate the figure of Meliboeus to describe his own situation with regard to the Visigothic king, Euric, who had imprisoned the writer and still controlled his movements, while his correspondent Lampridius, a poet and rhetorician in favor at the Visigothic court, is addressed as Tityrus (*Ep.* 8.9.5, verses 12 and 56–59), enjoying the king's generosity.

There is, then, in principle no objection to Paulinus' reuse of Virgil's pastoral world for his personal ends. Again, it is important to emphasize that it is the situation between Tityrus and Meliboeus that provides the ground of comparison; details or connotations in Virgil which are discordant to their new context are neutralized by that context.³⁰ The principle is enunciated by Servius on *Ecl.* 1.1: "hoc loco Tityri sub persona Vergilium debemus accipere; non tamen ubique, sed tantum ubi exigit ratio." To take one example, Paulinus' *otium* is occasioned by his spiritual experience of the Christian God, Tityrus' by the practical benefactions of the quasi-divine dynast, Octavian. The parallel, expressed in these terms, seems positively blasphemous. But it is on the abstract situation, not the historical details of personalities and actions that all the emphasis lies. Prudentius feels quite able to reuse in *Cathe-*

²⁹ The word *otia* is used by Ausonius of Paulinus' isolation in *Ep.* 29.31 and by Paulinus of Christian monasticism (*C.* 10.166); cf. *ThLL* 9.1178.79–1179.20.

³⁰ For the concept of "neutralization" in poetic imitation see Reinhart Herzog, *Die Biblepik der lateinischen Spätantike: Formgeschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung* 1 (Munich 1975) 197.

merinon 5 language used by Horace of the emperor Augustus; Christian poets regularly employ of their own God turns of phrase first coined to describe pagan divinities.³¹ In all these cases the poets' attention is on the abstract mold furnished by the poetic reminiscence, emptied of its particularizing detail. This way of looking at things is characteristic of late antiquity; the gaze of a late antique reader/writer/viewer was typically focussed on the higher reality that informed particular events.³² So, for instance, in biblical typology the events of the Old Testament supply schematic situations to be repeated with different characters and narrative details in the New.³³ The parallel with Paulinus' use of Virgil is close; in both cases an authoritative text provides a pattern of action that can, in principle at least, be repeatedly duplicated. Paulinus' reuse of Virgil implies an allegorical reinterpretation of the earlier poet, exploiting the Virgilian model as an atemporal pattern of human behavior. Biblical schemata not only recur in Old Testament and New Testament, but are repeated in the experience of the individual Christian so that descriptions of historical events in the life of a Christian, especially a saint or martyr, tend to be cast in a biblical mold,³⁴ just as Paulinus forms his own experience after the Virgilian model. Nor is this attitude to allegory exclusive to Christian exegesis. Servius' allegorical reading of the *Eclogues*, quoted above, follows the same principles: it does not insist on absolute conformity of detail (*aliquibus locis / tantum ubi exigit ratio*); it describes the allegory as a pattern of behavior, giving thanks for favor; and its interpretation depends on the substitution of a historical for a poetic character, Virgil for Tityrus. Ausonius would certainly have been attuned to recognizing this kind of intertextual allegory, which differs from the type of allegory exemplified for Quintilian by Horace, *Odes* 1.14, the extended metaphor (Quintilian 8.6.44; but cf. 8.6.46–47). Remembering his own use of Virgilian pastoral to embody his longing for Paulinus' return, Ausonius will have been particularly sensitive to the implications of any similar use of the same poetic tradition in Paulinus' response.

³¹ For the use of Horace C. 4.5 in *Cathemerinon* 5 see Antonio Salvatore, *Studi Prudentiani* (Naples 1958) 62–71, with the qualifications of Marion M. van Assendelft, *Sol Ecce Surgit Igneus: A Commentary on the Morning and Evening Hymns of Prudentius* (Groningen 1976) 126–27; for pagan locutions used of the Christian God, Harald Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers*, *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 6 (Göteborg 1958) 382–89.

³² Cf., for instance, Sabine MacCormack's description of the relationship between historical events and higher reality in Latin prose panegyrics, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1981) 26 and 31.

³³ What John MacQueen, *Allegory* (London 1970) 23, calls "situational allegory"; cf. Reinhart Herzog, *Die allegorische Dichtkunst des Prudentius*, *Zetemata* 42 (Munich 1966) 6.

³⁴ For instance in the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius; Herzog, *Die allegorische Dichtkunst* (above, note 33) 26–27.

Paulinus' exploitation of the first *Eclogue* operates at two levels: to express his grateful devotion to Ausonius, but also to provide a model for the influence of divinity on human relationships. This double level of allegory is reminiscent of the multiple interpretive planes of Christian allegoresis. The two levels are hierarchically related and represent two schemes of values. On the level of human *amicitia* Ausonius receives extravagant praise, the words used of a *deus* in Virgil's *Eclogue*; but in the divine scheme of things duty to a friend must take second place to duty to God. On this level, which has priority, Ausonius finds himself playing not Octavian, but Meliboeus. Paulinus' poem requires a certain subtlety of interpretation on Ausonius' part. But correspondents in late antiquity were used to reading between the lines in just this way, as verses 30–39 of our poem demonstrate. The case of Symmachus is typical. His letters, though apparently so dry, often show a "remarkable allusive sensitivity."³⁵

One further piece of evidence can be cited, though the extent of its relevance is difficult to assess. In the last decade of the fourth century a certain Severus Sanctus Endelexchius wrote a Christian pastoral, *De mortibus boum*, heavily indebted to Virgil's first *Eclogue*.³⁶ In Endelexchius' poem Tityrus is a Christian, his *deus* the Christian God, who has saved the shepherd's flocks and herds from the epidemic that is plaguing the countryside, and who will bring salvation to the shepherd too (105–12, 125–32). Endelexchius was a Gallic rhetor and friend of Paulinus (*Ep.* 28.6), probably the Sanctus to whom Paulinus' letters 40 and 41 are addressed.³⁷ The coincidence is intriguing, especially as there are no certain traces of the Christian interpretation of the first *Eclogue* before this period. The most likely candidate is a pastoral cento attributed to a certain Pomponius, which is in the form of a dialogue between Tityrus and Meliboeus, and takes its setting from the first *Eclogue*. Like Paulinus the cento interprets the *deus* of *Eclogue* 1 as the Christian God. But there is no reliable evidence for the date of the work. Schenkl, its editor, would put it not far from Proba's cento (written in the third quarter

³⁵ Matthews, "The Letters" (above, note 10) 82–83.

³⁶ The most recent text is Dietmar Korzeniewski, *Hirtengedichte aus spätrömischer und karolingischer Zeit*, Texte zur Forschung 26 (Darmstadt 1976) 57–71; his introduction contains a summary of what is known of the poet (4–6). There are studies by Wolfgang Schmid, "Tityrus Christianus: Probleme religiöser Hirtendichtung an der Wende vom vierten zum fünften Jahrhundert," *Hermes* 96 (1953) 101–65, supplemented by his articles "Bukolik," *RAC* 2 (1954) 786–800, and "Endelexchius," *RAC* 5 (1962) 1–3, and Terenzio Alimonti, *Struttura, ideologia ed imitazione Virgiliana nel "De mortibus boum" di Endelexchio* (Turin 1976).

³⁷ For the Gallic homeland of the poet see Schmid, "Tityrus" 122–23, and, for his identity with Paulinus' correspondent Sanctus, Schmid, "Endelexchius" 1–2, Alimonti (above, note 36) 19–22, and Francesco Corsaro, "L'Autore del *De mortibus boum*, Paolino de Nola e la politica religiosa di Teodosio," *Orpheus* 22 (1975) 22–26.

of the fourth century).³⁸ It is tempting to propose a relationship with the other two works we are discussing and suggest a date in the last decade of the fourth century,³⁹ but an earlier date cannot be ruled out. As it is, Endecheius' poem is the earliest securely datable Christian treatment of the first *Eclogue*. Now it was Endecheius, we know, who suggested to Paulinus in 394 or 395 the project of a panegyric on the Emperor Theodosius (*Ep.* 28.6). Can it be that Paulinus, in turn, proposed to Endecheius the subject for his Christian pastoral, as Augustine (*Ord.* 1.8.24) proposed a Christian version of the Pyramus and Thisbe legend to Licentius and as Paulinus later was to propose a program of Christian poetry to Jovius (*C.* 22, especially 1–34 and 148–56)?⁴⁰ The possibility is worth considering, although there is no reason why Endecheius should not have come up with the project of a Christian treatment of the first *Eclogue* on his own.

The reverse seems to me less plausible, that Endecheius influenced Paulinus. Paulinus' use of pastoral language follows naturally from the correspondence with Ausonius and needs no further explanation. Moreover, admittedly a subjective judgment, I am inclined to think that Paulinus' allusiveness is likely to predate the more systematic use Endecheius makes of the first *Eclogue*. In any case, the *De mortibus boum* confirms that in the last decade of the fourth century the educated classes were likely to be receptive to such an undertaking.

There is, then, every reason to believe that Ausonius, confronted by the references to the first *Eclogue* in Paulinus' letters, would be quite capable of seeing the parallel with his own situation and understanding the point Paulinus was trying to get across. He had sought in *Ep.* 27 to identify his own life on his country estate with the pastoral ideal (90–98), and to appropriate the pastoral landscape for the Ausonian world view (99–102).⁴¹ Paulinus, in effect, replies that he, not Ausonius, is the true inheritor of the spiritual ideals of Virgilian pastoral, a *Tityrus Christianus*.⁴²

³⁸ *CSEL* 16.561. Other poems in the Latin Anthology inspired by the first *Eclogue* are probably later; 696 Riese² (cf. Schmid, "Tityrus" [above, note 36] 153–54) and 720b (Schmid, "Bukolik" [above, note 36] 797). On the whole question of Christian interpretation of Virgilian pastoral see Jacques Fontaine, "La Conversion du christianisme à la culture antique: la lecture chrétienne de l'univers bucolique de Virgile," *Bull. Budé* (1978) 50–75, reprinted in *Études* (above, note 7) 214–40.

³⁹ So Schmid, "Tityrus" (above, note 36) 155, note 135.

⁴⁰ The Pyramus and Thisbe legend and Virgilian pastoral presented similar problems to a Christian poet. Both contained erotic elements offensive to Christian opinion (cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 21.13.9), which the poet must neutralize; Schmid, "Bukolik" (above, note 36) 793.

⁴¹ Both passages belong to the longer version of the poem, which, some have maintained, postdates Paulinus Poem 11; so Agostino Pastorino, "A proposito della tradizione del testo di Ausonio," *Maia* 14 (1962) 212–29, and Francesco G. Sirna, "Ausonio, Paolino e il problema del testo ausoniano," *Aevum* 37 (1963) 124–35.

⁴² I borrow the phrase *Tityrus Christianus* from Schmid's article (above, note 36).

Poem 11 is Paulinus' attempt to explain to Ausonius in a way that he will understand the changed relationship between them. His earlier poem (10) had failed in this respect. But Paulinus does not abandon his ground. While recognizing implicitly the cultural bond between the correspondents and explicitly the ties of friendship, which will remain, despite physical separation, forever, he wants to show that these human relationships must take second place to religious imperatives. For this he evokes the context of Virgil's first *Eclogue*, where, too, friends must separate because of one party's experience with divinity. Virgil serves as a model of the comparative value of the human and divine in personal relationships. Paulinus does not reject *amicitia*; rather he demonstrates its limits. As Fabre shows, this distinction between Christian and human friendship is essential to Paulinus' thought throughout his writings.⁴³ Poem 11 is a sensitive and subtle presentation of the bonds that unite and the issues that divide the two men. It would be pleasant to think that this translation of Christian values into the terms of Virgilian pastoral helped Ausonius to understand and accept Paulinus' conversion.

⁴³ Fabre, *St. Paulin* (above, note 3) 137–52.