

## *Laudantes Elegi*

# Ovid's Exile and the Metamorphoses of Praise, Friendship, and Love in Late Latin Poetry

### Abstract

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Taking a cue from the re-use of love themes as praise motives enacted by Ovid in his exile elegies, this paper illustrates the reception of such imagery in late antique Latin poetry. Touchstones for this enquiry are mainly the verse panegyrics by Claudian and the elegiac short poems by Venantius Fortunatus, considered as two different realisations of a common *langue* of praise in two different cultural and socio-historical milieus. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to show the increasing intermingling of languages of love, praise and friendship (meant as the complex set of social relationships involved by the Latin *amicitia*): eventually, this highly stylised language survived until the early Middle Ages in the form of Christian spiritual friendship and ennobling love. Furthermore, when dealing with women patrons, this set of images results in intended literary overlaps, the most remarkable outcomes being perhaps recognisable in Fortunatus' elegies to St. Radegund.

*Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac*  
Henry Kissinger

It may well be more than a coincidence that we say "to court" someone and we speak of "courts" in a concrete and historical sense, for the concepts of courtship, courtly love, and court praise seem strictly linked in different linguistic traditions.<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, this is particularly true for Latin praise poetry from Ovid onwards.

A well-established critical tradition has convincingly shown how Ovid, in his exile poetry, brings about a conversion of his youthful love elegy: in a multifaceted palinody which involves the representation of the suffering poet, language of the elegiac *Werbung* (Stroh) and didactic attitude, the banished poet adapts the imagery of his youthful witty elegies to his miserable state of sorrow (Lechi; Nagle 63–92; Labate; McGowan). At the same time, however, he offers to

1. I am thinking for instance of the Italian expression "fare la corte." But it is also noteworthy that the German *Liebe* and *Lob* share the same etymology (from a common Proto-Germanic root \*leubh-, "to be fond of," "to covet;" see Pfeifer 798–99 and 807).

2. The cited passages from the *Tristia* are from the edition by G. Luck.

write a new kind of official, morally acceptable (and again joyful) poetry for the Prince, while asking for a partial remission:<sup>2</sup>

Lenior invicti si sit mihi Caesaris ira,  
                   carmina laetitiae iam tibi plena dabo.  
 Nec tamen ut lusit, rursus mea littera ludet:  
                   sit semel illa ioco luxuriata meo.  
 Quod probet ipse, canam, poenae modo parte levata  
                   barbariam rigidos effugiamque Getas. (*Tristia* 5.1.41–46)

(Should unconquerable Caesar's wrath be milder to me, forthwith will I offer you verse filled with joy. Yet no writings of mine shall again wanton as once they wantoned; let them have rioted with my jests but once! I will compose something which he will himself approve, if only a part of punishment be removed and I escape the barbarian world and the stern Getae.)<sup>3</sup>

3. The English translations of *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* are taken (occasionally with slight modifications) from the edition by A. L. Wheeler.

The new kind of poetry envisaged here sounds likely to be, above all, celebratory and laudatory poetry: “a new poetry of the City, homages to the Prince, to the Imperial House, to friends of different social condition, among whom men of letters and scholars” (Labate 104). Not by chance, these Ovidian lines turn out to forecast the actual development of imperial celebratory poetry. For instance, Statius' *Silvae* and many of Martial's epigrams may match the above definition quite well (Dewar, “*Si Quid Habent Veri*” 392–93). In particular, I shall focus on how Ovid influenced later Latin poetry by converting elegiac themes and images into laudatory motives,<sup>4</sup> which eventually became established *topoi* in a long encomiastic tradition. This theme intersects with another notable feature of Latin poetic language, that is to say the similarity and interference between love verbiage and the vocabulary of *amicitia* (I am thinking for instance of verbs such as *colere*, *curare*, *diligere*: Oliensis; Knight), which can involve relationships between clients and patrons (White, “*Amicitia*”; White, *Promised Verse* 48 ff.; Konstan 135–45) and socio-political relationships as well.<sup>5</sup>

4. Seminal hints in Rosati, “*Dominus / Domina*” and “*Luxury and Love*.” On the convergence between love and political discourse in medieval literature, see Jaeger 17–24.

The first motif I shall address concerns the comparison between the *laudandus* and a heavenly star (and, jointly, his sacralisation). The comparison between the beloved and a *sidus* is an extremely widespread metaphor in love poetry, at least since the writing of two epigrams that the *Anthologia Palatina* attributes to Plato (*AP* 7.669; *AP* 7.670; Musaios 271 ff.). It is also interesting that the latter of these

5. Hellegouarc'h 142–50, Konstan 128 ff. I would like to recall, for instance, some of the lines the eponymous of Roman maecenatism addressed to one of his best friends, Horace: “*Ni te visceribus meis, Horati, / plus iam diligo, tu tu <u>m sodalem / ninnio videas strigiosorem*” (Fr. 3 Blänsdorf: Maecenas is joking on his well-fed appearance). Cf. also Ennodius, *Carm.* 1.7.69: “*lux mea, Fauste.*”

6. See [Tib.] 3.9.15; [Tib.] 3.18.1; Prop. 2.14.30; Prop. 2.3.14; Ov., *Am.* 2.17.23; Ov., *Am.* 2.16.43–44. Cf. already Cat. 68.132. Interestingly enough, in Trist. 3.3.51–52 (“Parce tamen lacerare genas, nec scinde capillos: / non tibi nunc primum, *lux mea*, raptus ero”) Ovid refers in these terms, as an elegiac *domina*, to his wife. It is noteworthy that Maecenas addressed to Horace as *mea vita* in one of his fragmentary poems (Fr. 2 Blänsdorf), another evidence for the permeability between amatory and friendship language.

7. The cited passages from the *Epistulae ex Ponto* are from the Teubner text by J. Richmond.

8. Translation by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, with minor adjustments.

9. Men. Rh. 378.10: “κᾶν μὲν ἄρχοντα, εὐθὺς ἔρεις· ἀλλ’ ἦκεις μὲν ἐπ’ αἰσίσις συμβόλοις ἐκ βασιλέως λαμπρός, ὥσπερ ἡλίου φαιδρά τις ἄκτις ἄνωθεν ἡμῖν ὀφθεῖσα; 380, 30: οὗτος δὲ ὅτι τῷ γένει πάντων κρείττων ἐστί, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ <ἥλιος> τῶν ἀστέρων δέδεικται.”

10. On the rhetorical structure of Claudian’s panegyrics, the account of Struthers may still be useful. On the mingling of epic imagery and rhetorical framework of Claudian’s *encomia*, as well as for some definitions of the hybrid genre of the epic panegyric, I refer primarily to Fo 15–95; Schindler, “Tradition” and *Per Carmina Laudes* 21–30 and 44–58; Müller 19–60; and Ware 59 ff. It seems important anyway to bear in mind that the epic as genre can contain many eulogistic elements: it is striking, for instance, that according to Tiberius Claudius Donatus the *Aeneis* belongs to the *genus laudativum*, as its purpose is to perpetuate the deeds of Aeneas (*Prooem.* 2: “Primum igitur et ante omnia sciendum est quod materiae genus Maro noster adgressus sit [...] Et certe laudativum est, quod idcirco incognitum est et latens, quia miro artis genere laudationis ipse, dum gesta Aeneae percurreret, incidentia quoque etiam aliarum materiarum genera complexus ostenditur, nec ipsa tamen aliena a partibus laudis; nam idcirco adsumpta sunt, ut Aeneae laudationi proficerent”).

shows the catasterism of the loved person. This theme was widely adopted by the Latin elegists.<sup>6</sup> One of the passages in Ovid’s exile poetry in which the conversion of this amatory motif best appears is in *Pont.* 2.5.47–56; here, Germanicus is praised for his brilliant eloquence:<sup>7</sup>

Cum tu [*viz.* Salanus, Germanicus’ teacher of rhetoric]  
desisti mortaliaque ora quierunt  
tectaue non longa conticuere mora,  
surgit Iuleo iuvenis cognomine dignus,  
*qualis ab Eois Lucifer ortus aquis.*  
Dumque silens astat, status est vultusque disert,  
spemque decens doctae vocis amictus habet.  
Mox, ubi pulsa mora est atque *os caeleste* solutum,  
hoc superos iures more solere loqui.

(When you have finished and mortal lips have become quiet, closed in silence for a short space, then arises the youth worthy of the Iulean name, as rises Lucifer from the eastern waters, and as he stands in silence, his posture, his countenance are those of an orator, and his graceful robe gives hope of eloquent words. Then after a pause he opens his godlike lips and one might take oath that the gods above speak in this fashion.)

The imagery of light is here associated with the praise of the ruler, or *laudandus*, as a man of letters (Curtius 176–79). But already Statius in his *Silvae* has clearly adopted this astronomic metaphor as a common laudatory element, and it might be that his praises of Domitian (1.1.103–04 “tua sidereas imitantia flammas / lumina contempto mallet Rhodos aspera Phoebos,” “fierce Rhodes would prefer your eyes like starry flames, contemning Phoebus”; 4.1.2–4 “insignemque aperit Germanicus annum, / atque oritur cum sole novo, cum grandibus astris / *Clarius ipse nitens et primo maior Eoo*,” “Germanicus inaugurates a banner year; he rises with the new sun and the stars in their grandeur, himself shining more brilliantly than they, greater than Eous”) are somewhat mindful of the Ovidian passage quoted above.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, this motif was included in the rhetorical handbooks, for which we can rely above all on that of Menander, probably composed around the end of the third century CE.<sup>9</sup> It is hardly a coincidence that in an author such as Claudian, who skilfully grafted epic machinery onto a long-established rhetorical structure,<sup>10</sup> the adjective *side-*

11. Cf. Claud., *Hon.* IV, 570: “sidereum onus;” *Hon. Nupt.* 252: “salve sidereae proles augusta Serenae;” *Carm. Min.* 31.58: “adnue sidereo laeta supercilio.” Cf. also *Fesc.* 1.1 (“Princeps corusco sidere pulchrior”) with Hor., *Carm.* 3.21–22 (“Quamquam sidere pulchrior / ille est”). A passage from *Carm. Min.* 30 (*laus Serenae*) deserves special attention: here Stilico is imagined coming back from his battles to his wife’s arms (217–20): “Gaudia quae rursus, cum post victricia tandem / classica sidereas ferratum pectus in ulnas / exciperes, castae tuto per dulcia noctis / otia pugnarum seriem narrare iuberet!” Among the possible models for this scene, a passage from the Ovidian epistle of Laodamia to Protesilaus (*Her.* 13.115–20) seems particularly striking. Yet, as Consolino, *Elogio di Serena* 23 remarks, the elegiac eros appears here ‘censored.’ It does not seem out of place to believe that such an expression of conjugal love in elegiac terms was prepared by the ‘moralisation’ of elegiac topoi enacted by Ovid in his exile poetry. This passage might have been influenced by one of the epistles that Ovid sent to his wife, addressing her as the elegiac *domina* (*Pont.* 1.4.49–54).

12. See for instance Prop. 2.2.3–4: “Cur haec in terris facies humana moratur? / Iuppiter ignosco pristina furta tua;” Ov., *Her.* 18.167–70: “Ipse meos igitur servo, quibus uror, amores / teque, magis caelo digna puella, sequor. / Digna quidem caelo es, sed nunc tellure morare / aut dic ad superos et mihi qua sit iter.”

13. I am not going deeply into the conjecture *absentia numina* proposed by Hall, “Problems.” Although it would highlight the contrast with *praesentem deum* of the following line, I still find it difficult to gauge clearly the meaning of *absentia numina*. Tertia numina transmitted by mss. should be understood as “gods of heaven” or, perhaps more probably, “gods of the Underworld” (two good parallels are provided by *Fasti* 584 and [Tib.] 3.5.21–22). Cf. the commentaries by Owen 131–32, Ciccarelli 65–70 and Ingleheart 91–93.

*reus* has become a standard element of poetic *Kunstsprache* to refer to members of the imperial family.<sup>11</sup>

The similarity between the ruler and a star leads naturally to the broad theme of the deification of the emperor. In imperial Rome, these two concepts are strictly linked through the increasingly common custom of the *consecratio* (or *relatio in numerum divorum*), that is to say the post-mortem apotheosis of the emperor, which was usually associated with his catasterism (Domenicucci, about the early imperial age; Tommasi 6 ff. about religious elements in late panegyrics). Again Claudian provides a gleaming description of Theodosius’ catasterism in the panegyric for the third consulship of Honorius (*Hon.* 3.162 ff.). Such a praxis, which was originally borrowed from the cult of Hellenistic kings, manifests itself in a motif that is usually called *serus in caelum redeas*, the late return of the ruler to the stars (after the famous passage of Hor., *Carm.* 1.2.45: see Nisbet and Hubbard 37). This encomiastic motif, extensively exploited at the end of the *Metamorphoses* (15.446–49, 837–38, and 868–70) and, of course, in the *Tristia* (5.5.61–62; 11.25–26), likewise finds an amatory counterpart: the beauty of the beloved is so high and transcendent that it is easy to imagine her apotheosis.<sup>12</sup> Statius (*Theb.* 1.22–31) and Martial (5.15–16) would soon emulate Ovid in the exploitation of this theme.

For us, however, the sacralisation of the Prince is especially important as it introduces a widespread theme in Ovid’s exilic poetry, which seems crucial to the persuasive discourse woven by the author, that is to say the motif of the *deus praesens*. It is evident, for example, in *Trist.* 2.53–58, where it is associated with the late return of the ruler to heaven:

Per mare, per terras, per tertia numina<sup>13</sup> iuro,  
per te praesentem conspicuumque deum,  
hunc animum favisse tibi, vir maxime, meque,  
qua sola potui, mente fuisse tuum.  
Optavi, peteres caelestia sidera tarde,  
parsque fui turbae parva precantis idem.

(By the gods of sea and earth and by the third gods I swear,  
by thee a present and manifest deity, that this soul of mine  
favoured thee, mightiest of men, and that, wherein alone I  
could, in heart I have been thine. I prayed that thou mightest

make thy way late to the stars of heaven, and I was an humble member of the throng that uttered the same prayer.)

Not only is Augustus a god, but he is a god whose actions are felt much more immediately (and frightfully) than those of the other gods. This celebratory theme was already typical of Hellenistic kingship, as shown by the ithyphallic hymn, which, according to Athenaeus, was composed by Hermocles of Cyzicus<sup>14</sup> and was sung by the Athenians in honour of Demetrius Poliorcetes (6.253e.15–20):<sup>15</sup>

14. Athenaeus here depends on Duris of Samos (cf. FGrHist 76 F13 and Powell 173 ff.); the attribution to Hermocles relies on Ath. 15.697a (where it is actually a plausible conjecture for Ἑρμιππος of the mss.: Ateneo 610–11 nn. 4 and 5 and 1797 n. 9).

ἄλλοι μὲν ἢ μακρὰν γὰρ ἀπέχουσιν θεοὶ  
ἢ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὦτα  
ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἢ οὐ προσέχουσιν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ ἔν,  
σὲ δὲ παρόνθ' ὀρώμεν,  
οὐ ξύλινον οὐδὲ λίθινον, ἀλλ' ἀληθινόν.  
εὐχόμεσθα δὴ σοι

15. Translation by S. Douglas Olson, with slight modifications.

(The other gods are either far away,  
or have not ears,  
or do not exist, or they pay us no attention;  
but you we see here,  
not made of wood or stone, but real.  
To you, then, we pray.)

Athenaeus says that this hymn was performed when Demetrius arrived in Athens with his troops in 307 BCE: after the cult of the Hellenistic sovereigns, the imagery of the *deus praesens* became part of the manifold ceremony called *adventus*. At first, this ritual welcomed the Emperor into a city during a military campaign; after the Tetrarchy, however, it gradually evolved towards a more and more hieratical ritual, which eventually became detached from the original military meaning (MacCormack 25–89). In the Augustan Age, this theme is touched upon by Horace (to whom we actually owe this label) in *Carm.* 3.5:<sup>16</sup>

16. Translation by N. Rudd.

Caelo tonantem credidimus Iovem  
tonare terris: praesens divus habebitur  
Augustus adiectis Britannis  
Imperio gravibusque Persis.

(Because Jove thunders in heaven we have always believed that he is king. Augustus shall be deemed a god on earth



when the Britons and the deadly Persians have been added to our empire.)

The divine status of Augustus is here stated with the discretion that emerges from the use of the future tense. But this theme becomes a basic constituent of the Ovidian rhetoric of the exile. As such, it is wisely exploited in *Pont.* 2.8.9–18; the circumstance of the poem is provided by the gift of a silver statuette bearing the portraits of Augustus, Livia, and Tiberius:

Est aliquid spectare deos et adesse putare,  
 et quasi *cum vero numine posse loqui*.  
 Quantum ad te, redii, nec me tenet ultima tellus,  
 utque prius, media sospes in urbe moror  
 Caesareos video vultus, velut ante videbam:  
 vix huius voti spes fuit ulla mihi;  
 Utque salutabam numen caeleste, saluto.  
 Quod reduci tribuas, nil, puto, maius habes.  
 Quid nostris oculis nisi sola Palatia desunt?  
*Qui locus ablato Caesare vilis erit.*  
 Hunc ego cum spectem, videor mihi cernere Romam,  
 nam patriae faciem sustinet ille suae.

(It is something to behold gods and think them present, to have the power to speak as it were with a real deity. So far as you effect it, I have returned, I am no more in a remote land; as of old I am safe in the midst of the city. I see the faces of the Caesars as I used before to see them; of this prayer's fulfilment I have scarce had any hope. I salute the deity of heaven as I used to do; even should I return, no greater gift, I think, have you bestow upon me. What do my eyes lack save only the Palatine? And that place, if Caesar is removed, will be worthless.)

In these lines, Ovid glimpses the mirror-like relationship between the man who holds and embodies political power and the place where this power is exerted. Such a relationship, however, implies a mutual interdependence: on the one hand, without the Prince, the Palatine is an empty and mean place; on the other, the Prince has the appearance of Rome, whose values and power he incarnates. Even such a politically marked motif, however, has at a least one counterpart in love poetry, as Ovid himself shows in the epistle of Sappho to Phaon (*Her.* 15.145–46):<sup>17</sup>

17. The scepticism raised about the authenticity of this poem (Tarrant, "The Authenticity" and Knox 12–14) has been plausibly rejected by Rosati, "Ovid, Sabinus and the Poet-Nightingale" and, for metrical reasons, by Ceccarelli, "Note sul distico delle *Heroides*." Translation by H. Isbell.

At non invenio dominum silvaeque meumque:  
*vile solum locus est; dos erat ille loci.*

(But I do not find him who was lord of both that forest and me. Now it is cheap and has no value, he was the gift that enriched that remote place.)

The analogy stems from by the exceptionality of the addressee of the amatory or encomiastic praise: such exceptionality casts its beauty and its 'aura' on the surrounding environment. It comes as no surprise that Sappho calls Phaon *dominum meum* in a fully elegiac language expressed in a female voice. The analogy of functions between the ruler who holds a political power and the elegiac *domina* who holds a psychosexual power has been convincingly recognised (Rosati, "Dominus/Domina" 61 ff.). In the same way, the representation of the *poeta relegatus* and that of the *exclusus amator* show many similarities (Nagle 48 ff.), as happens in the same epistle quoted above:

Felices illi, qui non simulacra, sed ipsos,  
 quique deum coram corpora vera vident.  
 Quod quoniam nobis invidit inutile fatum,  
 quos dedit ars, vultus effigiemque colo. (*Pont.* 2.8.56–60)

(Happy they who see no likenesses, but the reality, the real persons of gods face to face. But because this had been begrudged me by hostile fate, I cherish the countenances and figures which art has produced.)

If we shift our attention to the fortune of these encomiastic modules in late Latin poetry, it may be worth making a comparison with two passages from Claudian's panegyric for Honorius' sixth consulship. In the elegiac *praefatio*, the poet declares that he has dreamt of singing the Gigantomachy in front of the divine council. But now his dream has come true, for he is singing in front of the imperial court:<sup>18</sup>

Additur ecce fides nec me mea lusit imago,  
 inrita nec falsum somnia misit ebur.  
*En princeps, en orbis apex aequatus Olympo!*  
*En quales memini, turba verenda, deos!*  
 Fingere nil maius potuit sopor, altaque vati  
 conventum caelo praebuit aula parem. (*Praef.* 21–26)

18. Claudian's passages are cited from the Teubner edition by J. B. Hall. On this passage, see Perrelli 129–31, Felgentreu 142–55 and Dewar in Claudian, *Panegyricus* 47–63. The translations from Claudian's *Panegyricus* are by M. Dewar.

(See how confirmation is now granted me, and my vision has not played me false, nor has the deceitful Gate of Ivory sent dreams that come to nothing. Behold our Prince, behold the world's pinnacle made level with Olympus! Behold the gods as I remember them, a venerable host! Sleep could imagine nothing greater, and this lofty hall has shown the bard a gathering that is the peer of heaven.)

The sacralisation of the sovereign, *sidus imperii*, is an accomplished fact in Claudian's poetry. As in Ovid, the point of view is that of the subject towards the ruler (which could make such a statement less controversial in a strictly Christian environment like the court of Milan): "the divinisation of the poet in heaven of which he dreams is made possible by his experience of the presence of the emperor, through which he lives while awake" (MacCormack 189). The Ovidian idea according to which the presence of the emperor confers numinous majesty on the surroundings is here developed: the wish, which in the exiled Ovid was elegiac *reverie*, becomes the proud boast of the official poet at court in Claudian's self-representation. Moreover, it is relevant that the subject of the poem he dreamt of is the Gigantomachy, as this theme typically conveyed a political meaning: in this case, it alludes in perspective to the siege of Milan by Alaric in 402 and his defeat at Pollentia. Another passage of the same work displays a sort of long development of the concept briefly expressed by Ovid in *Pont.* 2.8.16 ("Qui locus ablato Caesare vilis erit," "and that place, if Caesar is removed, will be worthless"). In the first section of the Panegyric, the return of Honorius after many years to the City which was mother of the Empire is compared to the return of Apollo to Delphi, which restores the prophetic numinousness of the sanctuary:

cum pulcher Apollo  
 lustrat Hyperboreas Delphis cessantibus aras,  
 nil tum Castaliae rivis communibus undae  
 dissimiles, vili nec discrepat arbore laurus.  
 antraque maesta silent inconsultique recessus.  
 At si Phoebus adest et frenis grypha iugalem  
 Riphaeo tripodas repetens detorsit ab axe,  
 tunc silvae, tunc antra loqui, tunc vivere fontes,  
 tunc sacer horror aquis adytisque effunditur Echo  
 clarior et doctae spirant praesagia rupes.  
 Ecce Palatino crevit reverentia monti



*exultatque habitante deo potioraque Delphis  
supplicibus late populis oracula pandit  
atque suas ad signa iubet revirescere laurus. (25–38)*

(When fair Apollo, as Delphi lies idle, moves in procession round the altars of the Hyperboreans, in no way then are Castalia's waters different from common streams, nor is the bay to be distinguished from any worthless tree, and the caves are sorrowful and silent, and the inner hallows left unconsulted. But if Phoebus is present and, seeking once more his tripods, with his reins turns back his griffin team from the Riphean pole, then the woods, and then too the caves give utterance, then the springs come alive, then the waters shudder with his holy presence and from the sanctuary the echo pours out louder, and the inspired cliffs breathe out their prophecies. See how the reverence owed to the Palatine mount has grown and how it exults in the god now dwelling there, and to suppliant nations far and wide reveals oracles more powerful than those of Delphi, and commands the bays that are its own to grow green again, for our standards.)

19. Cfr. for instance Ov., *Fasti* 17–18 (“Da mihi te placidum, dederis in carmina vires: / ingenium vultu statque caditque tuo”); Manil. 1.7–10 (“Hunc mihi tu, Caesar, patriae princepsque paterque, / qui regis augustis parentem legibus orbem / concessumque patri mundum deus ipse mereris, / das animum viresque facis ad tanta canenda”) or Mart. 9.18.7–8 (“Quam dederis nostris, Auguste, penatibus undam, / Castalis haec nobis aut Iovis imber erit”), but also, in the Carolingian age, Angilbert’s *Ecloga ad Carolum* 7–8 (“Dulcis amor David inspiret corda canentum, / cordibus in nostris faciat amor ipsius odas”), where, interestingly, the love for the sovereign is explicitly alleged as source of poetic inspiration. See Jaeger 38–41 for further examples.

20. See for instance Gualandri, “Claudian’s Greek World,” and Cameron, *Wandering Poets* 113–33.

Considering the frequent recurrence in Claudian’s poetry of the Apollinean oracle as an allegory of poetic inspiration<sup>19</sup> (such as in *Carm. Min.* 3 or in the roaring *incipit* of *De Raptu Proserpinae*), I would not rule out the possibility that these stilted lines are an original way to express the celebratory theme according to which the ruler is the direct source of inspiration. In general, Claudian’s panegyrics, with their skilful harmony of epic and rhetoric, show a systematisation of praise *topoi*, which would be largely imitated by later writers, such as Merobaudes, Sidonius, Priscian (Panegyric for Anastasius) and Corippus. Obviously, late verse panegyrics and Ovid’s exilic elegies have different diplomatic aims and belong to different literary genres. In particular, epic panegyric turns out to be an especially fluid and inclusive genre, in which influences from different literary traditions can be traced; moreover, in the specific case of Claudian, born in Egypt and a native Greek speaker, Greek influences should not be ruled out.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, on the one hand, I believe that such systematisation of laudatory themes reflects the organic role of the poet within the court; on the other, these panegyrics mirror the crystallisation of the *adventus* ceremony in the Theodosian age.

21. See for instance Tib. 1.5.61–65 and [Tib.] 3.1.7–8; 23–24: “Carmines formosae, pretio capiuntur avarae: / gaudeat, ut digna est, versibus illa tuis. [...] / ‘Haec tibi vir quondam, nunc frater, casta Neaera, / mittit et accipias munera parva rogat.’”

22. Cf. Prop. 3.2.13–18 (in particular the last couplet: “Fortunata, meo si qua est celebrata libello! / Carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae”) and Ov., *Am.* 1.10.59–62.

The last theme on which I would like to focus concerns the disproportion between the grand majesty of the addressee of the encomium and the smallness of the author’s poetic offering. The origin of this theme lies again in love elegy. The elegist typically contrasts the precious gifts his rivals bestow upon the *domina* with the *munera parva* which he can offer, along with his fidelity.<sup>21</sup> Yet, out of this opposition arises the proud consciousness of the immortalising power of poetry: in such a negotiation the poet proposes himself as a guarantor of immortality unlike his rich rivals.<sup>22</sup> The theme is thoroughly construed in laudatory terms in an Ovidian epistle (4.8.31–36 and 45–48), which contains programmatic remarks on the new celebratory poetry envisaged by Ovid during his exile (Galasso, “*Pont.* 4,8”):

Nec tibi de Pario statuum, Germanice, templum  
 marmore; carpsit opes illa ruina meas.  
 Tempula domus facient vobis urbesque beatae.  
 Naso suis opibus, carmine gratus erit.  
 Parva quidem fateor pro magnis munera reddi,  
 cum pro concessa verba salute damus.  
 [...]
   
 Carmina vestrarum peragunt praeconia laudum,  
 neve sit actorum fama caduca cavent.  
 Carmine fit vivax virtus, expersque sepulcri  
 notitiam serae posteritatis habet.

(I will rear no temple of Parian marble for thee, Germanicus; that disaster tore away my wealth; temples will be built for thee and thine by rich houses and cities; Naso will show gratitude with verse, his only wealth. Poor indeed, I confess, is the gift that is rendered for great service, if I give words in return for the grant of salvation. [...] Verse heralds your praises abroad and sees to it that the glory of your deeds falls not to the ground. By verse virtue lives on and, avoiding the tomb, becomes known to late posterity.)

This motif will enjoy considerable fortune in encomiastic literature. Already the author of the *Panegyricus Messallae* contrasted the *munera parva* represented by his poetic offering with the great deeds of his patron (ll. 5–8) and an ironic allusion to such disproportion can be detected in Domitian’s fictitious address to Martial (1.5). But most of all I believe it is interesting to focus on a passage of a work

23. Translation by M. Platnauer.

by Claudian in which the elegiac models are especially recognisable, that is to say the unfinished *laus Serenae* (*Carm. Min.* 30.1–10):<sup>23</sup>

Dic, mea Calliope, tanto cur tempore differs  
 Pierio *meritam* serto redimire Serenam?  
 Vile putas donum, solitam consurgere gemmis  
 et rubro radiare mari si floribus ornes  
 reginae regina comam? Sed floribus illis,  
 quos neque frigoribus Boreas nec Sirius urit  
 aestibus, aeterno sed veris honore rubentes  
 fons Aganippea Permessius educat unda:  
 unde piae pascuntur apes et prata legentes  
 transmittunt saeculis Heliconia mella futuris.

(Say, my muse, why tarriest thou so long to crown Serena's brows with the Pierian garland they so well deserve? Think-est thou the gift too poor shouldst thou, a queen, deck but with flowers the head of a queen accustomed rather to wear a tiara bright with all the jewels of the Red Sea? Nay, those flowers of thine are such that neither Boreas' cold blast nor Sirius' scorching heat can hurt them; theirs is the bloom of everlasting spring for they have grown by Permessus' fount and been watered by Aganippe's wave. Those flowers have fed the holy bees that skim the meadows and transmit the honey of Helicon to coming generations.)

In an encomium addressed to an extremely powerful lady, Stilico's wife (a *domina* in a proper sense), the affinity between amatory and laudatory language seems even closer. As happened to the classical elegists, the poetical offering brought by the author might seem scant if compared with the luxury in which Serena lives. This offering, however, is more valuable than any luxury, since it guarantees immortality.<sup>24</sup> The encomiastic features which were sometimes implicit in the elegy as a genre are widely exploited by Claudian in his learned art: the echoes from a genre open to eulogy, such as the elegy, can at the same time explain why the *laus Serenae* appears less influenced by genres other than the rhetorical panegyric, unlike other poems by Claudian (Moroni 143 ff.). If we turn our eyes to the literature of the romano-barbarian age, this theme finds a last witness in Venantius Fortunatus.<sup>25</sup> Born in Italy around 535 and educated in Ravenna, Fortunatus found a keen audience in the Merovingian nobles, kings, and clergy and a reliable source of patronage in the episcopal class, end-

24. For other literary parallels for these lines (among which Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, Synesius' *Περὶ βασιλείας* and Julian's *Panegyric of Eusebia*), see also Moroni 138 ff.

25. Who, as it is known, shows a wide re-use of the Augustan elegy and of Ovid in particular. On the links between Fortunatus' *oeuvre* and the ideal world of elegy, see Delbey (9–21, as well as ch. 2). For the intertextual relationship with Ovid, I refer as a starting point to Campanale, "L'Ovidio 'eroico.'"

26. This poem, once regarded as an opportunistic piece of flattery, has, on the contrary, been convincingly interpreted as evidence of loyalty towards Gregory of Tours and the episcopal class, on behalf of whom Fortunatus speaks. In this sense, this panegyric is a good example of the normative power which ties the addressee of each encomium to an ideal image (a *speculum*) he is supposed to respect. On the thorny historical circumstances of this poem (Gregory had been charged with having spread slanderous rumours about Chilperic's wife Fredegund and had needed to prove his innocence before the other bishops of the kingdom), see George, "Poet as Politician" and George, *Personal and Political Poems* 48–57.

27. The Venantian passages will be cited after the *Belles Lettres* text by M. Reydellet (*Venance Fortunat, Poèmes*); the translations are by J. George.

ing up as bishop of Poitiers in his last years (Brennan; Di Brazzano 15–38; Ehlen 12–36). In his works, he systematically reduced the large-scale panegyric in the style of Claudian to the metre and scope of elegy: while Claudian's epic panegyric may be compared to large mosaics, Fortunatus' elegiac poems have the grace of the miniature. An interesting parallel is provided by the panegyric delivered before king Chilperic at the council of Berny-Rivière in 580 (*Carm.* 9.1).<sup>26</sup> At the very end of this poem, Fortunatus set his humble poetical homage against other more precious gifts:<sup>27</sup>

Regibus aurum alii aut gemmarum munera solvant:  
de Fortunato paupere verba cape. (ll. 147–48)

(Let others bring their rulers gold and gifts of jewels; from  
Fortunatus, a poor man, accept these words.)

The promise of immortality is lacking here, probably because it would have been out of place in the delicate circumstances in which the poem was read. By contrast, the hint at the paucity of his offer seems to suggest that in such circumstances he had no decision-making power and that he was acting at any rate as a mere representative of the episcopal class, which was in (not always easy) dialogue with the king and aligned with Gregory (Consolino, "Venanzio poeta" 233–34). Not much different is the close of the miniature, verbally virtuosic panegyric addressed to Childebert I (see the thorough analysis by Pisacane, "La regalità merovingia"):

Childebercthe cluens: haec Fortunatus amore  
paupere de sensu pauper et ipse fero. (*App.* 5.11–12)

(Esteemed Childebert: I, Fortunatus, in love, humbly with  
humble understanding, offer you this.)

It is affection (*amor*) that prompts Fortunatus to offer his short panegyric to the young king. The rhetoric of praise, however, often entails that such declarations of love may influence concrete requests and be part of a sort of negotiation (so Rosati, "Amare il tiranno" 267 ff.: in this poem, the 'business part' is represented by the recommendation of the servant Audulf, which is the linking element with the following *App.* 6 and 7).

Fortunatus, often referred to as the last ancient and the first medieval poet, is also one of the last witnesses of this centuries-old en-

28. The issue has been recently handled in the learned contribution by Levine, “Patronage and Erotic Rhetoric”, who is mainly concerned by the question of Fortunatus’ sincerity. I am inclined to believe that tracing the history of these communicative modules, which have their roots in the sociopoetics of classical Rome, would help to pinpoint the many elements of stylisation (and sometimes mannerism) in a language that turns out to imply necessarily a somehow diplomatic function.

29. In absence of an English version, I provide my own translation. An integral English translation of Fortunatus’ *Carmina* by Michael Roberts is forthcoming.

30. Consolino, “I classici” 86–90 speaks of “metabolizing” the classical models; the insightful remarks of Vinay, *Alto medioevo latino* 163, describe Fortunatus’ influence on early medieval literature as “the transmission of an already cooked classic”: two metaphors the passionate gourmet would have appreciated.

31. He wrote a *Life of Maximus of Riez* (*PL* 80.31 ff.; new edition in *Maxime de Riez* 43–58) and *Marius of Lerins* (*PL* 80.25 ff.). It is uncertain whether the *Laus de Lerine insula* should be attributed to him or to his grandson, who bore the same name (*Anth. Lat.* 786a Riese).

32. Cf. for instance Greg. Naz., *De Vita Sua* 229–30 and Ambr., *De Officiis* 3.22. But cf. already the Ovidian redress of this expression in an exilic elegy for his wife (*Trist.* 1.2.43–44).

33. Cf. *Carm.* 9.9.3–4 (“*quae loca te teneant, venientia flabra requiro / si fugias oculos, non fugis hinc animos*”). This image finds significant parallels in other Venantian poems. In the *De Excidio Thoringiae*, perhaps the most Ovidian in style among Fortunatus’ poems, Rade-gund is depicted longing for his distant cousin Hamalafredus and asking the breeze for a greeting from him (*App.* 1.41–42: “*Specto libens, aliquam si nuntiet aura salutem / nullaque de cunctis umbra parentis adest*”); in the elegy on the death of Galswintha, Goiswintha says farewell to her daughter, who is destined for a tragic wedding (*Carm.* 6.5.165–66: “*Mitte avidae matri vel per vaga flabra salutem: / si venit, ipsa mihi nuntiet*

comiastic language. More specifically, the boundaries between the languages of encomium, friendship and love appear particularly blurred in this author.<sup>28</sup> As I have said above, the vocabularies of *amicitia*, social relationships and patron-client relationships often intertwine in Latin Literature: it is interesting to notice how extensively some of the poems written soon after his arrival in Gaul, around 566, when he was searching for a reliable source of patronage, make use of this affectionate language: I shall take as an example one of the greeting epistles (*Carm.* 6.10.47–50) addressed to Dynamius, *patri-cius* of Marseille (*Prosopography* 3.429–30; Norberg; Berschin und Blume):<sup>29</sup>

Ex illo, celebrande, cliens stat pars mea tecum,  
et venis huc animae pars mediata meae,  
antea corde mihi notus quam lumine visus,  
quem mente astringo, si neque tango manu.

(Therefore, O praiseworthy, part of me is always with you, as a client, while you come to me as half of my soul; recognised by my heart before than seen by my eyes: if I cannot touch with my hand, I caress you with my affection.)

The unmistakable echo from the expression by which Horace addressed Virgil (*Carm.* 1.3.8: *animae dimidium meae*) and Maecenas (*Carm.* 2.17.5: *meae partem animae*), quite unusual in a poet who loved to merge his models quite freely,<sup>30</sup> is particularly striking. It is important to note that Dynamius was a man of letters as well:<sup>31</sup> his cultural excellence is remarked in ll. 57–60. This Horatian *iunctura*, which had some antecedents in Greek culture, enjoyed considerable fortune among Christian writers<sup>32</sup> and is echoed twice in the epistolary of Ruricius, a fundamental document of the family ties and friendships of the Gallo-Roman learned class in post-Roman Gaul (*Ep.* 2.1.1; *Ep.* 2.10.1). In the same manner, Dynamius is called in another poem *noster amor*: not much differently from an Ovidian heroine, the author asks the winds for some news about his highborn friend.<sup>33</sup> This hyper-expressive language of friendly affection is clearly shared by Dynamius himself in one of the so-called *Epistulae Austrasicae* (12), perhaps addressed to Fortunatus (as conjectured by the MGH editor Gundlach: Malaspina 250–52). But even with someone whose social level was not so high as that of Dynamius and with whom he arguably enjoyed a more familiar relationship, the style is

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aura boni”). Even the novice of the *De Virginitate* expresses her yearning for her celestial spouse in the very same way (*Carm.* 8.3.241–42: “*Ecce procellosos suspecta interrogo*

ventos, / quid mihi de domino nuntiet aura meo;” on the spiritualised re-use of Ovidian themes and images, often blended with echoes from the *Song of Songs*, see Schmid and Bisanti 629–35).



34. Translations by J. Pucci, with slight modifications.

nearly the same, as, for instance, a short verse epistle to the deacon Ragnemodus (affectionately nicknamed Rucco) shows:<sup>34</sup>

Nos maris Oceani tumidum circumfluit aequor,  
 te quoque Parisius, care sodalis, habet;  
 Sequana te retinet, nos unda Britannica cingit:  
 divisos terris alligat unus amor.  
 Non furor hic pelagi vultum mihi subtrahit illum  
 nec Boreas aufert nomen, amice, tuum.  
 Pectore sub nostro tam saepe recurris amator,  
 tempore sub hiemis quam solet unda maris.  
 Vt quatitur pelagus quotiens proflaverit Eurus,  
 stat neque sic animus te sine, care, meus. (*Carm.* 3.26.3–12)

(The violent ocean swells around me, while Paris holds you, dear friend. The Seine detains you, the Brittonic waves surround me: yet one love binds our separation. Friend, no sea-borne fury banishes your face, nor Boreas carries off your name. In my heart you're a love who appears as often as the ocean cuffs the wintry shore. As the sea is shaken by Eurus, so is my soul without you, dear.)

35. Cf. *Carm.* 6.8.5–6 (“Tristius erro nimis patriis vagus exul ab oris, / quam sit Apollonius naufragus hospes aquis:” the Apollonius here referred to is in all probability Apollonius king of Tyre: the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyrii* was widely read in the late antique world and was translated into Latin between the 5th and the 6th century) and *Carm.* 7.9.7–8 (“Exul ab Italia nono, puto, volvor in anno / litoris Oceani contiguante salo”). Furthermore, in the general *Praefatio* to his *Carmina*, addressed to Gregory of Tours, Fortunatus famously depicts himself as a *novus Orpheus* in wild woods (*Praef.* 4). On Fortunatus’ self-representation as an exile and his integration into the post-Roman society of Gaul, see Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow* 313–19; Bord; Pietri, “Venance Fortunat” and “Autobiographie.”

From a remote and stormy island off the Breton coast, Fortunatus writes to his friend. Such a situation typically occurs in Ovid’s exile poetry (cf. for instance *Pont.* 1.8.65–68: “Te modo Campus habet, densa modo porticus umbra, / nunc, in quo ponis tempora rara, forum: / Umbria nunc revocat, nec non Albana petentem / Appia ferventi ducit in arva rota,” “You may stroll now in the Campus, now in the dusky shade of some portico, now in the forum, though you spend but little time there; Umbria now calls you home, or as you seek your Alban estate, the Appian road takes you to the country on glowing wheels”). It is worth noting that, in the poems of his first years in Gaul above all, Fortunatus describes himself as *Italus exul* in a barbarous land.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, this kind of affectionate intellectual nearness is aimed at keeping alive the bonds with the episcopal class on which he relies as a source of patronage. The exceptional exploitation of amatory language indicates here a friendship between peers, which implies a shared moral and, above all, religious system. It is ultimately not improbable that this startling hyperextension of love language was influenced by the concept of Christian love (*ἀγάπη* or *caritas*): “once the language of *caritas* had penetrated the

36. Translation by S. Allott. The same language permeates Alcuin's poetry: cf. his *Carm.* 11 and *Carm.* 55.

37. After the name given by F. Leo in his *MGH* edition to a group of poems only preserved in a single ms. (Par. Lat. 13048, called  $\Sigma$ ) whose textual and content features set it apart from the rest of the manuscript tradition of Fortunatus' *Carmina*, plus another poem known from indirect tradition (*App.* 33; see Leo VIII and xv–xxii). The question of the nature of the *Appendix* poems is one of the most intricate in criticism on Fortunatus. Leo's overall view that this unusual collection had been put together as an anthology of Venantian pieces from a complete, now lost, exemplar appears today untenable. However, his idea that some of the poems of  $\Sigma$  must have originally formed the last part of book 11, accidentally lost in the manuscript transmission (*Carm.* 9.26 appears clearly unfinished in the main tradition and complete in  $\Sigma$  only) may be retained, if applied to only the second half of this Venantian collection (Koebner 128–43). Fortunatus' last editor, Reydellet, thought that the *Carmina* had been thoroughly revised by their author precisely up to 9.26, when he passed away. Subsequently, a cleric *pieux* collected what he could find of the other Venantian poems to form the  $\Sigma$  collection (Venance Fortunat, *Poèmes* 1: LXXVIII–LVXXX). The evidence of the 16th century editor P. Christoph Brouwer and of Johannes Trithemius' *Liber de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* (1494), who had access to some lost manuscripts (both apparently located around Trier) which contained the *Appendix* poems, but in a probably different order than  $\Sigma$ , suggests that the collection of the *Parisinus* is somehow secondary and in no case original.

38. On the relationship between Fortunatus and Radegund, see in general Leclercq, "Relations;" Ehlen 19–24; and Cristiani, "Venanzio Fortunato e Radegonda," who highlights the details of fine sensuousness which emerge from the literary representations of Radegund (and are at any rate to be read in a spiritualised sense). In general, such de-eroticisation of the Roman elegy is one of the outcomes of the complete Christianisation of culture

spheres of relations previously denominated by *amicitia* and its cognates, the boundary between the semantic domains of love and friendship became more porous" (Konstan 173; see also Bisanti 635–36 and Barcellona 42–44). This highly stylised range of expression will surely survive throughout the centuries, like a *langue* in Saussurean terms; it is sufficient to have a look at an epistle by Alcuin to Arn, bishop of Salzburg (*Ep.* 193, dated at 798):<sup>36</sup>

O si mihi translatio Abacuc esset concessa ad te: quam tenacibus tua colla strinxissem, o dulcissime fili, amplexibus; nec me longitudo aestivi diei fessum efficeret, quin minus premerem pectus pectore, os ori adiungerem, donec singulos corporis artus dulcissimis oscularer salutationibus.

(O if I could be spirited to you, like Abacuc! How I would fling my arms round your neck and hug you, sweet son; a whole summer day would not be too long for me to press breast to breast and lips to lips till I kissed each limb of your body in tender greeting.)

Fortunatus appeals to a shared universe of Christian values as a bond of a fruitful friendship: the language of amatory *Werbung* and the semantic domain of social relationships are almost totally fused. Not by chance he has been indicated among the predecessors of the courtly lyric (Bezzola 41–76; see nevertheless the remarks of Dronke 200–17 and Stella 281–85).

If I can take my reasoning a little further, I am inclined to see in this mingling of the languages of love and friendship the preliminary step towards the spiritualised re-use of elegiac themes which is ultimately brought about in the many short elegies for St. Radegund and her spiritual daughter, Agnes. These pieces, mostly located in books 8, 9 and in the so-called *Appendix Carminum*,<sup>37</sup> can be vague and everyday-like in content (and therefore hard to date), but are also extremely graceful and significant as testimony of a relationship of spiritual love and concrete patronage: they largely exploit motifs, themes and imagery of the Roman classical elegy to express a kind of beatific, wholly de-eroticised affection towards the spiritual mother and sister of the poet (Consolino, "Amor spiritualis;" Epp, "Männerfreundschaft und Frauendienst" and "In himmlischer Verbundenheit"; Roberts, "Letters" and *The Humblest Sparrow* 283–313; Barcellona).<sup>38</sup> In this sense, Fortunatus may be seen as a forerunner of the

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in the 6th c. CE (another being Maximianus' elegies, which describe erotic desire as a systematically frustrated urge, as explained by Consolino, "Massimiano" 396–400). On the one hand, the feeling of

spiritual nearness and the literary patronage promoted by Radegund can remind us of the friendship between Jerome and the matrons Marcella, Paula and Eustochium; on the other, it paves the way to a long series of collaborations between

writers and intellectuals and women patrons, either lay or highborn nuns, which runs through medieval culture (Ferrante and McCash). On the spiritualisation of female characters overall in Fortunatus' poetry, see Piredda; on the evolution of spiritual love between men and women, see also Jaeger 82–106 (with special regard to eleventh- and twelfth-century literature).

39. I am thinking for instance of the couple of epistles in the style of the *Heroides* between Baudri de Bourgeuil and the nun Constance (Baldricus Burgulianus, *Carmina* nos. 200 and 201), in which the Ovidian erotic nuances are paradoxically aimed at emphasising a spiritual and quasi-parental love: see Tilliette 152 ff. Indeed, a precedent is given by Fortunatus himself with the *De Excidio Thoringiae* (App. 1), in which the female voice of Radegund, in the manner of a deserted Ovidian heroine, reproaches her cousin Hamalafredus for his distance; the kind of love here described is of course a familial one (on the stylistic imitation and otherness in content compared with Ovid's *Heroides*, see Consolino, "Lelegia amorosa;" Campanale 133–37; Wasyl, "An Aggrieved Heroine;" and Fielding, "The Ovidian Heroine"). An overview of Ovid's fortune in the late Middle Ages has recently been provided by Desmond, "Venus' Clerk," with further bibliography.

40. Similarly, the poet expresses his longing for the secluded Radegund in terms of an elegiac παρακλαυσίθυρον: cf. *Carm.* 8.9; *Carm.* 9.2. Translation by J. Pucci, with slight modifications.

41. Cf. for instance Ov., *Am.* 2.16.51–52: "At vos, qua veniet, tumidi subsidite montes, / et faciles curvis vallibus este viae."

42. Cf. Plin., *Pan.* 16.5: "omnia haec tam prona, tamque cedentia virtutibus tuis sentiet, ut subdisse montes, flumina exaruisse, interceptum mare, illatasque non classes nostras, sed terras ipsas arbitretur;" Men. Rh. 399.1. For further examples in Flavian literature, see Rosati, "Luxury and Love" 42 ff. In this Venantian poem, moreover, cf. 1.3 ("revocas mea gaudia tecum") with Claud., *Mall.* 30 ("tantaque commissae revocasti gaudia genti").

moralisation of Ovid's love poetry that took place in the late Middle Ages and in the twelfth century in particular.<sup>39</sup> Of course, many of the elegiac themes mentioned above survive in these poems. Let us take, for instance, *Carm.* 8.10; although spring has just begun, Radegund's return from the seclusion of her Easter retreat is compared, in the view of the poet, to the flowering of the summer:<sup>40</sup>

Quamvis incipiant modo surgere semina sulcis,  
hic egomet hodie te revidendo meto.  
Colligo iam fruges, placidos compono maniplos:  
quod solet Augustus mensis, Aprilis agit;  
[...]  
Quamvis nudus ager nullis ornetur aristis,  
omnia plena tamen te redeunte nitent. (ll. 5–8; 14–15)

(Although shoots just now poke through the furrows, I gather their harvest in your sight again, today. I collect fruits, laying aside quiet handfuls: April acts as if it were August. [...] Although no harvest dressed the barren field, everything thrives and shines at your return.)

These lines are a neat variation on the elegiac theme of the divine nature of the beloved, which exerts its power on the elements of nature<sup>41</sup> and has several encomiastic counterparts.<sup>42</sup> It is noteworthy that Radegund herself was a former queen: as is known, she deserted her husband, king Lothar I, when he killed her younger brother, her last surviving relative after the destruction of Thuringia, took her vows and founded the Cloister of the Holy Cross near Poitiers.<sup>43</sup> Her queenly status is, however, often remembered by Fortunatus: the former queen who scorned the secular world has already obtained another, greater kingdom in Heaven:<sup>44</sup>

Regali de stirpe potens Radegundis in orbe,  
altera cui caelis regna tenenda manent,  
Despiciens mundum meruisti adquirere Christum,  
et dum clausa lates, hinc super astra vides. (*Carm.* 8.5.1–4)

(Royally born, powerful in the world, Radegund, who will reign over a new kingdom in Heaven. Despising the world, you deserved to earn Christ, and while you are secluded in your retreat, from there you see above the stars.)

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43. Radegund's earliest years are nostalgically remembered in the *De Excidio Thoringiae* (App. 1); the main sources on Radegund's life are constituted by Gregory of Tours (*LDH* 3.4 and 7; 9.2) and by the two *Vitae*

*Radegundis* by Fortunatus and Baudonivia (Consolino, "Due agiografi;" Huber-Rebenich). Another life of Radegund was composed around 1100 by Hildebert of Lavardin (*PL* 171.967–88).

44. Translation by J. Pucci, with modifications.

45. Nisard, n. 1 *ad loc.* has seen in *Carm.* 9.4.3–4 (“Fortunatus agens, Agnes quoque versibus orant / ut lassata nimis vina benigna bibas”) an allusion to the official employment of Fortunatus as *agens in rebus*, that is to say the official spokesman and administrator of the external lands of the nunnery. The Rule of Caesarius mentions a *provisor monasterii* (see for instance *Regula ad Virgines* 36.2), but it is not clear if and how such a figure derived from the late antique *agentes in rebus* (about which see Jones 578–82 and *Late Antiquity. A Guide* 278–79). I would find it more reasonable to believe that Fortunatus simply lent his voice and his art to represent the interests of his patrons (Radegund and Gregory above all) by praising their ecclesiastical politics, according to typically late-antique dynamics of socio-political communication. See in this regard Fels 25–26 and Ehlen 33–34.

46. This word originally designated the blessed bread that was distributed among the worshippers after the service; later, it was used to mean in general the dish freely given by the ecclesiastics to the poor. Cf. *Carm.* 11.9, 10 and 12.

This kind of encomium (which notably has some parallels in the contemporary encomia of the Merovingian bishops: cf. *Carmina latina epigraphica* 01371.7–8 and 00688; Heinzelmann 84 ff.) poses an intriguing question. I have briefly touched upon the elegiac memory in many of the poems for Radegund: here it is curious that we have an elegiac *domina* (in a double sense, since she was a former queen and now the founder of her cloister) who, thanks to her sanctity, is truly worthy of ascending to Heaven and is a model of holiness (cf. Ov., *Her.* 18.170: “*Digna quidem caelo es, sed nunc tellure morare / aut dic ad superos et mihi qua sit iter*”). Moreover, I believe it is important to bear in mind that Fortunatus relied on Radegund’s patronage for most of his stay in Poitiers: he lived near the Holy Cross and, as far as we can deduce from his poems, he acted as the mouthpiece of the monastery,<sup>45</sup> not least because the rule of Caesarius of Arles adopted by Radegund imposed a very strict enclosure on the nuns. Graceful testimony to this concrete dependence are the short elegies in which he thanks the nuns for sending him many tasty dishes (the so-called *eulogia*),<sup>46</sup> and we can detect a theory of Christian charity as *pium commercium* not much different from what emerges from other poems written for secular personages (Pisacane).

To sum up, the set of words, images and expressions which once belonged to the love courtship of classical Augustan elegy, after the conscious ‘trans-codification’ (or, as I would find more evocative to say, metamorphosis) brought about by Ovid in his exile poetry, enjoyed great fortune as language of court praise. An interesting touchstone is provided by Claudian’s poetical panegyrics. This same language shows many common traits with the vocabulary of *amicitia*, perhaps determined by the often-informal nature of the Roman patronage system. These elements are wisely exploited by Fortunatus in the occasional poems for some secular addressees, whom he viewed as potential patrons or privileged poetical interlocutors. But in the elegies for Radegund, a powerful nun and both a spiritual and a concrete patron, we may observe an interesting literary short circuit within a centuries-old Latin poetical diction: this same courtly language is, in turn, bent to express a new form of de-eroticised and spiritual love. In future research on the evolution of concept and forms of patronage between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, I believe that Fortunatus should be regarded as an important witness and interpreter of an age in which the ancient communication system began to mirror new social structures and new mentalities. I am also inclined to think that, in such research, a survey of the presence



of Ovid's exile poetry in this author, which is currently lacking, will turn out to be fruitful.

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