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RE(F)USING THE MUSES. SOME REMARKS ON PAULINUS' USE OF CLASSICAL TRADITION IN POEM 10

After his conversion to ascetic Christianity, Paulinus of Nola, a Gallo-Roman aristocrat, descendant of a family possessing vast estates not only in their native Aquitaine but also in other provinces, imperial governor and renowned poet, deeply admired by his former mentor, Ausonius, renounced his public career, as well as worldly goods, to move first to Spanish properties of his wife Therasia south of the Pyrenees and, eventually, to the city of Nola, famous for the grave of Saint Felix, where he adopted monasticism and spent the rest of his life. It does not seem, however, that this change of perspective caused any hesitation in his mind about his "propriety of continuing

to write poetry"[1] or a really strong thought of excluding echoes of pagan authors from his verses[2].

In fact, the classical heritage defines and inspires Paulinus' poetic oeuvre. He does not only exploit such traditional and topically specialized forms as: *propemptikon*, *epithalamium*, *genethliakon* (Christian *carmen natalicium*), *epikedeion* (*consolatio*), protreptic verse epistle but also, to quote the (already classical itself) study by Green once again, uses the diction of the classical Roman poets "with sympathy and good sense" and does not "fall short of their strict rules in his working of their meters".

Researches in Paulinus' 'Latinity' prove that he was a diligent student of the classics, not willing to forget texts memorized at Ausonius' school. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that his poetic mastery consists not so much in the ability to recognize 'standards' but rather in the readiness to enter into a continuous dialog with them. Paulinus' *ars poetica* comprises reusing, reworking or even inverting[3] classical motifs and adopting them to the new, Christian content. In this perspective the very texts, the set books, are seen as "a common pool of allusions through which the educated *would* carry on their rich, multivalent, and socially exclusive conversations"[4]. Paulinus' poetry, one must remember, is oriented on this kind of reader, trained well not just to trace 'echoes' but also to interpret them, to answer the poet's call for his participation in the act of creating their 'meaning'.

In this paper I will focus on Paulinus' *Carm.* 10, addressed to his former master and friend Ausonius. The correspondence is

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[1] Cf. R. P. H. Green, *The Poetry of Paulinus of Nola. A Study of His Latinity*, Coll. Latomus, Vol. 120, Bruxelles 1971, p. 16.

[2] Cf. ibid., p. 41. Green adds that "Paulinus does in fact make a playful show of such scruples in a letter to Sulpicius, [*Epp.* 156.26], but in his poetry he accepted the classical tradition as legitimate and useful for a Christian if followed with restraint".

[3] Good example are the *Natalicia* commemorating not the birthday, of Saint Felix but the day of his death, the day of his birth into heaven. However, as P.G. Walsh observes, a precedent can be found already in pagan literature, in *Epist.* 102.26 by Seneca, cf. P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, New York 1975, p. 7 (n. 24).

[4] Cf. D. E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters and Poems*, Berkeley 1999, p. 29.

unique not only because of the seriousness of its topic but also because of the fact that it is the only example we have of a true exchange of verses (not just a fiction of such correspondence like the *Heroides*). Certainly, contemporary scholarship should not have any doubts about the 'literariness' of these texts: they are not 'just' letters addressed to one particular person on a particular occasion (although as a literary genre they are definable and recognizable precisely because of their epistolary character, or their 'epistolarity', to use the term coined by J. G. Altman[5]) but poetic forms transforming and reinterpreting 'real' facts. If, after all, they were used as means of communication, which is indeed probable, this communicative function was also rather mock than 'real'. As Mario Citroni observes, analyzing the case of Catullus' letter-like poems:

Se i carmi [...] hanno una funzione comunicativa, la hanno in quanto "poesia", non in quanto "epistole", la hanno in quanto nella società del tempo si attribuisce alla poesia anche una funzione d'uso nei rapporti sociali. Ma non si tratta certo della funzione comunicativa diretta, propria delle lettere private, bensì di una ritualizzazione della funzione comunicativa entro forme letterarie[6].

Carm. 10, the first of Paulinus' verse epistles addressed to Ausonius, composed probably as a response to four letters written by the rhetorician of Burdigala, worried that he had not heard from his friend since the latter moved from Aquitaine to Spain (of which two survive, *Epist.* 21 and 22)[7], is one of the most famous, if not the most

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[5] *Epistolarity. Approaches to a Form*, Columbus 1982. Altman, on p. 4, defines the term as "the use of the letter's formal properties to create meaning".

[6] M. Citroni, *Poesia e lettori in Roma antica. Forme della comunicazione letteraria*, Bari 1995, p. 85.

[7] The other of Paulinus' responses to Ausonius is *Carm.* 11. According to K. Schenkl *Carm.* 10 is an answer to *Epist.* 21 and 22 of Ausonius, whereas *Carm.* 11 is a response to *Epist.* 23, cf. Decimi Magni Ausonii Burdigalensis *Opuscula*, Teubner, Leipzig 1883, p. XI ff. Among contemporary scholars only S. Prete does not accord with Schenkl's interpretation: "nullo modo agnosci epistula potest qua Paulinus amico et magistro respondet; in una enim eademque epistula ipsa verbis et sententiis utitur, quae non reperiuntur in una tantum Ausonii epistula"; S. Prete (ed.), D. M. Ausonii, *Opuscula...*, p. LI, cf. also his earlier paper: *The textual tradition of the correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus*, "Studi e Testi" 220, 1962, p. 310-314. R. P. H. Green strongly disagrees with Prete, considering Schenkl's

famous among his compositions. Therefore, offering another 'linear' reading of it, just to recapitulate the subjects treated in this lengthy (331 verses) poem, would be of no use. Instead, I will concentrate on details. What will be the subject of my interpretation are some points of the text, some moments in Paulinus' epistolary speech to Ausonius, worth noting and made to be noted because marked by a literary allusion. This special 'mark' seems particularly unusual and noticeable in a poem declaring, apart from selfless devotion to Christ, also the refusal of the very 'apparatus' of Ancient poetry: aims, themes, conventions. Paulinus, replying to Ausonius' complaint about his suspicious silence, does not overlook its closing part, a somewhat pathetic and somewhat amusing prayer to the Muses to 'call back their bard with Latin strains'. Yet, his elaboration of the motif proposed by the friend is astonishing: he ostensibly takes (or rather pretends to take) Ausonius' play with convention (the convention of the invocation to the Muses in this case) at face value, as if it was fully 'serious' and 'sincere', and dismisses this 'prayer' as blasphemous, asking of Ausonius either to approve of his new life turned towards God or to leave him to be approved by Christ only.

The discrepancy of tones and arguments is apparent. *Carm.* 10, if compared with Ausonius' *Epistles* 22 and 23, could indeed give the impression that the two poets "parlent un langage trop différent pour se comprendre", as was once noted by Pierre Fabre[8]. If Ausonius wants the Muses, Paulinus wants the truth – he wants Christ. If Ausonius wants to make use of the literary convention, Paulinus wants to speak 'openly' professing his faith. Yet, on taking a closer look at *Carm.* 10, one can realize that also Paulinus, while

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chronology fully reliable, *The correspondence of Ausonius*, "L'Antiquité Classique" 49, 1980, p. 192.

[8] *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, Paris 1949, p. 164. L. Mondin comments: "le loro rispettive argomentazioni si svolgono su piani totalmente diversi, e non sorprenderà troppo notare che, tra le due posizioni, la più rigida è quella di A., che anche dopo aver ricevuto una lunga, dettagliata risposta da parte dell'amico (carm. 10), sembra ignorare l'intera serie delle sue spiegazioni proseguendo quello che risulta più che un dialogo a distanza, una sorta di soliloquio.", cf. L. Mondin (ed.), Decimo Magno Ausonio, *Epistole*, Venezia 1995, p. 240.

speaking the language of religious exaltation, does not really forget to speak the language of Ausonius, the language of the Camenae. Under the surface of Paulinus' text a capable reader will discover the presence of other texts which is not a mere residue of his erudition but an invitation to intertextual reading where classical (=pagan) texts are the central point of reference. Let us accept this invitation.

Among Paulinian phrases in which a meticulous scholar would hear the echoes of the Roman literary tradition[9], those recalling the poetic world of the two 'giants' of the Augustan age: Vergil and Horace appear more than just once. As in the Christian epic, Vergilian strains (*Aeneid*) help to describe God who, unlike pagan divinities, 'nec inania murmura miscet' (v. 121)[10] and whose coming makes the believing heart tremble ('**huius in adventum** trepidis mihi credula fibris / corda tremunt', vv. 304-5)[11]. Especially the latter, reinterpreting Anchises' prophecy that with Augustus' coming the Golden Age will return, sounds very expressive indeed. One might even say that the message encoded in this evocation is comparable (toutes proportions gardées) with the Christian interpretation of Vergil.

The function of the allusions to Horace, which will constitute my special point of interest here, is, apparently, not as clearly definable; their significance though seems to be not less relevant. The first example is verse 29. Dennis E. Trout notices that Paulinus, responding to Ausonius' suspicions that he has changed his nature (*Epist.* 21.50) and lost his 'Romanitas' (epitomized by a consular robe and a curule chair, vv. 60-61) living in uncivilized Spain, speaks openly, but "not without a nod to Horace on poetry and divine «enthusiasm»"[12]:

Bibl. Jag.

[9] Cf. Hartel's index 2: G. De Hartel (ed.), S. Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Opera, pars I: *Epistulae*, [in:] *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vol. XXIX, Vindobonae 1894 (used by P. G. Walsh in his commentary, cf. n. 3 above) and some corrections added by R. P. H. Green, *The Poetry*..., p. 133.

[10] *Vergil*, Aen. *4.210: 'caecique in nubibus ignes / terrificant animos et inania murmura miscent'*

[11] Vergil, *Aen.* 6.798-800: '**Huius in adventum** iam nunc et Caspia regna / responsis horrent divom et Maeotia tellus / et septemgemini turbant trepida ostia Nili.'

[12] Op. cit., p. 78. Trout follows A. Nazzarro, *Orazio e Paolino*, "Impegno e dialogo" 10 (1992-1994), p. 245-248.

nunc alia mentem vis agit, maior deus,
aliosque modos postulat. (29-30)

A sort of complement to this protestation is to be found in lines 142-143 where he adds:

mens nova mi, fateor, mens non mea: non mea quondam,
set mea nunc auctore deo'

Here is the Horatian original:

Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui
plenum? Quae nemora aut quos agor in specus
velox **mente nova**? (1-3)

The dithyrambic opening of *Carm.* 3.25, taken in the abstract, as a confession of a man fascinated and dominated by the divine power (not just as a hymnic apostrophe to Bacchus), quite blends into the new context[13]. The words of Horace in the mouth of Paulinus sound full of passion and religious zeal. One might conclude that the very Horace ('Horace' understood as the poetic *persona* speaking in *Carm.* 25), a man whose heart is governed by an invincible force, almost before the very eyes of his audience changing into a divine *vates* determined to 'speak the new and the immortal' ('dicam insigne, recens, adhuc / indictum ore alio', vv. 7-8; "nil mortale loquar", v. 19), is reincarnated in Paulinus. This parallel complements, if not gives, the sense of the whole section of *Carm.* 10 in which it appears: what Paulinus dismisses are not 'letters' but only certain topics. Like Horace, he is a poet, showing poetic 'enthusiasm' for composing verses. And like Horace, he strives to become

[13] It has been noticed several times (also by M. Roberts, *Paulinus Poem 11, Virgil's First Eclogue and the Limits of Amicitia*, "Transactions of the American Philological Association" 115, 1985, p. 279, quoting the basic bibliography) that Christian poets describe God with phrases coined by pagan authors speaking of their pagan gods or of the emperor Augustus.

a 'poeta divinus', "poet of the God" (though praising not the glory of the god Augustus but of the Christian Almighty Father of all things).

The topics Paulinus refuses to treat are defined, or rather judged, just too clearly in verses 33-46. These are 'fabulosae litterae' (v. 34), empty things, not worth the time of a Christian ('vacare vanis, otio aut negotio, / et fabulosis litteris / vetat', vv. 33-35). Harsh words, especially if addressed to the former teacher, the guide who showed him the way to the world of letters, and the master of such 'fabulosae litterae'. It is worth noting though that in the literary past of the Roman *recusatio* (which is, in fact, one of the points of reference that a reader of Poem 10 should take into consideration) a somewhat similar tone can be heard.

Opening the first book of his *Epistles* Horace addresses Maecenas, like he used to in his previous compositions, especially in *Carmina* 1-3. This time, however, he does not start with 'o et praesidium et dulce decus meum' closed by 'quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres / sublimi feriam sidera vertice' (Carm. 1.1.2&36-37) but rather with a decline, if not a complaint: 'why do you wish to send me back to the «old school» if my present 'mind' (!) and age are not as they used to be' ('quaeris, / Maecenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo? / **non eadem** est aetas, non **mens**', vv. 2-4). In verse 10 he declares that nowadays he is laying aside 'versus et cetera ludicra', being totally absorbed by the pursuit of the true and the decent ('nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono: / quid verum atque decens, curo et rogo', vv. 10-11). It is tempting to juxtapose Horace's 'versus et cetera ludicra pono' (especially if the *versus* are described by another apparently derogative term, 'antiquus ludus') and Paulinus' 'vana et fabulosae litterae', preceded by 'abdicatae Musae' (v. 19). In the final part of the letter Horace seems to imply that Maecenas, while paying attention to irrelevant details, may misunderstand his real spiritual needs[14]. At the same time though, he

[14] Cf. M. J. McGann, *Studies in Horace's first book of Epistles*, Coll. Latomus, Vol. 100, Bruxelles 1969, p. 36. The tone of the passage is purposely jocular: Horace complains that Maecenas cares more about his badly cut nails than about his lapses in judgement, its interpre-

stresses his continual affection and reliance on his *potens amicus* ('rerum tutela mearum / cum sis', vv. 103-104; 'de te pendentis, te respicientis amici', v. 105). This protestation is important, especially in the context of the second epistle addressed to Maecenas, *Epist.* 1.7, the impetus of which was, as the poet wants us to believe, patron's urging of Horace to return from his farm to Rome and his refusal to accede. The situation as presented in the poem may give grounds (and in fact gave grounds) for interpreting *Epist.* 1.7 as a declaration of Horace's independence from Maecenas or even a call for such independence[15].

Indeed, it seems that in the *Epistles* 1 Horace intends to add some new tinges to the picture of his relationship with Maecenas, the picture he continuously creates throughout his oeuvre. If in his previous works Horace portrayed this tie as surpassing the limits imposed by different social status, because, instead, based on moral equality ('quod placui tibi, qui turpi secernis honestum, / non patre praeclaro, sed vita et pectore puro', *Sat.* 1.6.63-64), now he wishes to focus particularly on these 'limits'. The definition of the dangers that the unequal friendship may cause to be found in *Epist.* 1.7 and later in *Epist.* 1.18, teaching young Lollius how to cultivate the grandees, *maioribus uti* (prefaced by, not free from irony, *Epist.* 1.17, praising Aristippus' *scientia utendi regibus*, even at the cost of playing the *scurra*) are just too precise, though given mainly through anecdotes and fables. Unequal friendship is not dissuaded but, as the poet emphasizes, it must be founded on high morals and self-control (which

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tation though poses some problems. According to McGann, Horace actually reproaches Maecenas, pointing out that the patron "attaches importance to matters which *the poet* will be seen to regard as no longer important. In *Sat.* 1.6 Maecenas had been closely associated with moral values, here he has the interests only of a literary patron and a dandy". R. S. Kilpatrick does not read the passage as indicating symptoms of crisis in the relationship between Horace and Maecenas. In his opinion "the discourse begins with a fervour calculated to impress Maecenas with the urgency of his case. Maecenas must realize how serious the scourge of inconsistency is, and how bad a case of it Horace has"; *The Poetry of Friendship. Horace, Epistles I.* Edmonton 1986, p. 6.

[15] Kilpatrick, who strongly opposes such interpretation, gives a quite detailed list of studies presenting this point of view, op. cit., p. 6 & 8 and the bibliography he quotes in nn. 23, 24.

will not allow a *humilis amicus* to abuse 'his' grandee nor to risk his own independence) as well as on mutual understanding and respect for the true needs of the other (especially weaker) party ('si me vivere vis sanum recteque valentem, / quam mihi das aegro, dabis aegrotare timenti, / Maecenas, veniam', *Epist.* 1.7.3-5). These needs, these goals with time may change ('non eadem est aetas, non mens') but if they are righteous, it is the duty of the *potens amicus* to accept them.

Horatian *Epistles* 1, "the poetry of friendship", to recall the beautiful title of the study by Ross S. Kilpatrick, show various aspects of the Roman notion of *amicitia*, and also show 'Horace', the poetic *persona* of the book – a mature man who knows how to live and what to pursue in life, and a mature, renowned (and retired) poet who knows what and how to write – as the *amicus* of various personages: social superiors of whose benevolence he has been ascertained many times, and young men who may now seek some benefits from him (significant is *Epist.* 1.9, a letter of recommendation addressed to Tiberius, written in behalf of Horace's young friend, Septimius, who wishes to become a *comes* of Augustus' stepson).

Ausonius' *Epistles*, mutatis mutandis, reconstruct and reuse this Horatian (if not earlier, actually[16]) archetype. The literary world

[16] Horace in *Sat.* 2.1, defining himself with pride as someone befriended with the greats, compares his experience to that of Lucilius, a friend of Laelius and Scipio ('infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me / cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque / invidia', vv. 75-77). Lucilius is usually considered the *inventor* of a new kind of poetry, *sermo*, purposely autobiographical in tone, in which he celebrated his personal relations with some prominent personages of his times, in particular Scipio Aemilianus and Gaius Laelius, cf. G. Williams, *The Nature of Roman Poetry*, Oxford 1983, p. 88; idem, "Phases of Political Patronage of Literature in Rome," [in:] B. Gold, (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome*, Austin 1982, p. 8; B. Gold, *Literary Patronage in Greece and Rome*, Chapel Hill 1987, p. 51. In this sense, he could provide a kind of situational model for Horace, imitator of his *sermones*. It is not impossible though that a certain tinge of familiarity was to be found also in other texts written by poets gathered around Scipio. Cicero (*Att.* XIII 6, 4) mentions a Spurrius Mummius (H. Peter notices that he was an *amicus* of Laelius, *Der Brief in Der römischen Literatur*, Leipzig 1901, p. 178), author of some *'epistulae versiculis facetis'*, sent to his friends from Corinth in 146 B.C. (which could be, actually, the first examples of the Roman verse epistle as a literary genre). N. Rudd may be right supposing that: "There must have been many such pieces in the decades which followed; for Lucilius, writing between 130 and 100 B.C., used the

of Ausonius' *Epistles*, built upon other literary worlds of the Roman verse epistle, is governed by a man of letters, once a grammarian, later a rhetorician, for some time even the tutor to the future emperor, befriended with people of his cast, other grammarians or rhetoricians, former students. Paulinus' position in this world is unique. He is Ausonius' 'pride', his 'greatest care' ('nostrum decus, mea maxima cura', *Epist.* 23.39), 'consors laborum' (*Epist.* 23.7)[17], someone 'above him in genius as far as beneath him in age' ('cedimus ingenio, quantum praecedimus aevo; / assurgit Musae nostra Camena tuae', *Epist.* 18.11-12[18]), his heir to whom he claims father's rights ('anne pudet, si quis tibi iure paterno / vivat amicus adhuc, maneasque obnoxious heres?', *Epist.* 22.6-7). Therefore, his departure seems parallel to the one of a mythical hero leaving or betraying the heroine who loves him (the theme exploited by Ovid in the *Heroides*, also reusing the topos of *fides tradita*)[19]. His silence is interpretable as the neglect of the duties of friendship ('**officium** sed nulla pium mihi pagina reddit', *Epist.* 21.3; 'dumque pudet tacuisse diu, placet **officiorum** / non servare vices', ibid. 30-31)[20], an accusa-

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epistula non magna as an instance of a *poiema* (...) as distinct from a *poiesis*", cf. N. Rudd (ed.), Horace, *Epistles Book II and Epistle to the Pisones*, Cambridge 1989, p. 11.

[17] See *Epist.* 23: 'consorte laborum / destituor' (vv. 7-8) and in *Epist.* 24: 'nos studiis animisque isdem miracula cunctis' (v. 38), it is worthwhile to remember Ovid's 'consortes studii' in *Tr.* 3.5.46, text written on occasion of the feast day of Bacchus and addressing poet's fellow-votaries.

[18] The whole *Epistle* 18, built on the theme of the epistolary salutation, is an excellent example of the epistolary *philophronesis* which A. Garzya interprets as a kind of Leitmotiv of the epistolary practice of Late Antiquity, cf. *L'epistolografia letteraria tardoantica*, [in:] *Il mandarino e il quotidiano. Saggi sulla letteratura tardoantica e bizantina*, Napoli 1983, p. 355: "L'antica teoria della letteratura conosce (al singolare e al plurale) il termine *philophronesis* a indicare «le espressioni di affetto e di cortesia» che conferiscono al suo *kallos*. Tali espressioni costituiscono appunto il Leitmotiv della prassi epistolare tardoantica. Particolarmente intenso è esso in campo cristiano, e non a caso scrittori come Basilio, Giovanni Crisostomo, Paolino da Nola, Girolamo parlano della lettera come *grammata agapes* (o *diatheseos*), *caritatis eloquia*, *charta caritatis*. La stessa politezza della lettera è sentita come un segno di riguardo verso il destinatario, come un complimento del quale ci si attende tacitamente il contraccambio. Sono qui i fondamenti di una tradizione che sarebbe durata secoli".

[19] See L. Mondin, op. cit., p. XXXII.

tion that some of Ovid's friends read in his Pontic poetry[21]. The emphasis put here on the term *officium*, belonging to the semantic sphere of the Roman *amicitia*, corresponds with verses 32-35 of *Epist.* 22, containing a 'recapitulation' of Ausonius' favors bestowed on Paulinus:

> tu contemne alios nec dedignare parentem
> affari verbis. ego sum tuus altor et ille
> praeceptor primus, primus largitor honorum,
> primus in Aonidum qui te collegia duxi. (32-35)

In this context, all the more provocative sounds the supposition that Paulinus may dread the charge of Ausonius' friendship put forward in *Epist.* 22: '[si] nostraeque vereris / crimen amicitiae' (v. 30-31).

Paulinus accepts the challenge. His poetic answer contains another keyword of the Roman concept of *amicitia*, 'pietas'. He refuses the accusation of want of filial *pietas* (which, by nature, cannot be lacking in a Christian, 'pietas abesse Christiano qui potest?', vv. 85-88), emphasizing that he recognizes Ausonius' father's rights[22] and always remembers what he owes to him:

> possum tibi
> [scil. pietatem] non exhibere, id est **patri**,
> cui cuncta sancta iura, cara nomina
> debere me voluit deus?
> tibi disciplinas, dignitatem, litteras,
> linguae, togae, famae decus
> provectus, altus, institutus debeo,
> **patrone, praeceptor, pater**. (*Carm.* 10.89-96)

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[20] As Green observes: "The exchange of verses, then, either in the form of a letter, or as a *corollarium* to a letter, was integral to Ausonius' concept of *amicitia*: to receive a prose letter from a friend without an appendix in verse or at least very considerable artistry by way of compensation would be highly disappointing.", *The correspondence...*, p. 205

[21] Cf. e.g. *Tr.* 4.7.3-6: 'tempore tam longo cur non tua dextera versus / quamlibet in paucos officiosa fuit? / cur tua cessavit pietas, scribentibus illis, / exiguus nobis cum quibus usus erat?'.

[22] Paulinus puts a special stress on the word 'father' and its derivates: 'sed mihi mite **patris** plus quam censoris acerbum / sedit' (11-12); 'pater' (19), 'genitor' (109); 'patrio pectore' (107); 'venerande parens' (189).

At the same time, however, he makes it clear that Ausonius should pardon his conduct if it serves his ends and rejoice with him if he lives as he wishes to ('ignosce amanti, si geram quod expedit; gratare, si vivam, ut libet', vv. 101-102). Especially, if because of this change in him ('eum modo me non esse, sub illo / tempore qui fuerim', vv. 133-134) he has "deserved to belong to Christ whilst remaining the son of Ausonius"[23] ('ut sim promeritus Christi fore, dum sum / Ausonii', vv. 151-152). The argument reappears in vv. 260-285 where Paulinus adds that Ausonius' duty (significant is the word 'decet' in v. 264) was to react not as a poet, "souring bittersweet quips with the vinegar of sharp-toothed satire"[24] but as a loving father ('fermentare iocos satirae mordacis aceto / saepe poetarum, numquam **decet** esse parentum', vv. 263-4), doing what *fides* and *pietas* demand (v. 265). On hearing that his friend is 'different', he should examine the nature of this change, inquiring about his "aim and form of service" ('inmutatum audis, studium officiumque require', v. 271) and recall him to decent ways if he fell (vv. 273-277). It is hard to believe though that the 'revered father' would consider a "mental aberration to live for Christ in the way that Christ laid down"[25] (vv. 283-285):

> [cum me] inmutatum audis, studium officiumque require.
> si pravo rectum, si religiosa profanis,
> luxurie parcum, turpi mutatur honestum,
> segnis, iners, obscurus ago, miserere **sodalis**
> in mala perversi: blandum licet ira **parentem**
> excitet, ut lapsum rectis instauret **amicum**
> moribus et monitu reparet meliora severo. (271-277)
>
> non reor id sancto sic displicuisse **parenti,**
> mentis ut errorem credat sic vivere Christo,
> ut Christus sanxit. (283-285)

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[23] Translation by P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*..., p. 62.

[24] Ibidem, p. 66.

[25] Both quotations from the translation by P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*..., p. 67.

si placet hoc, gratare tui spe divite **amici**:
si contra est, Christo tantum me linque probari. (330-331)

Thus, Paulinus, following Ausonius, also focuses on the question of duties and, again like Ausonius, treats in particular the duties of his mate, implying that they may not have been fully maintained. His tone sometimes seems ironic, as may seem the comment that Ausonius admits to be his father even now when he considers him wayward ('Paulinus, cui te non infitiare parentem / nec modo, cum credis perversum', vv. 149-150), or even openly provocative, especially in the final two lines, which also recalls the tenor of Ausonius' letters.

What makes the passages quoted above particularly significant is an ostensible, just too ostensible, one might say, use of the terms belonging to the Roman "language of *amicitia*", a language describing – we must remember – a variety of social relations, from a deep, long-lasting intimacy to less familiar ties, which nevertheless involved always some mutual obligations, and often relationships between two people who could hardly consider themselves as peers (as *patronus* and *cliens* for example). The whole verse 96 is composed of three terms belonging to this sphere; besides, one can easily recognize the figure of alliteration which draws reader's attention to this particular line (**patr**one, **praeceptor, pater**). In verses 275-277 Paulinus places the terms *sodalis*, *parens*, *amicus* in a privileged, i.e. final, position (see also verses 283 and 330)[26]. *Parens* refers to Ausonius, the two others, namely *amicus*[27]

[26] Therefore, Roberts' assessment that in *Carm.* 10 there are no such protestations of affection as in *Carm.* 11 (op. cit., p. 274), should be attenuated. Although, as Roberts observes, "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", the poet does introduce other terms belonging to this sphere and also points out what he owes to Ausonius.

[27] As regards Paulinus' use of the very term *amicitia*, quite rare in his writings, P. Fabre argues that Paulinus never uses it to denote friendship grounded in Christ. Paulinian connotation of *amicitia* does not have to be negative but the term describes purely 'human' relationships, not those grounded in Christ (which he would name as *caritas*), cf. *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, op. cit., p. 148. Naturally, the poem addressed to Ausonius could be treated as an argument for this interpretation: Ausonius seems to epitomize ties by which Paulinus was bound before his conversion and decision to change his life. C. White, however,

and *sodalis*, to Paulinus, of which particularly the latter, as Ovid's use in the exilic poetry would prove[28], should indicate a close tie, based on a similarity of interests and lifestyles. Finally, not to be omitted is the word *patronus* (v. 96). It is important to remember that, as far as we know, the term in classical Latin is restricted to denote "the man who has manumitted a slave, the formally designated sponsor of a town or corporation, or a lawyer who has undertaken a defense, *and* does not denote the man who maintains a circle of friends and dependants"[29]. For example, Roman poets, speaking of their *potentes amici*, their '*maecenates*', never use this word. There is actually one, but very significant, exception: Ovid, who in his letters from exile asks Fabius Maximus (*ex Ponto* 1.2.68) to take upon himself the *patrocinium* over his difficult case, which (despite the fact that Fabius Maximus was probably one of the supporters of the social as well as poetic career of Ovid) can be read as a deliberate poetic strategy aimed to flatter the addressee[30]. By calling Ausonius *patronus*, Paulinus acknowledges his superiority, and even

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agreeing with Fabre that Paulinus indeed does seem to draw some distinction between friendship and Christian affection, points out that "he occasionally does use the term *amicus* without implying that he is talking to a non Christian". "Such instances show that Paulinus did not feel that the use of the word *amicitia* was anathema in Christian circles: while *caritas* is applied exclusively to the love in Christian relationships, *amicitia* can be used of either secular or Christian friendships"; cf. D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, Cambridge 1997, p. 157-158; and later, p. 158-160, where he discusses the relation between friendship and virtue in Paulinus' writings. Cf. also C. White (quoted by Konstan), *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century*, Cambridge 1992, p. 158, 159, 250 n. 32.

[28] Cf. 'iucunde sodalis', *ex P.* 1.8.25 (to Severus); 'veterem tutare sodalem', *ex P.* 2.4.33 (to Atticus); *ex P.* 2.6.5 (to Graecinus); *ex P.* 3.6.1 (to an undisclosed recipient); *ex P.* 4.13 (to Carus).

[29] Cf. P. White, *Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome*, "Journal of Roman Studies" LXVIII 1978, p. 79. Cf. also R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*. Cambridge 1982, p. 9-11. Saller argues that the reason for the infrequent appearance of *patronus* and *cliens* in literature lies in the social inferiority and degradation implied by the words. Instead, a whole variety of terms was used: *dives amicus*, *locuples amicus*, *potens amicus*, *magnus amicus* and, on the other side: *amici minores*, *amici pauperes*, *tenuiores amici*, *humiles amici*, *mediocris / modicus amicus*. Saller emphasizes though that the tendency to call men *amici* rather than the demeaning *clientes* did not produce any leveling effect or egalitarian ideology in the hierarchical Roman society. The use of terms like *amicitiae inferiores* or *amicitiae minores* is for him a proof that a new grade in the hierarchy was added to describe relationships with various *amici* (p. 11).

[30] Cf. J. F. Gaertner, *A commentary on Ovid, 'Epistulae ex Ponto' I.1-6*, (diss.), Oxford 2001, p. 134-135.

lowers himself to the social status of Ausonius' *cliens*. A Latin-speaker would probably find it hard to express one's respect and devotion to another person in a more concise way.

Thus, it seems that Paulinus by all means, also by the means of the language he uses, wants to emphasize that his feelings towards Ausonius are unchanged. At the same time, however, while declaring his attachment to the former mentor, he intends to make him realize and accept the 'limits' of their friendship. Ausonius, being Paulinus' spiritual and intellectual father should (it is, indeed, Ausonius' *officium amicitiae*) understand his desires and should not mistake the decline of 'father's' request for ungratefulness. Their friendship, Paulinus emphasizes, is, in fact, unequal (therefore Ausonius is called *patronus*)[31], as it was Ausonius to donate training, honors, learning, pride of eloquence, of civil rank, of reputation (vv. 93-95), and Paulinus – to receive all these gifts. Thus, in a certain sense, it was Ausonius to create Paulinus, to make him all he was, but also all he is now ('gratia prima tibi, tibi Gloria debita cedit, / cuius praeceptis partum est, quod Christus amaret', vv. 145-146). His gifts, given in the proper spirit, brought good fruit, and it will be the very Christ to proffer (as if: to give back) this fruit to Ausonius ('feret ille [Christus] tuae sua praemia laudi / deque tua primum tibi deferet arbore fructum', vv. 152-153).

It is worth noting that Paulinus, speaking of his relationship with Ausonius, refers everything to God: God has willed that he should acknowledge every sacred duty and expression of affection to Ausonius ('cui cuncta sacra iura, cara nomina / debere me voluit deus', vv. 91-92), Christ will ascribe to his glory the prizes He gains ('feret ille tuae sua premia laudi', v. 152) What is striking here is the combination of a 'typically' Roman concern with reciprocity, integral to the Roman concept of friendship (*beneficia* granted by Ausonius should be repaid) and the conviction that God is the true donor of all things (including human relationships) and so only God can and will give the true reward. Paulinus seems to prepare already

[31] The argument will be developed later in *Carm.* 11. On Paulinus' posture of lowliness, cf. Konstan, op. cit., p. 159-160.

the line of argumentation he will develop further in *Carm.* 11, where speaking by allusions, this time to Vergil's *Ecl.* 1, he will try to make Ausonius understand that human relationships (seen in terms of the Roman *amicitia*) must take second place to religious imperatives[32].

Paulinus' deliberate use of the traditional (=pagan) Roman language of *amicitia* and his focusing on some traditional keywords: *fides*, *pietas*, *officium*, even more noticeable in *Carm.* 11[33], place his discourse on friendship in a wider context of the Roman literary treatment of the theme, (probably also in prose in prose but) especially in poetry: in the Roman verse epistle where this subject is, indeed, one of the principal. Ausonius' *Epist.* 21 and 22 (for *Carm.* 11 also his *Epist.* 23) are of course the most direct point of reference here, whereas more distant ones may be earlier texts concerning *officia amicitiae* (Horace's *Epistles* 1 and Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*). In particular, as I have suggested above, a careful reader might probably notice some analogies between Paulinus' attitude towards Ausonius and Horace's approach to Maecenas. The common places, the moments when the two discourses converge, are marked not by repetition or evocation of particular phrases but rather by similar rhetoric of content: the speaking subject manifests his regard for the addressee by using the language of *amicitia*, especially terms indicating the latter's superiority (Horace's *Epist.* 1.7.37-38: 'rexque paterque / audisti coram, nec verbo parcius absens' and Paulinus' verse 96: 'patrone, praeceptor, pater'), yet also makes it clear that some aspects of their relationship may change, or even must change (like for

[32] I follow the thesis put forward by M. Roberts in his illuminating article, op. cit., pass. Roberts emphasizes that *Carm.* 11, the second of Paulinus' verse epistles addressed to Ausonius, in particular lines 30-39 evoking the Vergilian topos *parvis componere magna* (*Ecl.* 1.22-25) and lines 47-48 echoing Tityrus' thanksgiving to the divine *iuvenis* (ibid. 61-63), demonstrates not only his mastery of the literary tradition but also his continual affection and respect for Ausonius' intellectual pursuits. The very literariness of these passages reveals that Paulinus through his reuse of Vergilian *First Eclogue* tries to explain his decisions in a way Ausonius will understand and, what is maybe even more relevant, appreciate.

[33] Cf. especially *Carm.* 11.8-9: 'cura mihi semper fuit et manet officiis te / excolere, adfectu observare fideli'. As Roberts concludes, op. cit., p. 274: "His choice of language leaves no doubt that at least in his own mind he has maintained the duties of friendship".

example sharing the same pursuits[34]), as he has reexamined and redirected his own aspirations. This should not affect their friendship, provided the other party's understanding.

The poetic discourse in which a well-trained reader can trace some 'links' with the literary tradition draws his attention also to these points where it diverges from the 'continuum' (by focusing on *pietas* Paulinus alludes to Ausonius' text as well as to other texts treating this subject from the 'classical Roman' point of view; by combining *pietas* with *Christianitas* he presents his **own** interpretation of the term). At the same time, such 'links' make the reader more aware that the 'discussion' between Paulinus and Ausonius as he hears it, though may be (probably is) a reflection of an extra-textual event, now takes place primarily in the textual world where the presence of literary past is more than welcome.

The 'literariness' of the poetic world in which Ausonius and Paulinus carry on their epistolary conversation shows particularly well in passages treating Spanish geography. Ausonius situates Paulinus in the "desolate glades of Vasconia and the snowy reception afforded by the Pyrenees"[35] ('vertisti, Pauline, tuos, dulcissime, mores: / Vasconei saltus et ninguida Pyrenaei / hospitia et nostri facit hoc oblivio caeli', *Epist.* 21, 50-52)[36]. His curses on Spain in verses 53-55 are, as Luca Mondin observes, modeled on Lucanus' *dirae* on Egypt (8.827 ff.)[37]. Paulinus does not omit to point out this inaccuracy[38] (developing later on the theme of Spanish *loca amoena*, v. 234

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[34] Which, actually, the ancient concept of *amicitia* presupposed, to quote Cicero's *De Amicitia*, 74: 'dispares enim mores disparia studia sequuntur, quorum dissimilitudo dissociat amicitias'. Cf. P. A. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays*, Oxford 1988, p. 352.

[35] Translation by P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*..., p. 64.

[36] Later on (*Epist.* 21.58-60) he also mentions three cities: Birbilis, Calagurris, and Hilerda that have no relation with the actual residence of Paulinus, which the latter emphasizes in his answer (*Carm.* 10.221-225).

[37] Op. cit., p. 261.

[38] Inaccurate geographical descriptions are quite typical of ancient literature. Ovid's description of Pontus is one of the best examples but, as J. M. Claassen observes, also Seneca depicts Corsica in terms reminiscent of Tomis. "Ausonius, who intimately knows and loves the Moselle area, seems most literary (and therefore generically most 'sincere') just on those

ff.) but, again, accepts the challenge. Even if Ausonius' supposition was true and he indeed "chanced to have lived on brigand-infested hills", it does not mean that he is "congealed in some barbaric abode transformed into one of those peasants whose primitive hospitality he shared. Evil does not enter a chaste mind"[39] (vv. 208-211). Therefore, even in the forest of Vasconia the one who lives the life of Horatian '**Integer vitae scelerisque purus**' (*Carm.* 1.22.1) "catches no infection of evil manners from an unpolished host":

> si Vascone saltu
> quisquis agit **purus sceleris vitam, integer** aeque
> nulla ab inhumano morum contagia ducit (213-215)

The righteous man portrayed by Horace in *Carm.* 1.22, however unarmed, does not have to fear external danger of any kind, whether in the most perilous ('sive per Syrtis [...] aestuosas', v. 25), the remotest ('sive [...] per inhospitalem / Caucasum', vv. 6-7), the least inhabitable (vv. 17-22) parts of the world or in the Sabine forest when a monstrous wolf happens upon him (vv. 9-16). The parallel between this poetic *persona* and the one of 'Paulinus' as presented in *Carm.* 10 is striking. Paulinus (now understood as the author of *Carm.* 10), as it seems, agrees to Ausonius' proposal to describe his Spain as a mythic region of terror and his forest of Vasconia as similarly unreal as the Sabine one where a wolf flees from the defenseless singer of Lalage. Therefore, once again, like earlier in verses 29 and 142, he portrays his very self as the incarnation of a Horatian protagonist, this time the *integer vitae scelerisque purus* who remains intact and stainless even if surrounded by wrongdoers. In such way Paulinus, following Horace, refers to Ausonius' accusa-

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aspects where one would expect him to be able to draw on first-hand observation. Such was the strenght of the demands of the literary convention", *Poeta, Exsul, Vates. A Stylistic and Literary Analysis of Ovid's Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto*, diss., University of Stellenbosch 1986, p. 24.

[39] Both quotations from the translation by P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*..., p. 66.

tions that barbaric environment has changed his human (=Roman) way of life ('vertisti, Pauline, tuos dulcissime mores?'; 'hic trabeam, Pauline, tuam Latiamque curulem / constituis, patriosque istic sepelibis honores?', *Epist.* 21.50 & 60-61). *Humanitas*, Paulinus seems to point out, springs from the nature of a man, not just from his surroundings, and so, firstly, should be seen as a permanent feature and, secondly, should not be reduced to mere 'emblems', like *trabea* or *sella curulis*. What is more, even the choice of life 'in seclusion' to devote one's self fully to God should not be interpreted as a denouncement of the *humanitas* understood also as 'culture', as a proficient knowledge of literary codes and a strong need to use these codes, the sign of which is, for example, an allusion to Horace's verses. Faith and culture are not opposite categories as 'Christian' does not mean 'barbarian'[40].

Nevertheless, culture, being an effect of human actions, cannot and should not take the place of faith, which was given by and leads to God. A sort of epitome of this message, integral to the whole Poem 10, can be found in verse 289. Paulinus, emphasizing that his decision "to live for Christ in the way that Christ laid down", is irrevocable, paraphrases the words of Saint Paul[41]: "I do not mind

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[40] Very interesting are, in this context, verses 73-80, explaining the motives behind Paulinus' decision to devote his life fully to God. Speaking of the benefits that will accrue to a man from such a life, Paulinus makes an extensive use of the Roman legal vocabulary:

caelo **reponi creditas** [scil. opes] Christo deo,
qui plura promisit datis,
contempta praesens vel mage **deposita** sibi
multo ut **rependat faenore**.
sine **fraude** custos, **aucta creditoribus**
bonus **aera reddet debitor**
multaque spretam largior **pecuniam**
restituet usura deus. (73-80)

deponere – to deposit; *credere* – to loan; *rependere deposita (multo) faenore* – to pay back deposited (money, movables) with abundant interest; *reddere aera aucta* – to return augmented [sum]; *restituere pecuniam (multa) usura* – restore the money with abundant interest; *debitor* – debtor; *creditor* – creditor; *fraus* – fraud. It seems probable that through such *argumentatio* Paulinus wants to convince Ausonius that, even living in Spain and even despite the fact that he has given up his secular career, he has not forgotten to be 'Roman'.

[41] Cf. S. Paul., 1 Cor. 21-25&27-29.

being stupid in the eyes of those who follow a different course, provided that my decision is wise in the eyes of the eternal King"[42]. In this context he introduces another Horatian phrase: "a man without Christ is **dust and shadow**":

> breve, quidquid homo est, homo corporis aegri
> temporis occidui et ***sine Christo*** **pulvis et umbra** (288-289)

The expression is taken from the famous *Carm.* 4.7, *Diffugere nives*. The strophe in which it appears, the center of the whole *carmen*, offers a comparison between the nature, eternal and full of regenerative power, and the man, who is mortal and lives only once:

> damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae:
> nos ubi decidimus
> quo pius Aeneas, quo dives Tullus et Ancus,
> **pulvis et umbra** sumus (13-16)

Paulinus completes Horatian statement with his own, very significant, 'sine Christo'. By doing this, he seems to enter into a sort of 'dialog' with the very poet born in Venusa in 65 B.C., as if saying that Horace's notion of the human lot was right, but it was a notion of someone who did not know the true God, the sole who can really and utterly alter it.

At the same time, however, Paulinus' words are addressed firstly and mainly to Ausonius. He is not only the one who will certainly recognize and appreciate Paulinus' mastery in making use of the literary allusion but he is the one to whom Paulinus owes this mastery. Therefore, any evocation or quotation Paulinus weaves into his text may be seen, and probably is to be seen, by Ausonius as a kind of subtle compliment, a thanksgiving for the lessons of reading classics. Yet, the old master cannot fail to notice that Paulinus by his complement of the Horatian phrase does not just revoke the pa-

[42] Both quotations from the translation by P. G. Walsh (ed.), *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*..., p. 67.

gan vision of the other world but rather contrasts it with that offered by the Christian religion. Thus, if he reads Paulinus' words deeply enough, he may interpret them as an invitation – if not a veiled demand – to reconsider not only his unjust accusations against the former student but also his own system of values and to think over whether the admiration for the Roman tradition, the quintessence of which is the literary tradition, does not blind him sometimes to the value that must be treated as the supreme one. Perhaps the question Ausonius should pose to himself would be: what is **my** notion of the human destination, the one formulated by Horace or the one given by Christ...

Paulinus would not go as far to make a charge: *Horatianus es, non Christianus*; after all, it is not his intention to denounce the fine allusiveness of Ausonius' poetry, so deeply inspired by Horace[43]. Rather, he himself reuses the very same *arte allusiva* to explain the motives behind his conversion in the way in which only Ausonius' best student could do.

[43] The Horatian spirit of Ausonius' poetry has been analyzed quite well by D. Nardo, *Ausonio e Orazio*, "Paideia" XLV, 1990, pp. 321-336: Nardo rightly observes: (p. 321) "Orazio indossa negli opuscula ausoniani la duplice veste di maestro d'arte e di vita; egli è, da una parte, l'incarnazione stessa di quell'ideale di poesia culta e raffinata che è sotteso a tutta l'opera di Ausonio, dall'altra l'espressione di una dimensione esistenziale con la quale il poeta bordolese cerca insitentemente il confronto. [...] Ausonio [...] fa dell'arte allusiva la sostanza stessa della sua poesia, resa viva, nei suoi esiti migliori, dalla capacità di calare l'esperienza personale dentro un patrimonio di memorie segnate da non peritura bellezza." (p. 330): "è l'Orazio moralista che alimenta soprattutto la musa ausoniana, proponendo un paradigma di vita tramato di equilibrata saggezza."