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THE AUTHORIAL DRAMA OF PRUDENTIUS IN THE *APOTHEOSIS*, *AMARTIGENIA*, AND *PSYCHOMACHIA*[1][*]

Abstract: The authorial persona figures prominently at the end of Prudentius's *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia*. In the first poem, the writer is supremely confident in his resurrection; in the second poem, he prays only for a lenient punishment; and in the third, he eagerly awaits the resolution to come with Christ's arrival. Rather than read these passage as biographical evidence, this paper offers a model for how to understand such scenes as literary and fictional devices: they are designed to enact and elicit the faith that is a major theme in the poetry of Prudentius, and each passage suggests that the author's survival is coterminous with his positive literary reception. One important result of a poetic reading of Prudentius's faith is that it confirms the substantial continuity between his poetry and the previous tradition of Latin poetry. An appendix sets out the evidence for thinking that the *Hymnus de trinitate* was written as a preface for these three poems when they were arranged as a trilogy.
Keywords: Prudentius, Late Antiquity, author, persona, reader, reception, fiction.

This paper is a study of the poetic persona in Prudentius's *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*,[2] and *Psychomachia*. Prudentius, who was born in 348 c.e. and published some collected edition of his works in 404, is widely regarded as the most important early Christian poet who wrote in Latin, in no small part because of his influence throughout the Middle Ages and until the Enlightenment. In *Apotheosis*, Prudentius fluctuates between doubt and certainty; his confidence at the end of *Apotheosis* balances his uncertainty at the end of *Amartigenia* and prepares the way for his patient faith in *Psychomachia*. In each case, the author expresses his hope for a personal salvation that is also—without the expression being insincere—a figure for the reception and survival of his poetry. Seen from the other side, his poetry's survival and redemption mirrors Prudentius's faith in the story of Christian salvation.

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[2] For the spelling of the title (*Amartigenia* instead of *Hamartigenia*), I follow the manuscripts and Gennadius (*Vir. ill*. 140). I see no reason to follow the conventional spelling when all of the evidence points to *Amartigenia* as the most likely spelling used by Prudentius.

The choice of topic and the approach taken in this article are designed to demonstrate the importance of fictional tropes in the Christian poetry of Late Antiquity. Although this Christian author asks more of his reader than Ovid, say, or Horace did, the literary space created by Prudentius would have allowed his poems to be read and enjoyed by those of every faith and no faith. In this regard, the authorial drama in *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* is a crucial framework for understanding the author's expectations regarding the future reception of his work. In a separate article published in *The Journal of Roman Studies*,[3] , I discuss the related topic of the metapoetic use of the resurrection in Prudentius.. In that paper, I took into account all of the poetry of Prudentius except for the didactic trilogy covered here, and I showed that the author used the resurrection as a figure for the positive reception and literary afterlife that he expected. While this article stands on its own as a complete reading of the authorial drama in these three poems, I do not repeat what I said there about the modern scholarly reception of Prudentius or about the broader question of fiction in Late Antiquity, an important and immense topic that requires much further consideration. By extending my discussion of Prudentius's authorial drama, I aim to provide further evidence; more importantly, this article develops this framework for understanding Prudentius's Christian poetry within the fictional world that he creates for reader and author to inhabit together. The most far-reaching outcome of this research is that the turn towards Christian poetry in the centuries following Prudentius would be a result, at least in part, of aesthetic developments and changing models, rather than simply a rejection of mythological or fictional literature. Because many authors condemned fiction as nothing more than lies and falsehood, there has been an unhelpful tendency to see Christian poetry as essentially cut off from the previous tradition, and there has been a tendency with Prudentius to elide poet and persona.[4] In the context of such truth claims, it is crucial to see how Prudentius creates fictional spaces and invites his reader to share in them.

1. *Apotheosis*

The authorial drama in *Apotheosis* reveals the poet to be a complex character alternating between certainty and doubt and suffering from momentary lapses of poetic omniscience and infallibility. Some of these lapses are internal to the text and others are external, in the form of misplaced allusions. By con-

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[3] Pelttari 2019.

[4] In particular, Palmer 1989 describes Prudentius as prone to credulity and as a devout poet hoping to gain only salvation through his poetry; Cullhed 2015 see no room for a separate poetic persona in Christian poetry.

sidering each of these moments in sequence, we will show that the authorial drama in this poem creates space for the reader's response; and this in turn will provide context for understanding why the poem ends as it does and why the author's hope for a resurrection includes his hope for a literary survival that is to come through the reader's approval and acceptance.

The authorial drama begins with the first line of the so-called second preface, when Prudentius wonders aloud whether he has his story right:

Est uera secta? Te, magister, consulo.
Rectamne seruamus fidem
an uiperina non cauemus dogmata
et nescientes labimur?[5]

Is this the true way? I ask you, teacher.
Do we keep the right faith,
or are we unguarded against the serpent's teaching
and do we slip unawares?

Prudentius asks himself and his reader whether his teaching aligns with the right faith, as a performance of uncertainty and not because he feels any real doubt. The teacher addressed in the first line is probably Christ, and the parallel with the invocation of Christ as *indulgentissime doctor* in *Psych.* 888 is intriguing, especially since the phrase *uiperina dogmata* could allude to the devil's role in *Amartigenia*.[6] In any case, the poet immediately introduces himself and his faith; the rest of the poem never strays far from his twists and turns. The end of this preface announces—with a nod to the parable of the weeds from Matt. 13:24–30—that God will wait until the harvest to separate into his barns everything chosen with his winnowing fork (*Apoth.* praef. 2.53 "det uentilabro lecta quaeque ut horreis"), an image that might have influenced Sidonius Apollinaris to write about winnowing books.[7]

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[5] *Apoth. praef.* 2.1–4. Gnilka athetizes these four lines because he finds the question impossible, that Prudentius would even imagine his faith could be confused with the serpent's teaching (2000–2003, 1.464). The following pages draw attention to some points at which Prudentius definitely did express uncertainty, but I do not exclude the possibility that he added these four lines with the *Hymnus* after composing the rest. Among other reasons that Gnilka's position here is unsustainable, it makes no sense for an interpolator to have introduced the difficulty of addressing an unnamed *magister*, nor is it likely that an interpolator could have made such drastic changes without leaving any trace in the archetype. Interestingly, Sedul. *Carm. pasch.* 1.299 'haec est uera fides' looks like an allusion to this line, especially because it follows immediately upon an exposition of the trinity.

[6] Regarding the links between the three poems, see the Appendix below.

[7] See Sidon. *Epist.* 4.3.4, 4.11.2, 8.1.1, 9.16.3 v. 14. To be sure, this image of reception as winnowing was used by Christian exegetes before Prudentius, and Sidonius might have found the image

Whereas the poet in *Apotheosis* refers only once to a contemporary extratextual event—in an anecdote from Julian's reign that he remembers happening in his childhood (*Apoth*. 450 "me puero ut memini")—he most often plays the role of the teacher; and *Apotheosis* has all of the hallmarks of a didactic poem, including the teacher-student constellation and didactic intent.[8] Thus, as often happens in didactic poetry, Prudentius uses various rhetorical devices to mark his own authority, for example in addressing his reader directly and bidding him or her to believe, and to believe again that no one has seen God (*Apoth*. 77 **"**Credite, nemo deum uidit, mihi credite, nemo"). Indeed, Prudentius addresses his readers throughout the poem with imperatives and jussive subjunctives that present the reader as a student and the poet as the teacher.[9] Likewise, vocatives addressed to heretics, doubters, and Jews construct an adversarial scene.[10] To be sure, the poet is careful to specify that his authority comes from elsewhere, and usually from Christ, as when the reader is to learn that the soul is incorporeal:

> In corpore discas
> rem non corpoream sollers interprete Christo. (*Apoth*. 834–35)

> You should be smart to learn
> from Christ our interpreter that this non-corporeal entity is in a body.

In these lines, Prudentius displaces his authority and presents himself as only a messenger of someone else's truth, and in this he conforms to the practice of many other Christian poets.[11] Indeed, Prudentius often emphasizes the authority of scripture and his reliance on the sacred books.[12] This interplay between dependence and authority complicates the poet's didactic voice, but the intention to teach is nonetheless evident in the text.

Prudentius establishes his authority by interpolating himself as a witness of Christ and by ventriloquizing both scripture and Classical poetry. In the first case, he says that he was present when Christ was on earth, apparently equating his authority as a Christian author with that of the apostles:

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elsewhere; see *TLL* s.v. *eventilo* B = 5.2.1016.69–17.11 (Kapp and Meyer).
[8] I refer to Katharina Volk's theory of ancient didactic poetry, for which see Volk 2002, 25–68; the other two features of didactic poetry that she identifies (poetic self-consciousness and poetic simultaneity) are also present in Prudentius's trilogy insofar as he creates a drama featuring his own faith journey. On Prudentius's extensive use of Lucretius, see for a start Fabian 1988, 219–70.
[9] *Apoth*. 101, 128–29, 178, 200–1, 294–95, 348, 509, 585, 588, 594, 598, 646, 673, 715, 786–87, 834, 837, 843, 857, 878, 879, 898, 959, 979, and 1055–56. Of course, telling your reader to believe could well inspire doubt, and the phrase *crede mihi* is not uncommon in Ovid.
[10] *Apoth*. 16, 101, 178, 290–91, 347, 355, 368, 421, 504, 576, and 974.
[11] See Pollmann 2013.
[12] See, for example, *Apoth*. 312–14.

Sed nos qui dominum libris et corpore iam bis
uidimus, ante fide mox carne et sanguine coram,
quique uoluminibus uatum cruce teste probatis
rimantes digitos costarum in uulnera cruda
mersimus et manuum uisu dubitante lacunas
scrutati aeternum regem cognouimus Iesum,[13]
abiurare deo titulum nomenque paternum
credimus esse nefas. (*Apoth*. 217–24)

But we who have seen the lord twice, in the books and now
in the body (before by faith, soon after openly in flesh and blood)
with the scrolls of the prophets proved by the witness of the cross,
and we who sank our searching fingers into the raw wounds
of his side when our vision doubted the holes in his hands,
and we who searched and recognized Jesus as our eternal king,
we believe it would be unspeakable to take from God the title
and name of father.

The pronoun (*nos*) and the first-person verbs (*uidimus*, *mersimus*) claim that the poet himself was there with the resurrected Jesus. Of course, we can interpret these as collective plurals, "we Christians saw our Lord," but that is not what the poet says. Indeed, he invokes the ancient prophets (*ueterum uatum*) as his counterparts in lines 234–38, and he claims a similar presence with the singular verb *uideo* later in lines 650–54. In order to lend authority to his poetry, Prudentius even appropriates the voice of the Apostle John. The final verse of the Gospel of John says, "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25 RSV).[14] Prudentius repeats the sentiment almost exactly:

Milibus ex multis paucissima quaeque retexam,
summatim relegam totus quae non capit orbis. (*Apoth*. 704–5)

I will unravel a few individual cases from many, I will gather
again in summary what the whole world does not contain.

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[13] For this spelling of the name, which Prudentius treated as dissyllabic, see Fontaine 1966, 470. In some MSS, it is spelled *Hisus*, etc.; and it is true that the first letter does not make position in Prudentius.
[14] Thraede (1961–1962) discusses a rhetorical topos "pauca e multis" as operative throughout ancient literature, but he does not analyze Prudentius's very exact use of the Gospel of John.

By repeating a turn of phrase from the gospel in his own voice, Prudentius again implies an equivalence between himself as poet and the apostle; elsewhere he builds up his authority by comparing prophets and poets (*uates*) and by alluding to Vergil.[15] I am belaboring what might seem an obvious point, that the poet uses literary devices in *Apotheosis* to establish his own authority; but this is important because it is how Prudentius creates a fictional space and a persona that the reader can enjoy, or with which he or she will identify if they happen to be similarly devoted Christians.

The poet's fusion of personal (< *persona*) devotion and literature reaches a high point in an extended polemic against the Jews, who are disparaged for their reading of the scriptures. In this passage, Prudentius prays in the words of the Latin poets, immediately after he says that Hebrew, Greek, and Roman literature are all now tuned to praise Christ. The Christian reading of Vergil's fourth Eclogue in Constantine's *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum* (19.5) is the most famous example of such radical appropriations of classical literature,[16] but Prudentius goes one step beyond individual readings to say that all literatures can now be read through Christ ("Quae iam littera Christum / non habet?").[17] He gives an example in the immediately following lines, an ecstatic prayer in praise of Christ. Almost the entire prayer derives from previous Latin poetry:

> *O nomen praedulce mihi, lux* et *decus* et *spes*
> *praesidium*que *meum, requies* o *certa laborum,*
> blandus *in ore sapor,* flagrans odor, *inriguus fons,*
> *castus amor,* pulchra species, *sincera uoluptas*! (*Apoth.* 393–96)

> *O name so sweet to me, light* and *honor* and *hope*
> and *my fortress,* o *certain rest from labors,*
> you're a pleasing *taste in my mouth,* an ardent odor, *a watery font,*
> *my chaste love,* pleasing beauty, *pure pleasure*!

Prudentius apparently takes the words *nomen … praedulce mihi* from Valerius Flaccus 4.161, although the phrase *dulce decus meum* also appears with *praesidium* in the first of Horace's *Odes* (1.1.2), in which Horace addresses Maecenas as his patron. In the same line, Prudentius takes *o, lux,* and *spes* from *Aen.* 2.281, where Virgil had described Aeneas addressing Hector in a dream. At *Aen.* 3.393, Helenus tells Aeneas that he will found his new city in

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[15] *Apoth.* 151–54 says that only the songs of holy men now matter, with an allusion to *Aen.* 1.236; for the authority of the *ueterum uatum* (Old Testament prophets), see *Apoth.* 234.

[16] For a detailed study of Christian receptions of the fourth Eclogue, see Benko 1980.

[17] *Apoth.* 376–77. Heinz discussed this passage in detail and argued that these and the following lines include pre-Christian literature among the works that now proclaim Christ (2007, 121–41).

Italy and that it is his sure respite from labors ("requies ea certa laborum"). At *G.* 4.277, Vergil describes a flower (the purple Italian starwort) as having an "asper in ore sapor." An *inriguus fons* appears at *G.* 4.32, although it is in the accusative case in that line. The exact phrase "castus amor" shows up in one of Ambrose's hymns (4.15), a poem by Paulinus of Nola (*Natalicia* 9.623 = Hartel *Carm.* 27), and also one of Maximianus's elegies (3.66); these four passages together might point to an earlier, shared poetic source. And the phrase "sincera voluptas" appears in Ov. *Met.* 7.453. Given all of these parallels, we might assume that "flagrans odor" and "pulchra species" (the only two phrases unaccounted for) also had classical sources now lost to us. By praying in the language of Latin poetry, Prudentius reveals that there is no distinction—within the poem—between his personal devotion and literary intent.

Despite the poet's tricks and resources, we have already seen that his confidence did not keep him from voicing hesitation regarding his entire project. Indeed, the authorial drama includes a moment of powerful emotion, at the end of a paragraph that praises the Virgin Mary's acceptance of the unbelievable omen provided when the unborn John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb. The poet asks that the scriptures be produced and that those around him leave so that he can have a moment of reflection alone with the holy writing that prophesied Christ's coming[18]:

> Promite secretos fatus, date, pandite librum,
> euomuit spirante deo quem sanctus Eseias.
> Percensere libet calamique reuoluere sulcos,
> sidereis quos illa notis manus aurea duxit.
> Ite hinc, dum rutilos apices submissus adoro,
> dum lacrimans ueneror, dumque *oscula dulcia figo*.
> Gaudia concipiunt lacrimas, dant gaudia fletum. (*Apoth*. 594–600)

> Bring out the secret words, come, spread out the book,
> which holy Isaiah poured out at God's inspiration.
> I want to survey and unwind the furrows of the pen,
> which that golden hand produced of heavenly signs.
> Go hence, while I bow down and adore those ruddy letters,
> while I cry and venerate, while I put on it sweet kisses.
> My joy conceives tears, my joy produces weeping.

Here we see the persona front and center in the authorial drama that priv-

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[18] In this paragraph, I expand on the discussion of this passage in Pelttari 2019, 232–33.

ileges *his* character and *his* relation to the material being presented. With its heightened rhetoric, this is obviously a fictional scene; and we are not meant to think that the writer was crying as he wrote the words on the page. Perhaps his private tears, away from prying eyes, are meant to encourage the reader to share in his devotion to the holy book. But it is still an artificial scene, and Prudentius is reliant upon the reader's sympathy. Although such is the common fate of any literary author, it is emphatic in this case because the phrase *oscula dulcia* derives from the first book of the *Aeneid*, from a passage in which Cupid is being instructed in how to deceive Dido (*Aen.* 1.687–88):

> Cum dabit amplexus atque *oscula dulcia figet*,
> occultum inspires ignem fallasque ueneno.

Once the source of Prudentius's phrase is recognized, then he would naturally be read either as deceitful like Cupid or perhaps as inspiring love in his audience in the same way that Cupid's sweet kisses inspired a hidden flame in his target. Whatever the poet may have wanted, we should avoid the temptation to biographical interpretations, because the uncertainty created by this misplaced allusion demonstrates the extent of the author's dependence on his reader's charity. We have every reason to think that Prudentius self-identified in real life as a devoted Christian; but that does not in any way mean that he would not use his poetic persona to toy with the possibility of deception for literary purposes, namely to emphasize that he was writing in a fictional mode. Indeed, an allusion to Prudentius from the sixth century points in this very direction. The elegist Maximianus indicates the fine line between fiction and poetic devotion when he explains that he often fashioned sweet lies (*Eleg.* 1.11, "Saepe poetarum mendacia dulcia finxi"). Indeed, the easy slide from *figo* to *fingo* appears in Prudentius's MS *S* (Sangallensis 136), in which the latter word was written before being corrected, apparently by the original scribe. The fictional mode here requires both sympathy and belief from the reader, lest they condemn his make-believe as lies.

In another passage, the poet says openly that he is unworthy to sing of what is holy[19]; he hesitates before calling on Lazarus to come out from the grave and to tell his own story:

> Sed quid ego haec autem titubanti uoce retexo,
> indignus qui sancta canam? (*Apoth.* 741–42)

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[19] On the rhetorical modesty of Prudentius, which is combined with his boldness to use Jesus' own words, see Prolingheuer 2008, 100–101. Unfortunately, Prolingheuer misidentifies the passage as coming from the *Amartigenia*, but his analysis is still instructive.

> But why then do I repeat these things in faltering speech,
> I who am unworthy to sing what is holy?

This same stuttering transition was used by Vergil's Sinon, the treacherous Greek who asked why he should go on, precisely so that the Trojans would ask him to continue and so that he could persuade them to bring the horse into their city:

> Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata reuoluo,
> quidue moror? (*Aen*. 2.101–2)

> But why then do I go over these unpleasant things in vain,
> And why do I delay?

Prudentius allows the possibility that he is as treacherous as the notorious Sinon. Although such hesitation is a rhetorical commonplace, the specific reference here is as certain as can be, both because the phrase *sed quid ego haec autem* does not occur anywhere else in Latin literature and because Prudentius's *retexo* signposts the allusion.[20] While the subtext suggests that the poem may be a lie and a deception, the reader must decide for himself or herself, and the persona does not seem to be aware that he has quoted Vergil inappropriately for the context. This misplaced allusion confirms the doubt that Prudentius expresses on the surface level of the text, his doubt that he is worthy to sing the *Apotheosis*.[21]

The *Apotheosis* ends with an extended discussion of the resurrection and then with an apostrophe addressed to the poet's own body. Apostrophes, as Jonathan Culler has notably observed,[22] are central to the creation of a poetic voice; and poetic success is exactly what Prudentius achieves with this apostrophe. The poet finally trusts that he will achieve a resurrection in the end, and so he calls his own limbs (*mea mebra*) to believe.[23] His various and momentary doubts now give way, just at the point where his lines suggest a definite resemblance between the poet's physical body and the textual body of the poem. The closing apostrophe predicts a future ending for the author beyond corruption and despite earthly pressures and fears; the lines preceding the apostrophe prepare the way for reading the passage in a metapoetic sense. Thus, he says that his aspect and color will remain the same (1066 "et color

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[20] For similar tags in the following lines, compare *Apoth*. 769 and 772 with *Aen* 6.502 and 12.932.
[21] I am revising, in this way, Pelttari 2014, 131–32, where I concluded that this allusion was non-referential; at that point, I was not considering the role of the persona in enabling a meaningful link between the two passages.
[22] Culler 2015, 211–43.
[23] On Prudentius's parallel use of *mea membra* in *Cath*. 3.201, on bodily language applied to texts in Antiquity, and on Prudentius's literary afterlife in general, see Pelttari 2019.

idem"), the latter word being used commonly of rhetorical embellishments.[24] He is confident that his body will be disturbed neither by tooth nor nail (1067 "uel dente uel ungue"), body parts that Horace, Symmachus, and Sidonius used metaphorically to describe anxieties about a negative reception.[25] The opened tomb will disgorge again (1068 "reuomet") the entire body, and the root of that word was used of verbal emissions.[26] Next, the biting age (1072 "edax senium") maybe recalls "imber edax" from Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.3 or "liuor edax" from Ov. *Am.* 1.15.1 or "edax … uetustas" from Ov. *Met.* 15.872.[27] Further, *curtum* and *curta … corpora* (1075–76) suggest the fear that Prudentius's book and text might be mutilated. Separately, *particulatim* (1077) recalls the same word in the same *sedes* in Lucret. 3.542, perhaps with a nod to Lucretius's poetics as well as his atomism. In these subtle ways, Prudentius prepares the way for reading his belief in the physical resurrection in light of his confidence that the poem itself will attain a resurrection through the reader's future enactment of it and response to it. Insofar as Prudentius directs his didactic poem to a Christian audience who believes in the bodily resurrection,[28] this apostrophe also serves as a kind of promise that his textual body will survive within a circle of like-minded readers:

> Pellite corde metum, mea membra, et credite uosmet
>
> cum Christo reditura deo; nam uos gerit ille
>
> et secum reuocat. Morbos ridete minaces,
>
> inflictos casus contemnite, taetra sepulcra
>
> despuite. Exsurgens quo Christus prouocat ite! (*Apoth.* 1080–84)

> Drive fear from your heart, my limbs, and believe
>
> that you'll return with Christ God; for he takes you
>
> and calls you back with himself. Laugh at the diseases that threaten,
>
> Despise the falls that come by force, reject
>
> nasty tombs. Go, to where Christ calls you as he rises.

The words *mea membra* and the imperative *ite* in the final line point to a

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[24] See *OLD* s.v. 5b.

[25] Horace pretended to be afraid of an auditor's sharp nail in *Epist.* 1.19.46 ("acuto ne secer ungui"). Symmachus could not believe that Ausonius was afraid the *Mosella* would suffer from a reader's jealousy, that is from the bite of a hard tooth (*Epist.* 1.31.2 "admorsu duri dentis"). Sidonius offered that he was not digging in to Virgil with a sharp tooth (*Carm.* 4.15 "non ego mordaci fodiam modo dente Maronem").

[26] The use of *euomuit* in *Apoth.* 595 was quoted above; more broadly, see especially *TLL* s.v. *evomo* I.B = 5.2.1072.58–73.28 (Kapp and Meyer).

[27] On the relevance of those intertexts for Prudentian metapoetics, see Pelttari 2019, 218–19..

[28] This is the focus of *Apoth.* 1047–79, that Christians are restored body and soul in the resurrection. On Prudentius's unexceptional understanding of the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection, see Buchheit 1986.

metapoetic meaning. Christ is the ideal reader who calls forward the *membra* and thereby guarantees the poet's resurrection; a metapoetic use of *membra* also confirms my understanding of the poet as a figure in the text. The final word of the *Apotheosis* points most clearly to the future of the poem, as the author tells his *membra* to go forth (*ite*). The imperative can recall Horace's injunction to his slave at the end of his first book of *Sermones* (1.10.92 "I, puer, atque meo citus haec subscribe libello"), which also involves the poet's hope for the survival of his work. It could also recall the last line of Vergil's *Eclogues* (10.77 "Ite domum saturae, uenit Hesperus, ite, capellae"), in which the departure of the flock becomes the end of the poem.[29] Because the audience overhears Prudentius's apostrophe, we should understand the entire passage as an elaborate fiction rather than as any kind of simple address by the Christian poet to his own body parts. I say fiction to make my point clear, that the poem is not a direct expression of the poet's faith; instead, Prudentius creates a shared space in which to present an image of himself as a faithful Christian.

Prudentius creates an authorial drama by focusing upon himself at key points in the *Apotheosis* as he alternates between confidence and doubt in his teaching. The poem's external fictional frame allows Prudentius to share with his readers an imitation through language of his own interior thoughts and emotions: together, he hopes, they will work out what it means to be a Christian poet; and they will grant him, he hopes, an afterlife. Rather than equate the author in the text with the extratextual author, we should give more attention to the poetic effects by which Prudentius creates the sense of devotion and drama that are present throughout his writings.

2. *Amartigenia*

Whereas *Apotheosis* ends with confidence in the poet's resurrection, *Amartigenia* ends with a modest prayer for relief in the afterlife. The poem's end matches its focus throughout on the origin of sin and on related problems that stem from the deceptions of language and the failures of human communication. In one striking passage, Prudentius describes error as entering the world when the tongue of the serpent was split in two (*Amart.* 201–2); that image locates the source of human failing in the ambiguity of language.[30] Likewise, he had condemned shadowy language in *Apotheosis* and praises openness in *Psychomachia*, but this cannot discount his actual practice, nor is Prudentius

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[29] Fabian quotes this passage from the *Eclogues* in a footnote, along with the liturgical phrase *ite missa est* (1988, 161). Fabian does not seem to have considered a poetic meaning for the *membra*; she only mentions interpretations of the *membra* as the poet's body or as the body of Christ.
[30] On this passage and its context, see Malamud 2011, 96–111.

so simple as to condemn figurative language entirely. Instead, he explores the possibilities for communication that remain even in a fallen world, and he does so through his own persona and with the help of the reader.

In an extended simile comparing the conception of error to the propagation of vipers, Prudentius addresses his reader directly, the only time in his corpus that he does so.[31] These snakes, we are told, conceive in the following way: the mother takes in an obscene desire to fellate the father; when the snake inserts his head into the viper's mouth, she bites it off, and his seed produces young inside the mother; lacking egress, the full-grown young tear their mother apart and so are born into the world (*Amart*. 581–607). Prudentius cites the ethical and natural authors (*ethici* and *physici*) as the source for this example, and a similar story does in fact survive in *Physiologus* 10, although the ultimate source is Herodotus 3.109.1–2 , a text that Prudentius perhaps knew indirectly. The mind, we are told, conceives wrong thoughts in the same way. This gruesome simile links death to the destruction of thought. It is followed immediately by the passage in which Prudentius urges his reader to study the whole of the Scriptures; unlike the heretic Marcion, his reader is to read the Old and New Testaments as a single text. The passage shows that this reader is charged with confirming the text, even when the author thinks that he knows what the reader will discover[32]:

> Sanctum, lector, percense uolumen;
> quod loquor inuenies dominum dixisse profanis
> uera obiectantem mortalibus. (*Amart*. 624–26)

> Survey, reader, the holy roll,
> you will find that the lord said what I am saying
> as he cast the truth at unholy men.

To avoid the viperous conceptions of heretical thinkers, Prudentius bids the reader to find and confirm his interpretation of the scriptures. Conybeare summarizes as follows the reader's central role: "The moral reader lies at the heart of the *Hamartigenia*. Prudentius seems to be showing us, and her, how a truly generative hermeneutic may be established by reading the Jewish and Christian scriptures in integrated form. But he also warns us of how that generative hermeneutic may go badly awry."[33] In other words, proper reading is

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[31] This passage has been discussed in detail by Malamud (2011, 131–33), and I am indebted in this paragraph to her interpretation.
[32] On this passage and late antique appeals for the reader to discover (*inuenire*) an author's reference, see Pelttari 2017.
[33] Conybeare 2007, 239.

the cure for the failures of thought and language, and only an act of interpretation can undo the monstrous contrivances of human conception. In short, Prudentius creates a text that enables pious reading, but it is not in any way a simple or univocal text.

The end of *Amartigenia* presents the poet as uncertain of his fate after death, because he is unable to ensure his own reception. After describing the locations of the blessed souls and the damned, Prudentius prays initially for forgiveness and then only for a marginal place in heaven (931–66); surprisingly, the poet concludes in apparent despair for his own redemption[34]:

> Esto cauernoso, quia sic pro labe necesse est
> corporea, tristis me sorbeat ignis Auerno.
> Saltem mitificos incendia lenta uapores
> exhalent aestuque calor languente tepescat.
> Lux inmensa alios et tempora uincta coronis
> glorificent, me *poena leuis* clementer adurat. (*Amart.* 961–66)

> Let it be—it must be so for my bodily failings—
> that a grim fire drown me in cavernous Avernus.
> May the burning at least be slow and release gentle
> smoke; may the heat be tepid and the glow faint.
> Let boundless light and heads bound with wreaths
> glorify others; may a light punishment burn me softly.

The poet admits that he is headed for Avernus in return for his bodily faults. He prays that wreaths and honor glorify others, and he alludes to Ovid (the wreaths are maybe for the glorified Christian martyrs, but they also suggest poetic laurels). In the first of his *Tristia*, the exiled Ovid had imagined a Roman praying for a light punishment for him and for Caesar's favor; in these lines, Ovid addresses his book as it is about to set off for Rome:

> Inuenies aliquem, qui me suspiret ademptum,
> carmina nec siccis perlegat ista genis,
> et tacitus secum, ne quis malus audiat, optet,
> sit mea lenito Caesare *poena leuis*. (*Trist.* 1.1.27–30)

> You will find someone who sighs that I am gone,
> and who cannot read these poems with dry cheeks,

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[34] The esteemed critic and editor Faustino Arévalo wholeheartedly defended the poet from accusations of despair, the worst of the deadly sins (Arévalo 1788–1789, 1.151–56). Separately, note that Maria Lühken compares to this passage the description of the purgation of souls in the underworld from *Aen.* 6.735–47 (2002, 146–47).

> and he will hope quietly to himself, so no enemy can hear,
>
> may Caesar be lenient and my punishment light.

Ovid said he despaired of ever returning from Tomis to Rome and he hoped for only a modest reception for his work. By suggesting a similar punishment for himself, Prudentius modestly expresses his hope for the poetic glory and earthly rewards achieved by Ovid. The allusion to the poet's name in the adverb *clementer* (his full name was Aurelius Prudentius Clemens) helps to confirm that Prudentius's lines are about the author's poetry as much as they are a straight forward reference to his soul. For this reason, I cannot agree with Malamud, who reads the lines as an expression of the poet's fear for writing a poetic and fictional text: "Prudentius saw his *carmen*, like Ovid's, as double-edged, as likely to bring down the wrath of his ruler as to redeem him. It cannot but be implicated in the duplicities and snares of human language, but at the same time it offers his only hope for salvation."[35] But the persona is not equivalent to the poet, and the word *me* in line 966 does not refer simply to the extratextual author. Indeed, if we read *Amartigenia* alongside *Apotheosis*, and if we consider Ovid's interest in the future reception of his *Tristia*, then the poet's prayer for clemency takes on a different hue. The portrayal of the *Amartigenia* poet as a sinner and a suppliant is not a simple reflection of the historical author, and the devotion expressed in these lines cannot be understood apart from the literary and poetic framework in which it is presented.

Whereas the poet in *Apotheosis* ends with confidence in his resurrection, the poet in *Amartigenia* expresses mainly fear but also a humble hope for clemency from future readers. In the *Psychomachia*, we will see that the poet is said to alternate between success and failure until the arrival of Christ.

3. *Psychomachia*

The author appears in *Psychomachia* only in paired prayers at the beginning and end of the poem. In the former, he prays for illumination; in the latter, he gives thanks to Christ for his intervention. The significance of these prayers is apparent visually in a remarkable set of medieval illustrations, whose archetype is dated by art historians either within or soon after the fifth century[36]; two of the original illustrations portrayed the poet in prayer, Stettiner's scenes

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[35] Malamud 2011, 190. Beyond their surface, Malamud reads the final four words as concealing an anagram for *Aurelio prudente se clamante* (2011, 190–92). I find this unlikely both because *se clamare* is not found elsewhere with this meaning ("glorify oneself") and because the anagram is itself difficult.

[36] Stettiner 1895–1905, 1.200–2 and Woodruff 1930.

7 (verse 1) and 90 (verse 888).[37] Prudentius appears with his hands raised in the posture of an *orans*, an iconographic figure type that is well known from funereal contexts.[38] The illustrations draw attention to these paired invocations and to the figure of the poet seeking salvation. The funerary theme confirms a link with the poet's death and expected resurrection. The early date of the illustrations makes them evidence for how Prudentius was read by contemporaries or near contemporaries: the poet waits in prayer for the deliverance of Christ. In such scenes, as we have already seen in *Apotheosis*, Christ stands as an ideal reader for all of Prudentius's future human readers.

The author provides a frame through which to read the *Psychomachia*, for the entire action of the poem takes place within the individual human soul. The prayer at the beginning is largely conventional, with the poet asking Christ to provide and explain his material; he lightly adapts the opening of Aeneas's prayer to Apollo at *Aeneid* 6.56:

> Christe, graues hominum semper miserate labores … (*Psych*. 1)
>
> Christ, you have always pitied the hard labors of men …

As Marc Mastrangelo has shown, the fact that Prudentius addresses his god directly instead of through an intermediary (like the Sibyl does) indicates that Prudentius "implicates the reader as the receiver of divine knowledge in the same direct manner as the poet" and that "the implied reader and poet become equivalent."[39] The reader and poet share together the same battle against vice and for virtue, and the invocation points to that shared space, rather than to any private illumination for the author. Most importantly, the central request in his prayer, *liceat portenta notare* (*Psych*. 20), is an appeal for impersonal and shared knowledge. The poet in the illustrations, therefore, appeals both to the reader to participate and to Christ as his addressee. The persona of the poet and his role within a staged authorial drama create the sense that the text is open and that the audience also has a role to play in the poem.

At the end of *Psychomachia*, Prudentius thanks Christ for identifying the dangers and struggles in the soul (888–92); he then explains that two senses are in conflict (*Psych*. 893–898):

> Nouimus ancipites nebuloso in pectore sensus
> sudare alternis conflictibus et uariato
> pugnarum euentu nunc indole crescere dextra,

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[37] For the versions of these scenes in the manuscripts of Prudentius, see Stettiner 1895–1905, 2.11 and 16. In the same volume, Stettiner provides reproductions of each extant medieval illustration.
[38] On the *orans* figure in funerary art, see Prigent 1992 and Jensen 2000, 35–37.
[39] Mastrangelo 2008, 20.

nunc inclinatis uirtutibus ad iuga uitae
deteriora trahi seseque addicere noxis
turpibus et propriae iacturam ferre salutis.

We know that in our darkling chest two senses
toil in turning conflicts and that with a varied
outcome for the fighting now our good genius rises
now the virtues are low and dragged to life's harsh
yokes and they give themselves over to foul
punishments and give up on their own salvation.

The phrase *ancipites … sensus* denotes the unreliability of feelings in the soul—within this poem, and as the subject of *sudare*, the double-headed meanings also point to the ambiguities created through the poem's allegorical figures. The soul's strength and increase (*crescere*) matches the poet's confidence at the end of *Apotheosis*, and their dejection recalls the end of *Amartigenia*. The following lines (899–907) expand on the same alternation of virtue and vice in the soul of the poet. The conflict in the soul is summed up in the observation that human nature is not simple (904 "non simplex natura hominis"), a phrase that recalls the duplicities that were the subject of *Amartigenia*. As a resolution of the themes of Prudentius's two previous didactic poems, this prayer offers a commentary on the poet's continually alternating hope and doubt.

Prudentius ends the poem by explaining that his double nature (909 "duplex substantia") will continue in struggles until Christ arrives and Wisdom reigns (908–15). Just as the poet struggles until Christ arrives (910 "donec praesidio Christus deus adsit"), the poem is incomplete until the reader inhabits the text. In this authorial drama, Prudentius waits for Christ—the ideal reader—to come and redeem the text, to bring it back, and to rule in it as wisdom. In this sense, the poem and the poet end with expectation and without a conclusion; thus, the focus on the author at the beginning and the end of the *Psychomachia* reveals only that the poet is waiting for an external validation and that the conflict continues until his help arrives. Whereas *Apotheosis* signals the author's hope for resurrection through reading and *Amartigenia* admits the poet's inability to guarantee his own crown, *Psychomachia* explains that the author's struggle will continue until the reader intervenes. In three different ways, the poet dramatizes his dependence on the reader by dramatizing the possibility of a personal redemption.

The authorial drama in *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* sets the poet within a fictional frame in which he describes uncertainty, doubt, and

insufficiency and which the reader is invited to inhabit to grant him a literary redemption isomorphic with the spiritual and literal salvation that he believes will come through Christ.

Appendix: *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* as a trilogy

Although there is no way to be certain that Prudentius grouped *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* together as a trilogy, there is good reason to think that the arrangement goes back to the author, and not merely to an early reader or editor. Beyond the evidence provided by the parallels just discussed from the end of each poem, there is the arrangement of the poems in the manuscripts, some further thematic parallels, and the *Hymnus de trinitate*. Slight external evidence points in the same direction.

Despite some minor variations, the arrangement of *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* as books I, II, and III is attested in all major branches of the manuscript tradition, most notably in the two sixth-century exemplars.[40] Thus, throughout the three works, MS *A* (Paris. lat. 8084) has running headers across the *verso* and *recto* along the lines of *Prudentii lib I Apotheosis*. Likewise, MS *B* (Ambros. D 36 sup) has the following note between *Amartigenia* and *Psychomachia*, although it is unclear whether the *explicit* was written by the original scribe: "explicit lib. secundus amartigenia. incipit lib. tertius psychomachia."[41] The Carolingian copies provide further confirmation that this arrangement was very early, and the slight variations that exist between manuscripts are not surprising since paratexts are usually the least stable elements in any textual tradition. MS *E* (Leidensis, Bibl. Vniu., Burmannus Q 3) has *Prudentii lib. I* as a running heading through the first part of *Apotheosis*, and *explicit liber secundus prudentii amartigenia* at the end of that poem. MS *T* (Paris. lat. 8087) gives *incipit psychomachia liber tertius* at the beginning of that poem, and MS *S* (Sangallensis 136) has a very similar formula. In short, all of the

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[40] See Cunningham 1966a, xxv and 1980, 11–12. Although I constantly consulted Bergman's edition, I used Cunningham's, despite the fact that is suffers from an apparent haste and some careless mistakes—on Cunningham's imperfect work, see Bastiaensen 1993a, 101–3. If ever you wanted evidence for the harm done by essentially negative scholarship, instructive are the acerbic reviews written by Cunningham (1966b) and Thraede (1968) of each other's books. Although both books have not received the reception they deserved, Thraede's review has been more successful in demolishing its target, which is unfortunate because even he admits that Cunningham's edition has merit. On misprints and misunderstandings in Thraede's review, see Cunningham 1971, 59–60n2; in the same article, Cunningham admirably and openly discusses contested readings from his edition, although he previously appeared to pass off some of the blame for the mistakes in it (see Cunningham 1968, 140, where he prints a list of flaws that he describes as due "either to the press or to the editor," *uitia siue preli siue editoris corrigenda*).

[41] A later hand has erased *secundus* and written *primus* (but without changing *tertius*).

manuscripts cited throughout by Cunningham offer evidence that the three poems were read together, and the manuscripts cited by Bergman do not alter the picture. Bergman puts the archetype of all extant manuscripts in the fifth century; the more conservative Cunningham says that it was no later than the early sixth century.[42]

Some internal thematic links between *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* were noted by Cunningham.[43] But this is the weakest evidence, and no one so far as I know has ever claimed that the three poems were written from the beginning as a trilogy; likewise, I openly admit that there is no full coherence between them. Nevertheless, *Apotheosis* and *Amartigenia* have indeed been considered to be preparatory to the *Psychomachia*, the former as a theological and theoretical account of the world and the latter as a practical account of human origins.[44] In any case, the best evidence of a thematic connection remains the endings of the three poems, with their circuitous route from assurance to doubt to expectancy, as described in the body of this article.

Although the headings in the manuscripts do not offer any indication of how the three poems were read together, the so-called *Hymnus de trinitate*[45] suggests the trinity as a metaphor for the trilogy. This twelve-line hexameter poem is presented in the manuscripts before *Apotheosis* (none of Prudentius's other prefaces are written in dactylic hexameters), but it is not without its own difficulties. Gnilka regards the entire poem as an interpolation, largely on the basis of the complicated syntax in lines 1 and 6.[46] Besides Cunningham's understanding that the lines introduced *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* together, scholars have suggested other arrangements: Ludwig

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[42] Bergman 1926, xxiv; Cunningham 1966a, xx.

[43] Cunningham (1966a, xxv) briefly notes that *Psych.* 83–84 look to *Apoth.*, that *Psych.* 904 ff. look to *Amartigenia*, and that the way is prepared for the *Psychomachia* by *Apoth.* 518 ff. and by *Amartigenia* 393 ff. (this passage features personified vices and is widely regarded as a preliminary stage in Prudentius's development of personification allegory). We can add a few more such passages to Cunningham's list: *Apoth.* 97–109 on the incarnation and virgin birth suggest *Psych.* 66–75, and *Amart.* praef. 63 on the triumph of the soul suggests *Psychomachia*. A long passage following on from the one cited above in *Amartigenia* suggests the themes of the *Psychomachia*: lines 406–423 offers a typological reading of the enemies of the righteous in the books of Genesis and Joshua; 429–431 treats spiritual slavery in a way reminiscent of *Psych.* 896; 445–451 offers a spiritual interpretation of Israel's enemies; and 509–516 features language of spiritual warfare similar to that in *Psychomachia*.

[44] See Fontaine 1981, 202–6 and Charlet 2003, 234n9.

[45] The title, perhaps Carolingian, is found in some manuscripts; but it is not in either of the sixth-century MSS.

[46] Gnilka 2000–2003, 1.461–88. If Gnilka were correct, then I would regard his putative interpolator as the ancient editor who organised the three poems into a trilogy. In the future, I hope to revisit Gnilka's entire study on interpolations in *Apotheosis*, the conclusions of which are as radical as his knowledge of Prudentius is deep.

thought that the lines introduced those three poems and also the two books *Contra Symmachum* (1976, 317), Thraede that it introduced *Apotheosis* and *Amartigenia* (1962, 1020), Fabian that it introduced just *Apotheosis* (1988, 40–52), and Bastiaensen that it was a self-standing poem (1993b). While some caution is necessary, there are still good reasons to understand the *Hymnus de trinitate* as a preface to the combined *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia*. We will discuss first the appropriateness of the trinity as a theme, and then offer a translation of the poem with a close reading of its most relevant parts.[47]

The trinity was used by Prudentius's contemporaries in comparisons to all sorts of things that come in groups of threes. Thus, Ausonius included the trinity as the surprising final item in his *Griphus ternarii numeri*, which cites as many things that come in threes as he could fit into thrice thirty lines; Ambrose included the trinity as the final step in his literary demonstration of the thesis that rhetorical artistry was derived from the Christian scriptures[48]; and Augustine's profound psychologizing in the second half of *De trinitate* goes through a whole range of loosely grouped faculties that come in threes. At the time when Prudentius's three poems were grouped together, the trinity would have been a likely unifying theme by which to link three doctrinal poems. Indeed, beyond the thematic overlap discussed above, the poems could each be seen as an exploration of trinitarian theology: *Apotheosis* and *Amartigenia* are largely concerned with the divinity of Christ and the Father's work in creation, while *Psychomachia* features spiritual warfare conducted under Christ's guidance. In this way, the *Hymnus de trinitate* could be conceptualized as a *skopos* for the three poems joined together as an exposition of the trinity's essential unity in diversity.[49] The trinity would be a perfectly apt metaphor for the complicated case of three books joined as one.[50] The poem begins with three introductory lines, which are followed by essentially three lines for the Father, three for the Son, and three for the Holy Spirit:

> Est tria[51] summa Deus, trinum specimen uigor unus.
> Corde Patris genita est Sapientia,[52] Filius ipse est.
> Sanctus ab aeterno subsistit Spiritus ore.[53]

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[47] For an excellent and wide-ranging explanation of the entire poem, see Bastiaensen 1993b.

[48] *Ep.* 55.15 (Faller–Zelzer).

[49] On the *skopos* as a prominent feature of interpretation in late antiquity, see Coulter 1976, 77 and, for example, Philarg. *Vita Vergiliana* p. 13 (Hagen) and Cassian. *Conl.* 1.2.

[50] Cf. Bastiaensen's summary: "The *hymnus* as a whole is dominated by the tension between one and three, the one Godhead and the three Persons" (1993b, 4).

[51] For the neuter *tria*, used of the three persons of the trinity cf. *Apoth.* 243.

[52] For the second person of the trinity as Sapientia, cf. *Amart.* 164 and *Psych.* 915.

[53] Bastiaensen (1993b, 8) cited here Lucret. 1.37 "Eque tuo pendet resupini *spiritus ore*."

Tempore nec senior Pater est nec numine maior.

Nam sapiens retro[54] semper Deus edidit ex se

per quod semper erat gignenda ad saecula Verbum.

Edere sed Verbum Patris est, at cetera Verbi:

adsumptum gestare hominem, reparare peremptum,[55]

conciliare Patri, dextraque in sede locare.

Spiritus ista Dei conplet Deus, ipse fideles

in populos charisma suum diffundere promptus

et Patris et Christi uirtutem in corpora transfert. (*Hymnus de trinitate*)

God is three perfections, a threefold appearance, one force.

From the Father's heart is born Wisdom, the Son himself it is.

The Holy Spirit subsists from his eternal mouth.

The Father is neither elder in age nor greater in power.

For the wise God always in the past brought out of himself

the Word, for which reason it always was for generating the ages.

Bringing out the Word is of the Father, but the rest is of the Word:

to bear the humanness he took up, to restore the lost

to reconcile them to the Father, to seat them at his right hand.

God the Spirit completes this, himself brought out

to spread his gift among the faithful peoples,

and he transfers the Father's strength and Christ's to bodies.

Prudentius unfolds the mystery of the trinity, and this whole short poem is relevant both as a metaphor for the trilogy and because so much of *Apotheosis*, *Amartigenia*, and *Psychomachia* take up precisely such questions as these. But the final three lines, with their focus on the Spirit, most closely suggest the *Psychomachia* as a continuation of the previous two works. The verb *conplet* in line 10 offers a faint echo of *Psych*. praef. 68, which is the last line of the preface: "herede digno patris inplebit domum." Just as the soul fills its ancestral home in that poem and just as the Spirit fulfills God's works, the *Psychomachia* is imagined as completing the trilogy. The last line offers confirmation of such an apparently bold interpretation, precisely at a point that has troubled previous commentators.[56] Since *translatio* is the Latin for "metaphor" (μεταφορά) and since there was no strict distinction in antiquity between metaphor and

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[54] For this use of *retro* like *retrorsum*, cf. *Amart*. 163 and 176–177.

[55] Bastiaensen noted the similarity between this phrase and one in Prudentius's *Contra Symmachum* 2.194 "Qui potui formare nouum reparabo peremptum."

[56] On previous difficulties understanding the final line—and the word *corpora* in particular, see Bastiaensen 1993b, 13–14.

allegory,[57] the words *in corpora transfert* suggest the allegorical representation of virtues and vices in *Psychomachia*, the personifications by which they are actually presented as bodies. On a more immediate level and in light of the common metaphor of text as body, the end of the preface points to the transition after *transfert* to the several poetic poetic *corpora* that follow. To interpret *edere* and *promptus* as referring to publication or reading might not convince everyone, but a paratextual apparatus enables such connections to be suggested without having to flesh them out.

What about external evidence? Gennadius, in his *De uiris illustribus* entry on Prudentius from around the year 480, lists these same three poems together and singles them out as having Greek titles ("Conposuit et libellos quos Graeca appellatione praetitulauit"), immediately after mentioning an otherwise unattested *Exameron*.[58] Separately, the length of the poems would have made them suitable for publication in a single quire codex; and Cunningham has observed that the poems of Prudentius circulated in smaller groupings in Late Antiquity.[59] As for parallels from other texts, Plato's dialogues were grouped into trilogies and tetralogies long before Prudentius, apparently by Thrasyllus already in the first century c.e.[60] But is there any evidence that Prudentius would group his own texts into larger wholes? We need look no further than the two books *Contra Symmachum*, long sections of which were written years before the whole was put together in 402–403. Although the timing and specifics of this arrangement are controversial, there is broad agreement that the final text was arranged from some pre-existing material.[61]

The author's own habits of composition, the evidence of the manuscripts, thematic considerations, and the *Hymnus de trinitate* all point to the idea that the three poems were grouped by their author for publication together, presumably sometime after they were first written. In the absence of any contrary evidence, the most likely hypothesis is that the three poems were presented as a trilogy by Prudentius himself.

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[57] Quintilian explains that allegory is commonly produced from *continuatis tralationibus* (*Inst.* 8.6.44).
[58] Gennad. *Vir. ill.* 14. Cunningham suggested that the title *Exameron* might conceal a title for the trilogy (1966a, 73), an idea that Gnilka found ridiculous (2000–2003, 1.462n6).
[59] See Cunningham 1958. My colleague Justin Stover pointed me to the importance of single quire codices for understanding the history of books in Late Antiquity.
[60] Diogenes Laertius 56–62, on which see Mansfeld 1994, 58–107.
[61] See Shanzer 1989; Tränkle, 2008, 44–48; and Cameron, 2011, 337–49.

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