

Varia Fulgentiana

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It has been just over a century since Rudolf Helm published the first—and so far the only—critical edition of the mythographer Fulgentius.¹ All students of Fulgentius are greatly in Helm's debt; his insight and good sense can be fully appreciated only by those who have themselves worked intensively on this maddening author. As Helm would have been the first to acknowledge, his text was far from the final word; he left no shortage of problems for later interpreters to tackle, and his edition should have been a stimulus to further work. Yet in the century since Helm there has been surprisingly little progress. A reliable and up-to-date commentary exists only for the *Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum*, the shortest and in many ways the least interesting of the four authentic works.² There is no concordance, nor is there a reliable translation of the whole corpus.³ Translations of individual works vary in quality, and are not always easy of access.⁴ Fulgentius's prose is both ornate to the point of obscurity and

¹ *Fabii Planciadis Fulgentii V. C. Opera* (Leipzig 1898). The 1970 reprint includes bibliographical addenda by J. Préaux, but is otherwise unchanged. The only major textual contribution known to me since Helm is R. Ellis, "Fulgentiana," *Journal of Philology* 29 (1904) 61–71 (hereafter "Ellis"). I am not convinced by the elaborate rewriting of *Mit.* 13. 21 ff. suggested by H. Fuchs, "Textbereinigungen," *Rh. Mus.* 113 (1970) 95. The conjecture of J. Relihan, "Fulgentius, *Mitologiae* I. 20–21," *AJP* 109 (1988) 229–30 is clearly correct, but was in fact anticipated by Ellis. Cf. also note 24 below.

² U. Pizzani, *Fabio Planciade Fulgenzio. Definizione di Parole Antiche* (Rome 1968). On T. Agozzino and F. Zanlucchi, *Fabio Planciade Fulgenzio. Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* (Padua 1972), cf. the review of J. Perret, *REL* 51 (1973) 397.

³ On the translation of L. G. Whitbread, *Fulgentius the Mythographer* (Columbus 1971), see the review by R. T. Bruère, *CP* 68 (1973) 143–45. The lack of a concordance should be partially made good by the forthcoming *Bibliotheca Teubneriana* on CD-ROM.

⁴ A useful translation of the *Mitologiae* prologue is included in J. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore and London 1993) 203–10. There are versions of the *Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* by T. A. McVeigh, *The Allegory of the Poets* (Diss. Fordham University 1964) 201–24; L. C. Stokes, *Classical Folia* 26 (1972) 27–63 (reprising the translation in her Tufts dissertation of 1969); F. Zanlucchi in Agozzino and Zanlucchi (above, note 2) 41–69; and O. B. Hardison, Jr. in A. Preminger et al. (eds.), *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism* (New York 1974) 324–40. Pizzani (above, note 2) includes a serviceable Italian translation of the *Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum*. A careful rendering of *De Aetatibus* 10 (only) may be found in C. Stöcker, "Alexander der Grosse bei Fulgentius und die Historia Alexandri Macedonis des Antidamas," *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979) 55–75; cf. G. Hays, "Second Thoughts on Fulgentius's Alexander," *Vigiliae Christianae* (forthcoming). I shall refer to the translations above by translator's last name alone.

frequently corrupt; real doubt remains at many points about what the Latin actually means.

Under these circumstances, it may be worth while to offer here some interim notes and corrections, the by-product of work on a new translation and commentary. I shall treat first the *Mitologiae*, then the *Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* (including a brief discussion of the title) before turning to the *De Aetatibus*. Text and sigla in each case are Helm's (I have updated the apparatus where appropriate), and references are to page and line number in his edition.

Mitologiae 11. 21 ff.

Si his, quibus ignorare aliquid contingit, ne ipsut quidem nescire suum scire contingerit, quanto satius erat eis etiam non nasci contingere quam *nasci ineffaciter venire*. Primum itaque ego scientiae vestibulum puto scire quod nescias.

nesciendo ineffaciter vivere E: nesciis ineffaciter vivere Ellis

The italicized phrase is diagnosed by Ellis as "transparently corrupt." His emendation is based on the reading in E (Reginensis 1567, s. xii, described by Helm, praef. xi as *coniecturis infectus*), which would in fact be slightly preferable.⁵ But Helm's *index sermonis* is probably right to take *venire* as equivalent to *evenire* (for this usage, cf. J. B. Hofmann and A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* [Munich 1965] 299 with references); *ineffaciter* should be taken closely with *nasci*. As often, striving for parallelism (*non nasci ~ nasci ineffaciter*; *contingere ~ (e)venire*) has led Fulgentius into unnecessarily contorted phrasing.

The words that follow are translated by Relihan: "And so I think that I know the most important entryway of knowledge, a thing you may not know." On his reading, Fulgentius here is "reminding Calliope of his belief in an ineffable power higher than Helicon."⁶ But this is to import Christian polemic where it does not belong. In reality, *quod* introduces *oratio obliqua*, as often in later Latin. Fulgentius is merely harking back to the Socratic paradox: "I think that the threshold of knowledge is to realize that you do *not* know."

Mitologiae 12. 3 ff.

Ad haec illa: "Tam secretis misticisque rebus vivaciter pertractandis ampliora sunt auctoritatum quaerenda suffragia; neque enim quippiam

⁵ For E's *nesciendo*, cf. e.g. *Mit.* 9. 15 *certando remittunt in mortem*; 11. 9 *ut Psice videndo perderet et Ero non videndo perisset*; *Exp. Virg. Cont.* 104. 1 *disciplina doctrinae quamvis studendo desciscat . . .*; *De Aet.* 139. 18 *operis fundamina in meliorem laborando perduxit statum*.

⁶ Relihan (above, note 4) 156.

ludicrum quaeritur, quo ludibundo pede metrica verborum *commoda* sarciamus. Sudor hic opus est palestrantis ingenii . . .”

incommoda *Ellis*

Ellis offers no explanation for his proposed correction, and in fact the transmitted text is perfectly sound; cf. 25. 9 *labia velut cimbala verborum commoda modulantia* (where Ellis proposes *commodo*!). The neuter plural is used in both places with the same force as *commoditas*, “(verbal) facility, fluency,” for which cf. *Rhet. Her.* 1. 1. 1 *copia dicendi et commoditas orationis* (sim. Cicero, *Inv.* 1. 2. 3); Ennodius, *Epist.* 9. 30 p. 251. 22 Hartel *omnis verborum commoditas humilitatis terminos egressa calcatur*. Thus *quo . . . sarciamus* should be rendered, “whereby we might link together a metrical flow of words in playful measure.”

Mitologiae 13. 6 ff.

Solverat ignivomos mundi regione peracta
quadrupedes gelidumque rotis tepfecerat orbem
rector et auratis colla spoliabat habenis.

Iam Phoebus disiungit equos, iam Quintia iungit;
quasque soror linquit, frater pede temperat undas.

...

astrigeroque nitens diademate Luna *bicorni*
bullatum biiugis conscenderat aethera tauris.

bicornis DβH₂

Baldwin claims to have identified echoes of Lucan in this passage, among them *astrigero*, allegedly echoing *flammigeros* at *Bell. Civ.* 1. 48.⁷ But in fact, Fulgentius is imitating Ausonius, *Cup. Cruc.* 42, *cum face et astrigero diademate Luna bicornis*.⁸ The echo confirms Fulgentius’s familiarity with Ausonius (he alludes to the *Cento Nuptialis* at *Mit.* 13. 3), and also helps settle a textual issue. Considerations of balance already speak for *bicornis* in the Fulgentius passage (Why should *Luna* go without an attribute while *diademate* receives two?) and the parallel with Ausonius surely tips the balance in its favor.

⁷ B. Baldwin, “Fulgentius and his Sources,” *Traditio* 44 (1988) 37–57, at 47. Cf. *Bell. Civ.* 1. 45 ff. *Te, cum statione peracta / astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli / excipiet gaudente polo; seu sceptrum tenere, / seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus / . . . iuvat*. But any passage on sunrise or sunset is likely to include a reference to Phoebus and his horses, and *peracta* at line-end is hardly uncommon in the Latin hexameter. I see no reason to think that Fulgentius was recalling Lucan rather than e.g. Ovid, *Her.* 21. 85 f. *cum iam prope luce peracta / demere purpureis sol iuga vellet equis* or Seneca, *Apoc.* 2. 4 *iam medium curru Phoebus diviserat orbem / et propior nocti fessas quatibat habenas*. The reference at 14. 23 to being inserted among the stars *ut Neronem poeticis laudibus* certainly proves that Fulgentius knew the opening of Lucan’s epic, but to view it as “cunningly . . . signal[ing]” an earlier imitation seems over-subtle.

⁸ The two passages are linked already at *TLL* II 959. 38 f. s.v. *astrigero*.

I take the opportunity of calling attention to two other echoes. In the fifth line, the clausula *temperat undas* echoes Ovid, *Met.* 12. 580 *deus, aequoreas qui cuspidē temperat undas*. The resemblance in this case may be unconscious or even accidental. Not so in the case of the preceding line, which appears in nearly identical form as Corippus, *Ioh.* 8. 279 *tunc Phoebus disiunxit equos, tunc Cynthia iunxit*.⁹ Fulgentius's exact dates remain uncertain, but on any dating thus far proposed Corippus must be the imitator.¹⁰ If so, he is also the earliest evidence for the reception of the *Mitologiae*.¹¹ But I suspect that in reality Fulgentius is imitating Corippus; the implications of this are considerable, and I hope to discuss them in more detail elsewhere.

Mitologiae 14. 1 ff. (the description of Satyra)

Hanc [sc. Calliopen] praeibat florali lasciviens virguncula petulantia,
hedera largiori circumflua, improbi vultus et ore contumeliarum sarcinis
gravido . . .

Relihan translates, "wanton in floral luxuriance," i.e. presumably, "garlanded with flowers," *vel sim*. This is just possible: cf. Pliny, *Nat.* 16. 124, *ramorum petulantia*. But given the collocation with *lasciviens*, I suspect we should translate, "wanton with Floral impudence," i.e. with the impudence displayed by the prostitutes at the Floralia. As one observer has noted, "Fulgentius's Muses are blatantly lascivious," and the same goes for Satyra here.¹² Philosophy's description of the Muses as *scenicae meretriculae* at Boethius, *Cons. Phil.* 1. 1. 8 suggests that this may be a generic motif.

Mitologiae 14. 6 ff.

Musae autem latera sarciebant altrinsecus duae, quarum dexterior verenda
quadam maiestate subnixa elatae frontis polimina argenteis astrorum
crispaverat margaritiis, cuius faleratum exoticis diadema carbunculis

⁹ Cf. *TLL Onom.* II 793. 16 s.v. *Cynthia*.

¹⁰ The preface of the *De Aetatibus* (131. 10 ff.) locates him in North Africa, while the reference to a *dominus rex* at *Mit.* 5. 14 has led scholars to place the composition of the work in the Vandal period. But no attempt to identify the *rex* more precisely carries real conviction. The Dracontian echoes identified by R. Helm, "Der Bischof Fulgentius und der Mythograph," *Rh. Mus.* 54 (1899) 111–34, at 117 ff., would be more helpful if the direction of the influence could be established.

¹¹ Helm (previous note) 119 f. is sometimes taken to have shown that the opening of Boethius, *Cons. Phil.* imitates the prologue of the *Mitologiae* (e.g. by J. Relihan, "Satyra in the Prologue of Fulgentius' Mythologies," in C. Deroux [ed.], *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* IV, Collection Latomus 196 [Brussels 1986] 537–48, at 538 f.; K. Pollmann in *Der Neue Pauly* s.v. Fulgentius [1]). Helm himself was more cautious, and see now J. Grüber, "Die Erscheinung der Philosophie in der Consolatio Philosophiae des Boethius," *Rh. Mus.* 112 (1969) 166–86, at 167 n. 6.

¹² D. Shanzer, *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii, Book I* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1986) 41.

corniculata lunae sinuatio deprimebat ac cerulanti peplo circumlita hyalinae cavitatem sperae osseo fastigans tigillo versabat. *Visus* itaque luminis tam elata contemplatione caelitus erigebatur *intuitus*, quo pene foribus superna intuens pollicem inlississet.

visus del. Ellis | intuitus delendum susp. Helm

I am not happy with *sarciebant*, which seems to have troubled Relihan also.¹³ But my business is rather with the final sentence. If *visus* is a verb (i.e. *visus est*) an infinitive in place of *erigebatur* is required. If it is a noun, either it or *intuitus* has to go. Helm chose the second option, while Ellis preferred the first. I suspect *erigebatur intuitus* is sound (at any rate deletion would destroy a good *cursus velox*). But deleting *visus* may not be the answer either. Rather, for *visus* read *huius*. The error may stem from an original *uius*; cf. *TLL* VI 2697. 41 f. for this spelling in inscriptions, and notice the spelling *oc*, not only at *De Aet.* 158. 13 *quid oc sibi vult* in the H-less chapter of the work, but also (unanimously transmitted) at 170. 13 *Ecce oc ut angelus edicit*. For the demonstrative with *itaque*, cf. *Mit.* 8. 6 *hoc itaque sacrificali carmine . . .*; *De Aet.* 153. 24 *huius itaque universos temporis ordines sequi valde prolixum est*.

Translate, therefore, "And her gaze was lifted so far skyward in contemplation of this luminescent object that while gazing at the heavens she almost stubbed her toe on the doorway."

Mitologiae 24. 2 ff.

In huius [*sc.* Apollinis] etiam tutelam corvum volunt, sive quod solus contra rerum naturam in mediis ipsis aestivis fervoribus oviparos pullulet fetus . . . sive quod in orneoscopicis libris secundum Anaximandrum sive etiam secundum *Pindarum* solus inter omnes aves LX quattuor significationes habeat vocum.

Anaximander and Pindar are cited as attesting *quod in orneoscopicis libris . . . (the raven) solus inter omnes aves LX quattuor significationes habeat vocum*—i.e. as authorities for the contents of works on bird divination.¹⁴ The implication is that they are earlier mythographers or antiquarians, who explained the raven's iconographic association with Apollo (god of prophecy) by its importance in divination. Pindar clearly does not fit this bill, but Fulgentius's reputation for fabricating quotations has made critics queasy about emending: an author who can cite *Cornelius Tacitus in libro facetiarum* (*Serm.* 125. 8) is felt to be capable of anything. This is not the place to argue the source question, but critics should recall that a fabricated

¹³ Cf. Relihan (above, note 4) 280 n. 58: "a very odd phrase . . . Perhaps the three of them together are a sort of crazy quilt of analytical powers."

¹⁴ Baldwin (above, note 7) 53 is mistaken to say that Pindar is mentioned "in a group of authorities on crows." In this context, *Olymp.* 2. 86 ff. (cited also by M. Zink, *Der Mythograph Fulgentius* [Würzburg 1867] 68) is irrelevant.

quotation can be corrupted as easily as a legitimate one. On the following page (*Mit.* 25. 17) we will be hearing about a *Pisander fisicus* with an interest in allegorizing. It strikes me as at least possible that we should read *Pisandrum* here as well, the name of this unfamiliar figure having been mistakenly corrected on first appearance to that of a better-known author.¹⁵ As for Anaximander, he is most likely the otherwise unknown *Anaximander Lamsacenus* cited at *Mit.* 25. 15.

Mitologiae 45. 22

Et quamvis Nicagorus in *distemistea* libro quem scripsit primum illum [sc. Prometheus] formasse idolum referat . . .

distemitea H: destemistea M: in dicto mystico libro *deterr.*: Διὸς
θεμιστεία *Plasberg*: de Prometheo *Boschartus*: δεσμ. Προμηθέως
Voss: in dicto Mythica libro *Zink*: de stemmatibus *Baldwin*

Emending the titles of lost works by unknown (and perhaps non-existent) authors is an unpromising task, and none of the suggestions so far offered is very persuasive. But it might be worth considering *diastemata*. Fulgentius uses this musical term at *Mit.* 76. 1 and 78. 17, and a musical work would cohere with the statement a few lines later that *Aristoxenus . . . similia profert* (assuming, of course, that this is the musical Aristoxenus). As to what role an allegorical explanation of the Prometheus story played in a work of this kind, I cheerfully confess ignorance.

Mitologiae 74. 19

Sequitur secunda cithara; quamvis enim de his rebus quas musici *disafexis* dicunt, sicut Mariandes scribit, multa de his faciat, tamen aliqua non implet quae viva vox potest.

The puzzling *disafexis* clearly hides a musical term. I think the answer may be διὰ ἐξῆς, a shortened version of the phrase διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς (φθόγγων); cf. e.g. Aristides Quintilianus 1. 8 p. 14. 26 (τῶν συστημάτων) τὰ μὲν διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς φθόγγων, τὰ δὲ δι' ὑπερβατῶν μελωδεῖται and often; sim. Aristoxenus, *Elementa Harmonica* p. 38. 5; p. 67. 7; Cleonides, *Introductio Harmonica* 10; 14.

Taken in conjunction with the previous note, this example suggests that Greek δια- in Fulgentius has been systematically misread as *dis-* by an early scribe. If correct, this hypothesis may shed some light on the puzzling reference at *Mit.* 68. 23 *Aristofontes Atheneus in libris qui disarestia nuncupantur*.

¹⁵ The phenomenon is too common to need extensive illustration; cf. J. Willis, *Latin Textual Criticism* (Urbana 1972) 173–77.

Mitologiae 77. 17 ff.

In omnibus igitur artibus sunt primae artes, sunt secundae; ut in *puerilibus litteris prima abecetaria, secunda nota*, in grammaticis prima lectio, secunda articulatio, in rethoricis prima rethorica, secunda dialectica, in geometricis prima geometrica, secunda arithmetica, in astrologicis prima mathesis, secunda astronomia, in medicinis prima gnostice, secunda dinamicæ, in aruspicinis prima aruspicina, secunda parallaxis, in musicis prima musica, secunda apotelesmaticæ. De quibus omnibus breviter rationem perstringam necesse est. Aliud est enim apud grammaticos aliena agnoscere, aliud sua efficere; apud rethores . . .

Pueriles litterae have a dubious claim to being an *ars*, and their inclusion adds an unwanted eighth member to a list of seven liberal arts, albeit with arithmetic and dialectic replaced by soothsaying and medicine. Heavy repunctuation might be applied as a last resort: *sunt secundae (ut in puerilibus . . . nota); in grammaticis . . .* etc. But the phrase should probably be deleted as a marginal observation that has slipped into the text (perhaps a later reader's attempt to clarify the rather opaque distinction Fulgentius is drawing here). It is significant that the intrusive *pueriles litterae* do not reappear when Fulgentius goes through the list a second time at 78. 5 ff.

Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae (title)

Translations of the title often suggest that *continentia* is the Latin equivalent of Greek ὑπόνοια: "de Diepere Zin van Vergilius"; "Esposizione del Senso Riposto nella Poesia di Virgilio"; "Allegorical Content of Virgil," etc.¹⁶ This sense would be unparalleled if it could be confirmed. Elsewhere in later Latin the word simply refers to the contents of a work at the most superficial level (cf. *TLL* IV 700. 46 ff.), rather than to any hidden or deeper meaning. Note in particular Jerome, *Contra Ioh. 7 totamque paradisi continentiam* [= the story of the Fall] *tropologica interpretatione subvertat*, where the contrast between *continentia* and *interpretatio* is expressed as clearly as one could wish. Similarly Macrobius, *Somn. Scip. 2. 12. 2 ut breviter a principio omnem operis continentiam revolvamus*, . . . (followed by a narrative summary of Scipio's dream).

In fact, closer inspection suggests that Fulgentius uses the word in its normal sense. At 90. 20 ff. Virgil demands *primi nostri libri continentiam narra; tunc demum haec tibi, si visum fuerit, reserabimus*. Fulgentius responds by providing a jejune plot summary of *Aen. 1: primum Iuno Eolum petit, . . . Dehinc cum septem navibus evadit. Libico in litore accipitur* (etc.), concluding: *Habes breviter decursam primi libri continentiam. Quid de his senseris, audire desidero*. Here, clearly, the *continentia* is not the

¹⁶ Respectively M. F. A. Brok, "De Aeneis als spiegel van het menselijk leven," *Hermeneus* 24 (1952/3) 210; Agozzino and Zanlucchi (above, note 2) 41; Relihan (above, note 4) 29 and passim. Cf. Whitbread (above, note 3) 105: "The *continentia*, or inner substance of Virgil . . ."

allegorical interpretation, but that to which it is applied—namely, the plot of the poem—and this is presumably the sense it has in the title also.

Exp. Virg. Cont. 83. 1 ff. (opening)

Expetebat quidem, *Levitarum sanctissime, nostri temporis* qualitas grande silentium, ut non solum mens expromptare desisset quod didicit, quantum etiam oblivionem sui efficere debuit quia vivit; sed quia *novo caritatis dominatui fulcitur* et in amoris praecepto contemptus numquam admittitur, ob hanc rem Virgilianae secreta physica tetigi vitans illa quae plus periculi possent praerogare quam laudis.

dominatus Uß | quia nova caritas imperat, ea dominatus fulcitur *Barb*

The phrase *nostri temporis* has several times been misinterpreted as a reference to the advanced age of the author (for which there is no other evidence), despite the fact that *tempus* is not normally used to refer to the age of an individual (for which in this context the Latin would be *aetas* or *anni*).¹⁷ In fact, Fulgentius is complaining about the anti-intellectualism of the era he lives in, just as he does at *Mit.* 3. 4 ff. *nostri temporis erummosa miseria non dicendi petat studium* and *De Aet.* 129. 1 ff. *hoc . . . temporis cursu . . . ubi nihil plus nisi de nummi quaestu res vertitur*.

As to the second italicized phrase, translators show a remarkable unanimity. McVeigh's version can stand as a sample: ". . . since our understanding is supported by a new law of charity and since contempt is never to be allowed within this law of love, I have, for this reason, investigated . . ."¹⁸ What is this "new law of charity" that "supports" Fulgentius's understanding? Whitbread and Hardison seem to take it as a veiled reference to Christianity, the latter even going so far as to capitalize the phrase ("I am subject to the New Law of charity").¹⁹ Yet the evocation of New Testament teaching does not really seem in place here. The practice of Christian charity requires many sacrifices, but it does not demand that its practitioners publish literary treatises, on Virgil or anything else.

Stokes offers a slightly different explanation. She translates, "the basis of the new rule is charity," and proposes that the "rule" in question is that of the Vandal king Hilderic (ruled 523–530), whose reign seems to have ushered in a period of religious détente between Catholics and Arians.²⁰

¹⁷ Hardison (above, note 4) 329: "Because of my age I thought complete silence proper." Similarly Whitbread (above, note 3) 119, who has led astray T. R. Maresca, "Dante's Virgil: An Antecedent," *Neophilologus* 65 (1981) 548–51, at 548.

¹⁸ Similarly Hardison and Whitbread. Cf. Zanlucchi: "essa [sc. l'anima] è sostenuta dal nuovo regno dell'amore."

¹⁹ Whitbread (above, note 3) 143 n. 3 explicitly glosses the "new law" as "Christianity, the spirit of the New Testament."

²⁰ Stokes (above, note 4). For the explanation and its implications for Fulgentius's date, cf. eadem, *Fulgentius and the Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* (Diss. Tufts University 1969) 48 f. I should add that I do not understand how Stokes construes the Latin (the subject of *fulcitur* is clearly *mens*), but this does not greatly affect her argument.

Under Hilderic's predecessor, the fervent Arian Thrasamund, it would have been dangerous to publish; only now can Fulgentius safely share his thoughts with the world. But there are objections to this reading also. Even leaving aside the circularity of the argument—we cannot be sure that Fulgentius wrote under Hilderic—it is hard to see anything in the treatise that could have caused offence to even the touchiest Arian. A more serious problem emerges if we examine Stokes's rendering in full: "the basis of the new rule is charity, and contempt is never allowed in this precept of love." How are we to take the second clause on this interpretation? What is the "contempt" that is not allowed? What is "this precept of love" and what does it have to do with the "new reign of charity"? Once again we are left with fudge.

A different approach is needed. I suggest that, as often, Fulgentian bombast conceals a relatively simple and stereotyped train of thought. The key lies in *caritatis*, which refers not to Christian charity, but to ordinary *amicitia*.²¹ The times are unpropitious to the publication of literary works, Fulgentius tells us, and he had vowed to lay down his pen. If he takes it up once more, it is only because he is *bolstered by the recent command of friendship*, i.e. by a friend's recent (or renewed) request for a work from his hand. *Dominatus* is admittedly difficult to parallel in this sense, but the semantic shift from "rule" to "(verbal) command" is not in itself an implausible one (compare the semantic development of *imperium*), and such shifts are common in Fulgentius.²²

At least two considerations speak for this interpretation. First, the clause as reinterpreted leads satisfactorily to the one that follows (in which *amoris praecepto* corresponds to *caritatis dominatui*): A friend has demanded a treatise from Fulgentius, and it is never right to refuse a friend (*in amoris praecepto contemptus numquam admittitur*). Secondly, this interpretation brings the preface of the *Expositio* into line with those of the three other works, all of which exploit the same tired pretence that the author is writing only reluctantly and in obedience to the urgent entreaties of his addressee.²³ The most sustained parallel appears in the preface to the *De Aetatibus* (129. 1 ff.): *Oportuit quidem, virorum excellentior, hoc nostro quo nuper regimur temporis cursu perenni potius studere silentio . . . Et*

²¹ This sense is classical, e.g. Cicero, *Fin.* 3. 73 *amicitias et reliquas caritates*. *Caritas* is regularly used with reference to late antique epistolary friendships; see K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Briefepik* (Munich 1970) 127 f.

²² For even more extreme examples of lexical *Umdeutung*, cf. R. Helm, "Einige sprachliche Eigentümlichkeiten des Mythographen Fulgentius," *ALL* 11 (1898) 71–79. Elsewhere in Fulgentius (*Mit.* 64. 10; *De Aet.* 150. 19; 165. 24) *dominatus* seems to have its usual sense, except at *Mit.* 13. 2 *Plautinae Saureae dominatus obdormit*, where it means something like "imperiousness" or "severity." The apparent parallel at *De Aet.* 164. 28 (Alexander) *Babilonicum regnum arripuit mille annorum dominatu fulcitum* provides no real help in interpreting our passage.

²³ On this stock sentiment, cf. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. W. Trask (Princeton 1953) 85 and T. Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm 1964) 117–20 and passim.

*crede, teste Deo nostro confiteor, volui tuum in his opusculis praeceptum spernere, nisi hoc meo indixissem ingenio, tuo nullo modo inobediens inveniri imperio. But cf. also *Mit.* 3. 14 *additur quia et mihi nuper imperasse dinosceris ut . . . tuarum aurium sedes . . . permulceam*; 35. 9 (preface to Book 2) *studens, mi domine, tuo reverendo imperio . . .*; *Exp. Serm. Ant.* 111. 1 ff. *Ne de tuorum praeceptorum, domine, serie nostra quicquam curtasse inoboedientia putaretur, libellum . . . retribui*. In light of these parallels we are surely justified in replacing the “new law of charity” with the more prosaic ties of friendly affection.*

De Aetatibus 136. 18 ff. (Noah’s flood a presentiment of Christian baptism)

illic aqua angelicae transgressionis fit ultio, hic aqua fit genuini peccati dilutio . . . : illic peccantis mundi materies in uno germine transplantanda in alium saeculum aquis purgatoriis enatat, hic unius Christi redemptione *pugnantis* rudis homo ecclesiae fontanis renascitur sacramentis.

Pugnantis is obscure (Who or what is Christ fighting?), and out of place in this diluvian context. Read *purgantis*, which sorts better with the baptismal imagery. For the balanced contrast of *peccantis mundi* with *Christi . . . purgantis*, cf. *Vulg. Hebr.* 1. 3 where Christ is described as *purgationem peccatorum faciens* (and see *TLL* X 1. 898. 66 for the frequency of the collocation *peccata purgare*).

De Aetatibus 146. 8 ff. (Jacob’s two marriages)

One of the peculiarities of the *De Aetatibus* is its “lipogrammatic” form: Each of the successive books deliberately omits the corresponding letter of the alphabet. In this extract from Book 5, *pulchra* refers to *Rach{e}l*, *maiori* to {*E*}*sau*:

Numquidnam non propria in his ordinibus mundi imago monstratur, dum in Lia matronalis invidia, dum in pulchra casualis fortuna, dum in Iacob livor fratrum, dum in maiori quoddam fortuitum; in Iob passionum indicia ac futura corona, in Iacob communis hominum vita, dum concubinarum amor non parcutitur, dum uxoris voluptatibus famulatur? Nota igitur quod in mundo unus pulchro sortitur coniugio, alius horridiori damnatur consortio; *illic filiorum gratia divino tribuitur aliquando solatio*. Subito iustum malis damnatum conspicimus, subito impium bonis [divitiis] ampliatum notamus; aliquando infimior in altum porrigitur, aliquando sublimis post tumidas pompas prostratus ab omnibus conculcatur.

divitiis del. Helm.

The italicized clause gives the impression of being orphaned in this Gorgianic passage. Moreover, *illic* suggests that the clause here should refer to the happy marriage (= Rachel), though clearly the *solatium* must be a consolation for an unhappy marriage (= Leah). It is tempting to assume a

lacuna, perhaps caused by a *saut du même au même*, e.g. *illic <filiorum facultas profundo nonnumquam abstrahitur consilio, hic> filiorum gratia* etc. In one case infertility mars an otherwise promising union, in another children console the husband for drawing an unattractive spouse.

De Aetatibus 162. 18 ff. (Judith)

Ecce autem repente dum *nulla vox ex adventu pignantum, nullus cruor emanat percussorum et tamen pugna nocte confecta est, caput pera gestatum est*, matronale tropeum peractum est, regale thorum perfectum est, facta est una puella Hebreorum salus, fuga Persarum, perpetua nunc usque fabula saeculorum. *Sed hoc proelio nulla vox ex adverso pignantum, nullus cruor emanat percussorum et tamen caput pera gestatur sola nocte adtestante sublatum.* Decora namque forma tantum excellentium operum fuerat lena, quae caput a corpore segregatum, salutem lugentum adtulerat populorum.

Fulgentius's propensity for saying the same thing in five different ways is justifiably renowned. Here, however, he says the same thing in the *same* way: The word-for-word repetition of the earlier sentence is not in his manner. Nor is this the only problem with the passage. The ninth book of the treatise omits the ninth letter (I), and the word *proel{i}o* therefore has no business here.²⁴ The obvious solution is to bracket the second sentence, but it is not easy to see how it made its way in here; we have to do with something more complicated than a simple scribal doublet. Is it possible that a draft version of the sentence managed to slip into Fulgentius's fair copy?²⁵

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²⁴ There are three other such violations in the text as printed by Helm: 139. 23 *effe{c}ta*; 144. 12 *av{e}rsum*; 170. 6 *a{l}ieno*. The second should probably be corrected to *aborsum*, which is in fact the reading of Bruxellensis 10098–105; cf. H. Silvestre, "Notice et extraits des manuscrits 5413–22, 10098–105 et 10127–44 de la Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles," *Sacris Erudiri* 5 (1953) 174–92, at 188 f. The other two may be simple slips on Fulgentius's part. In addition, as noted by an anonymous reviewer, at *ALL* 11 (1898) 294 f., Plasberg's *Rom<an>ae*, printed by Helm at 131. 7, is to be rejected since the preface to the *De Aetatibus* eschews A (the diphthong *ae* counts as *e*).

²⁵ I am grateful to the two anonymous referees for their advice on presentation and to the editor for his patience.