

The Dedicatory Presentation in Late Antiquity: The Example of Ausonius

HAGITH SIVAN

In a well-known analysis of the function of dedicatory pieces in Martial and Statius (whose title is here deliberately echoed), Peter White showed that the Roman concept of dedication was flexible in the extreme and well suited to a variety of purposes.¹ Some of his conclusions are borne out by the work of the fourth-century poet Ausonius, who was greatly influenced by these two predecessors.² Indeed, an examination of Ausonius' poems offers an ideal point of departure for an exploration of the topic of the dedicatory presentation in the literature of late antiquity.³ For example, one of the questions raised addresses the nature of the relationship between the dedication and the text to which it was attached: What can be deduced from the inclusion or omission of a dedicatory preface concerning the poet's working methods, his intended audience(s), the circulation and publication of his works? What sort of information is provided by the dedication about the chronological stages of the composition? Were dedications intended to function as proper prefaces as well as dedicatory addresses? Where multiple dedications were used, how do they relate to one another?

Several points can be made at the very start.⁴ Ausonius' surviving dedicatory work ranges from single to multiple dedications. This sort of variety follows obvious precedents, not the least Martial's four dedications in the first book of his *Epigrams*. The dedicatees include specific addressees, general readership and, on one occasion, even the poem's dead subjects (*Professores, Poeta*). Where Ausonius appended an "epilogue," it often

¹ P. White, "The Presentation and Dedication of the *Silvae* and the *Epigrams*," *JRS* 64 (1974) 40-61.

² See the edition of Schenkl (below, note 7) for precise references; on Martial's influence, R. E. Colton, *CB* 51 (1974-75) 27-30; 52 (1976) 66-67; 54 (1977) 8-10; on Statius' influence, Z. Pavlovskis, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell 1962, and *PP* 20 (1965) 281-97.

³ For a recent general survey of Ausonius' works, R. Herzog and P. L. Schmidt (edd.), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike V* (Munich 1989) 268-308, with vast bibliography.

⁴ Z. Pavlovskis, "From Statius to Ennodius. A Brief History of Prose Prefaces to Poems," *Rend. Istituto Lombardo* 101 (1967) 535-67, esp. 545-52.

serves, in conjunction with the prefatory pieces, as a frame to enclose the text. Still in the manner of Martial, the dedications of Ausonius are written in both prose and verse, and they all precede poetic works. These multiple dedications correspond to each other either by complementing or by simple overlapping. They also touch on a question of aesthetics, essentially the inner proportions of the whole, and the literary intention of this amalgam. In what follows I divide the dedications, for convenience's sake, according to their number, from "floating" compositions, unattached to a surviving poem or corpus, to multiple dedications. Of course, other divisions could also be used, from contents to form, or through types of dedicatees.

A word of caution first. The difficulties of dealing with the process of the publication of Ausonius' poems cannot be overstated.⁵ To date, no single edition has commanded universal consensus, and "the edition to end all editions" is still awaited.⁶ In the meantime, one has to contend with a different order of works and a different numbering system in every edition.⁷ The debate concerning the number of editions issued in Ausonius' lifetime and the affiliation of each of the families of manuscripts with these putative editions has been a long and wearisome affair.⁸ In addition, we are now in possession of a list which gives the titles of several lost works, from a versified version of a lost history by Eusebius (of Nantes) to a *libellus* on the names of the months of the Hebrew and Athenian calendars.⁹ It is not my intention here to deal with any of the problems raised by the transmission of the Ausonian corpus, but merely to point out the useful information contained in the dedications, particularly with regard to the chronological sequence and stages of composition.

⁵ M. D. Reeve in L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission* (Oxford 1983) 26–28, for a brief summary.

⁶ Reeve, review of Prete's 1978 Teubner edition, *Gnomon* 52 (1980) 444–51 (448 for the quotation).

⁷ The standard modern editions include: Schenkl (*MGH AA V.2*, 1883); Peiper (Teubner 1886); Pastorino (Torino 1971); Prete (Teubner 1978); Green (Oxford 1991). Unless otherwise stated, all references and quotations are from the edition of Schenkl.

⁸ To mention but few, O. Seeck, review of Peiper, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 13 (1887) 497–520; M. J. Byrne, *Prolegomena to an Edition of the Works of Ausonius* (New York 1916); G. Jachmann, "Das Problem der Urvariante in der Antiken und die Grundlagen der Ausoniuskritik," *Festschrift der Universität Köln zum 10 J. Bestehen des Deutsch-Italienischen Kulturinstituts Petrarcahaus* (Köln 1941) 47–104; and the introductions to the various editions.

⁹ R. Weiss, "Ausonius in the Fourteenth Century," in R. R. Bolgar (ed.), *Classical Influences on European Culture* (Cambridge 1971) 62–72; M. D. Reeve, "Some Manuscripts of Ausonius," *Prometheus* 3 (1977) 112–20; H. Sivan, "The Historian Eusebius (of Nantes)," *JHS* (forthcoming).

Dedications Without Texts

Several verse dedications have been transmitted without an attached text. One was prompted by an imperial letter, preserved in a collection of dedicatory prefaces, sent by the emperor Theodosius I (379–95).¹⁰ In it the emperor asked the poet to send him his works, and more specifically, two types of works: those which had already been “published,” and others which “rumor” had added to the corpus (*postulans . . . ne fraudari me scriptorum tuorum lectione patiaris. quae olim mihi cognita et iam per tempus oblita rursus desidero, non solum ut, quae sunt nota, recolantur, sed etiam ut ea, quae fama celebri adiecta memorantur, accipiam*). The words *scripta*, *cognita* and *nota* seem to indicate some kind of published edition of collected works, while those designated as *adiecta* may have been more recent additions, not yet officially presented to the public. Until the emperor’s request sent the poet to rummage through his drawers the latter had been stored away.¹¹ The date of the imperial letter cannot be ascertained, but it may have been written between 389 and 392, during Theodosius’ longest stay in the west. By then Ausonius was living in leisurely retirement on his Aquitanian estates.¹²

That Theodosius knew of these poems need not come as a surprise. Ausonius, like his predecessors, regularly sent copies to friends, some of whom he also expected to come forth with suggestions for revisions. One of these, Pacatus, to whom several poems are dedicated, was a fellow rhetor of Ausonius from Bordeaux.¹³ Pacatus travelled to Italy in 389 to deliver a panegyric in honor of Theodosius. In Italy, acquaintances of Ausonius, like Symmachus, with access to the imperial court, were also well informed and able to report on the state of Ausonius’ poetic productivity.¹⁴

The choice of the words *fama celebri* to mark the emperor’s source of information merits attention. We know that, in addition to poems circulating informally with the author’s permission, there were also unauthorised copies which, in spite of the poet’s wish, somehow reached an unintended audience. One such poem was the *Griphus*, ninety contrived verses on the number three. Before its formal dedication to the Italian senator Symmachus in the form of a long prose letter (below), the *Griphus*

¹⁰ *Epistula Theodosi Augusti* (Sch. I).

¹¹ *Quae tu de promptuario scriniorum tuorum . . . libens inerties* (ibid.).

¹² See L. A. A. Jouai, *De magistraat Ausonius* (Nijmegen 1938) for a detailed biography; R. Etienne, “Ausone ou les ambitions d’un notable aquitain,” in *Ausone, humaniste aquitain* (Bordeaux 1986) 1–90.

¹³ C. E. V. Nixon, *Pacatus. Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius* (Liverpool 1987).

¹⁴ On Ausonius’ contacts in Theodosius’ court, see J. F. Matthews, “Gallic Supporters of Theodosius,” *Latomus* 30 (1971) 1073–99. Recently, G. W. Bowersock, “Symmachus and Ausonius,” in *Colloque genevois sur Symmaque*, ed. F. Pachoud (Paris 1986) 1–14; R. P. H. Green, “The Correspondence of Ausonius,” *AC* 49 (1980) 199 f.

had been for a long time in "secret" or informal circulation.¹⁵ What irritated Ausonius above all was that as a result of his lack of control, the poem underwent several changes of which he disapproved. These unexpected alterations may be attributed to overzealous admirers eager to share in the poetic fame of Ausonius even before the poems were formally presented to the public. To reconstruct the process: A private copy is sent to a friend with a request for perusal and suggestions for revisions; the poem is then copied by friends of the original dedicatee, but the copiers reproduce not the "original" but the "corrected" poem. As a result, the work acquires a slightly different form owing to these unauthorised revisions. When accused of such a practice, Symmachus replied that once a poem was complete and left the author's desk it became public property.¹⁶

Complying with Theodosius' request, Ausonius prefaced the poetic corpus sent to the emperor with a personal dedication in which he expressed his "relief" at having thus been "forced" to part with his work.¹⁷ The imperial command, asserted the poet, came just in time to put an end to a long series of ever-worsening revisions (18–20: *quis nolit Caesaris esse liber, / ne ferat indignum vatem centumque lituras, / mutandas semper deteriore nota?*). If these words are to be taken seriously, they point to the introduction of revisions, Ausonius' own or other people's alterations of his work, either as a matter of course, in the process of re-writing, or when asked to publish an "official" version. In either case the final version of each work would have differed from previous drafts. There is also an element of the apologetic cliché in these words, as well as echoes of Martial's address to his book (1. 3) and of Horace's views on the process of poetic creativity (*Ars Poetica* 289–94, 438–41).

Both the emperor's letter to Ausonius and Ausonius' dedication to Theodosius have been transmitted by one family of manuscripts (P).¹⁸ It is unclear whether the imperial request was attached to a corpus dedicated to the emperor, in addition to the dedication itself. Authors often referred in their dedicatory preface to the prompting of the addressee.¹⁹ If indeed the letter in its original form did head a collection of Ausonius' poems, the gesture appears to constitute a novelty. While a later editorial hand may not be altogether excluded, Ausonius was vain enough to breach stylistic rules, if such a transgression contributed to his poetic reputation. There is no indication, however, in the verse dedication to the emperor of the scope and

¹⁵ *Griphus* (Sch. XXVI. 1), *Ausonius Symmacho: igitur iste nugator libellus, iam diu secreta quidem, sed vulgi lectione laceratus, perveniet tandem in manus tuas* (8–9).

¹⁶ *Cum semel a te profectum carmen est, ius omne posuisti, Ep.1* Peiper = I. 31. 2 Callu (*Symmaque. Lettres* [Budé 1972]).

¹⁷ *Domino meo et omnium Theodosio augusto Ausonius tuus* (Sch. II). Note the "timely coincidence" of *non iussa parant erumpere dudum carmina* (17–18).

¹⁸ The latter also in V.

¹⁹ T. Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm 1964) 117–20.

contents of the "imperial corpus." The correspondence between Theodosius and Ausonius seems to have extended to at least one other item. A list of contents of Ausonius' works names a prose letter, now lost, sent to the emperor.²⁰ One wonders whether this letter was also appended to this corpus or to another collection, perhaps an earlier one.²¹

Among other "detached" prefaces, there is one addressed to "the reader" in which the author called upon his audience to act as patrons for his poems.²² This is, of course, a *topos*, as is, to an extent, the autobiographical sketch which constitutes the bulk of the dedication. Horace and Ovid often inserted autobiographical details into their poems, the latter minutely following an established pattern based on a description of home, descent and education.²³ Nor can one deny that the age of Ausonius saw the beginning of Christian self-revelation and self-examination, which culminated in Augustine's *Confessions*. Ausonian influence, for example, can be detected in the works of Prudentius, whose *praefatio*, a general proemium to his collected works, is cast in the form of a biography detailing his career and his spiritual progress towards "poetic conversion."²⁴ But there is hardly a doubt that in the hands of Ausonius the poet's self-presentation attained considerable proportions. Not only are his home, parents and career described at great length, but the subject matter was amplified in a series of poems devoted to family members, in another, describing his school colleagues, and in several other works (*Parentalia*; *Professores*; *Epicedion*; *Liber Protrepticus*).

This sort of personal introduction, in the form of a dedication to the general public, left little doubt of the poet's social status.²⁵ Unlike his earlier models, Ausonius did not have to live from the sale of his books, nor

²⁰ Reeve (above, note 9) 116, no. 4: *item epistolas prosaicas ad Theodosium imperatore . . .*, not, I think, to be confused with the existing verse dedicatory preface.

²¹ The relations between Ausonius and Theodosius are far from clear. Having been labelled as a supporter of T. in the late 370s (Matthews [above, note 14]), Ausonius is strangely silent about the eastern emperor during the early 380s. Even in an obvious place such as the *Gratiarum actio* there is no mention of Theodosius or his connection with Gratian. The correspondence with Theodosius must, therefore, belong to the late 380s, when Ausonius, no longer in a position of power at the court, may have tried to court imperial favor.

²² *Ausonius lectori salutem*, Sch. III. 39-40: *tu ne temne, quod ultro / patronum nostris te paro carminibus*.

²³ Horace, *Ep.* 1. 20. 19 f.; *Serm.*, *passim*; Ovid, *Tristia* 4. 10; G. Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, trans. E. W. Dicks (London 1973).

²⁴ J.-L. Charlet, *L'influence d'Ausone sur la poésie de Prudence* (Aix-en-Provence 1980) for a basic comprehensive analysis; A. M. Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford 1989) 6 f. on Prudentius' *praefatio* and its literary antecedents.

²⁵ K. M. Hopkins, "Social Mobility in the later Roman Empire. The Evidence of Ausonius," *CQ* 11 (1961) 239-49.

was he in need of the type of literary patronage sought by earlier poets.²⁶ Any doubt to the contrary was immediately dispelled upon reading of the dedications. Not that the system of patronage ceased to function in later antiquity, but Ausonius had far-reaching ambitions, well beyond a solid literary repute and a comfortable living. As soon as he gained access to the imperial court in Trier (A.D. 366/7), he set about to employ his poetic talents in extolling the imperial house (*Mosella* 420–31; *Cento*, praef.). When given the opportunity, he courted the favors of the most powerful aristocrat of the day, Sextus Petronius Probus (*Ep.* 16). As a result, even by the standards of an age which set an inordinately high premium on literacy, Ausonius did exceptionally well. Already under Valentinian I he became the quaestor in charge of imperial legislation (A.D. 375) and during the reign of his pupil Gratian, Ausonius, his family and his protégés regularly occupied the highest civil offices.²⁷

Like the dedication to Theodosius, the one to the reader does not provide a clue regarding the contents of the works to which it was attached. Perhaps it comprised one of the prefatory pieces which preceded the above-mentioned collection sent to the emperor, in addition to the emperor's letter and the verse dedication. This hypothetical juxtaposition would have served the purpose of introducing the author as well as highlighting his unique poetic status. What came afterwards may have been of lesser importance by comparison. This sort of personal introduction also served to bring poet and audience into a direct and immediate contact. In addition to the customary *captatio benevolentiae*, the information provided in the prefatory dedication would surely have raised great interest and expectations.

Two other verse dedications, one transmitted among the prefatory pieces together with the dedication to Theodosius and the reader, the other transmitted with Ausonius' epigrams, were addressed to two political associates of Ausonius, Syagrius and Proculus.²⁸ No surviving texts can be attached to them. The one to Proculus bears two titles: *ad libellum suum* (Sch. *Epig.* 35) and *prosopopoia in chartam* (Peiper *Epig.* 1). Ausonius playfully debates there whether to consign his verses to the worms or to send them to Proculus. Not surprisingly he opts for the latter course, which he describes as a sweet revenge on a fellow-poet who refuses to part with his own poems (11–12: *prompta est ultio vati./ qui sua non edit carmina, nostra legat*). Proculus himself, then, was a poet, but an unpublished one by his own choice. He is to be identified with the Prefect of the Gauls in 382 and a consular candidate for 384. It is not clear which poems were sent to him;

²⁶ R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge 1982) and "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in A. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London 1989) 49–62.

²⁷ See Etienne (above, note 12) for the details.

²⁸ *PLRE* I 404 (G 9), Proculus Gregorius; *PLRE* I 862 (S 2 or S 3) for Afranius Syagrius, presumably the one here.

the work is described as *charta*, a *libellus* (3) and *carmina* (12). One wonders if this was a collection of epigrams. Be that as it may, Proculus was expected to give his approval, presumably with a view to publication (13–14: *huius in arbitrio est, seu te iuvenescere cedro, / seu iubeat duris vermibus esse cibum*). The request is a topos, and a form of literary courtesy in the period. The point here is that the importance of the addressee as well as his literary judgement are given due prominence (9–10: *irascor Proculo, cuius facundia tanta est, / quantus honos*).

Like Proculus Gregorius, Syagrius was a notable Gallic politician and a protégé of Ausonius. He is the addressee of four lines which mention a *liber* sent to him.²⁹ Perhaps he received a number of poems, although the scope of the presentation cannot be determined (3–4: *nostro praefatus habebere libro, / differat ut nihilo, sit tuus anne meus*). The case is interesting. Syagrius is not asked to come up with revisions or editorial suggestions, an omission which implies several possibilities: (a) The work sent to Syagrius may have been a final presentation copy rather than an informal one. This does not mean that everyone who was ever sent a “pre-publication copy” was asked to criticise it, but that such a request depended on the identity of the recipient. Literary men were natural candidates for such requests, whether made in earnest or in jest. (b) Ausonius sent Syagrius what he initially considered a final version, as a token of *amicitia*, but subsequently decided to revise and “re-publish” it in another form. This, in turn, implies that the verses to Syagrius merely accompanied the act of the dispatch and cannot be regarded as a dedicatory preface in the full sense of the word.

Among the epigrams of Ausonius, one other seems to have functioned as a dedication although it has reached us without an attached text (*commendatio codicis*, Sch. 2; Peiper 25). It is cast as a general address to “the reader,” and explains the nature of his poetry, which Ausonius terms a mixture of the grave and the light.³⁰ The message is clear: Ausonius had written verses for all occasions, a versatility to be commended (3–4: *non unus vitae color est nec carminis unus / lector*), nor has he forgotten, even in lighter moments, the good old manners (*veteres mores*). There is nothing unusual or novel in these words. A word of “warning” regarding the nature of one’s poetry had accompanied a good number of works in antiquity, including another Ausonian work (*Bissula*, below). What is interesting is the choice of modern editors who, like Schenkl, placed this poem, together with another (Sch. *Epig.* 1), at the head of the entire collection of epigrams,

²⁹ Ausonius’ Syagrius is identified by Evelyn White (Loeb I 7) as Apanius (*sic*) Syagrius, cos. 382. It is virtually impossible to determine which of the two eminent Syagrii of the late fourth century is the man. On the problems involved, Martindale in *Historia* 16 (1967) 254–56; Demandt, *BZ* 64 (1971) 38–45; and more recently, R. Bagnall et alii, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Atlanta 1987) 649–50.

³⁰ *Commendatio codicis*, Sch. *Epigrammata* 2. 1–2: *laetis / seria miscuimus*.

or, like Peiper, before the so-called "imperial" epigrams which Ausonius devoted to Valentinian I and Gratian (nos. 26–31). Perhaps this brief "*recommendatio*" headed a published collection of several poems, or collections of poems, including at least some that were of an erotic or frivolous nature. So far this is the only detached dedicatory preface which refers to the nature of Ausonius' poetry.

Finally, the untitled epigram with which Schenkl chose to head his edited collection of Ausonian epigrams is addressed to one Augustus, presumably Gratian (Peiper 26). Evelyn White regards it as the dedicatory poem of the first "edition" of Ausonius' works.³¹ The verses hardly read as a dedication but rather as a mini-panegyric of an emperor who, in spite of wars, found time to exercise his pen. "Rejoice, thou son of Aeacus! Thou art sung once more by a lofty bard and thou art blessed with a Roman Homer."³² Such words were better suited to preface a poem by the emperor than a collected edition of poems by his former tutor. Perhaps it was an epigram sent to Gratian.³³

To sum up, the "detached" dedications that survived in the Ausonian corpus conform, to an extent, to classical patterns while also displaying some divergent traits. None of them discloses the contents of the works which they accompanied, in the manner of Statius, for example. All the prefaces exhibit the poet's self-importance either through autobiographical details or by the emphasis given to the personality of the dedicatee. In this way it appears that poetic successors like Prudentius almost deliberately revelled in display of humility and contempt for worldly achievements. Ausonius' dedications also reveal something of his working methods; these included several stages of composition, revisions, informal and formal circulation. One can envisage drafts of all sorts sent to literary friends for their comments, with a dedicatory note requesting this service in the name of *amicitia*. At some point a collection would be made, whether of older poems or more recent pieces, with a "final" address, either to a specific individual like the emperor, and or to the general reader. In such cases, it is necessary to distinguish between the date of the prefatory pieces and that of the work itself.

So important did the dedicatory preface appear to have become that an editorial decision, possibly later than Ausonius', deemed them worthy of separate publication. In other words, by a process which remains obscure, these short poems were detached from the text(s) which they were intended to accompany. Thus, the literary unity of the two, which ancient writers

³¹ Loeb I xxxvi; II 168.

³² *Exulta, Aeacide, celebraris vote superbo / rursum Romanusque tibi contingit Homerus* (16–17), translation of Evelyn White.

³³ Its date can be indicated by references to the Goths, Huns and Sarmatians (7–9), which place its composition in 379, when the *Precatio consulis designati* of the same year mentions the same tribes (36–37).

were careful to insist on, was no longer important. In this respect, there is need to draw a clear distinction between a preface proper and a dedicatory one.

Texts Without Specific Dedications

In his dedications Ausonius used a variety of terms to characterise his work: *opusculum* and *libellus* (*Parentalia; Epitaphs; Tech.; Griphus; Cento; Ecl.* 1); *liber, charta* (*Prof.* 25); and *carmen* (*Prof.* 26). *Libellus* is by far the most common. If, as White has suggested, *libelli* refer primarily to private and informal copies, to be distinguished from the formal published text, then the majority of Ausonius' poems which have come down to us do not necessarily represent a "final" version.³⁴ That this is feasible can be gathered from a brief examination of Ausonius' most famous poem, the *Moselle*.³⁵

As it stands, the *Moselle* lacks a personal dedication. Such a dedication, as far as I can see, was never composed, since the poem was first recited orally at the court in Trier. We have, however, a letter written by a contemporary which attests to the poem's fame and wide circulation (Symmachus, *Ep.* 1. 14). The appearance of this letter in the corpus of Ausonius' work raises a question concerning the circumstances in which it became attached to the *Moselle*. We may assume that either Ausonius arbitrarily added it at some point, even though the *Moselle* was not dedicated to Symmachus, or, more likely, it was added by a later editor who recognised the literary-historical connection, in itself rather plainly stated in the letter. In this letter, the Italian senator and litterateur Symmachus complains about Ausonius' failure to send him a personal copy of the *Moselle*. He is particularly chagrined since the *Moselle* had apparently reached many other hands in Italy before he was able to read it. Most significantly, Symmachus praises two parts of the poem: the famed fish-catalogue, presently occupying 66 lines (85–150), and, more surprisingly, a section on the source of the Moselle, which seems to be altogether missing from the version that has come down to us.³⁶ One must conclude, then, that between the time of its first oral presentation at the court at about A.D. 368 and the poem's "publication," the *Moselle* had been revised. A gap of about ten years can be postulated between the two events, the first taking place during the early campaigns of Valentinian I against the Alamanni, and

³⁴ White (above, note 1) 44–45.

³⁵ The following is based on H. Sivan, "Redating Ausonius' *Moselle*," *AJP* 111 (1990) 383–94, with some modifications.

³⁶ Symmachus 1. 14. 3–4, esp. *nequaquam tibi crederem de Mosellae ortu ac meatu multa narranti*. The phrase is difficult. The most recent commentator on Symmachus conceded a single line (470–71) on the topic of *ortus ac meatus* (Callu [Budé] 78 n. 3). On the other hand, these words could be taken to belong naturally together, and as such either would apply to virtually the entire poem.

the latter, around 378, when Ausonius' political eminence at the court ensured instant popularity for his work. The question remains whether one is here dealing with two editions or with a lacuna in the text. At present, I have no answer.

Although lacking a personal dedication, the *Moselle* is prefaced by a brief description of the physical and poetic journey which led to its composition (1–22). The reader is thus informed of the source of inspiration before the praises of the river commence. More significantly the *Moselle* concludes with a lengthy epilogue (438–83) which is divided into an autobiographical component (438–68) and a section consisting of a poetic farewell (469–83). The latter connects with the preface to form a ring-composition that frames the whole piece. These sections follow well-known paths and act as an exposition of the subject, its importance and its raison d'être. Within this tightly constructed progression the rather lengthy autobiography seems somewhat misplaced. It holds two further promises, one of future success for the poet himself, the other of future poems. The former was possibly made on the eve of his consulship, the latter never fulfilled.³⁷ Both were composed for the formal publication and circulation of the *Moselle*.

Ausonius' most personal poems, the *Parentalia* and the *Professores*, have been transmitted without a specific personal dedication. They have, however, formal prefaces (and epilogues) which serve a variety of functions. The *Parentalia*, a collection of brief poems commemorating dead relatives, is preceded by two prefaces, one in prose and one in verse, each explaining the nature of the poems. Both were obviously intended for the general reader who, so Ausonius piously hoped, would be spared the sorrow which had motivated the *Parentalia*. The prose preface warns the reader of the solemn and sober tone of the work, indicates its contents and explains the somewhat unusual title of the collection.³⁸ In the verse preface, although the title could not be scanned in dactylic verse, Ausonius expands on the meaning of the act of commemoration, and prepares the reader for the scale of the poetic undertaking which embraces near as well as remote kin.

In spite of some repetition, the two prefaces complement each other. It remains to clarify whether they were written on separate occasions or conceived of as an entity. The thirty poems of the *Parentalia*, each devoted to one or two relatives, cover a period of over forty years.³⁹ Even if

³⁷ Upon reflection, I wonder if the correct reading of vs. 450 (*Augustus, pater et nati*, Sch.; Peiper) is not that of the ms. (*pater et natus*), referring not to Valentinian I and Gratian (plus/minus Valentinian II), but to Gratian and a hypothetical son, the much longed-for dynastic heir. Comp. Claudian envisaging the pregnancy of Maria, *Epithalamium* 340–41 and *Cons. Stil.* 2. 236 f., 341 f.

³⁸ Comp. the *Epicedion's* prose preface, surprisingly, in view of the long tradition of Latin epicedia.

³⁹ Very few events in the *Parentalia* can be dated. One is the death of Ausonius' maternal uncle in 337; Sivan, "A Forerunner of Ausonius: Notes on Aemilius Magnus

Ausonius kept family records, the composition made little sense as a leisurely exercise well over fifty years after the death of some of the persons included. More logically, it must be viewed in conjunction with his career. I would propose at least two stages of assembling and "publishing" the *Parentalia*: one, upon that momentous turning point with Ausonius' departure from Bordeaux to Trier in 366/7, the other, as part of his consular propaganda.⁴⁰ Already in his *Gratiarum actio* for his consulship in 379 Ausonius briefly refers to his family and his city, topics which he duly enlarges upon in the *Parentalia* and the *Professores*.⁴¹

Similarly, a traditional type of *praefatio* in verse heads the *Professores*, a collection of poems commemorating dead colleagues at the schools of Bordeaux. It is addressed to the dead subjects of the poems, but is meant to explain the rationale which dictated the selection of some teachers and the exclusion of others.⁴² Like the verse preface to the *Parentalia*, this one also ends with the poet's pious hope that one day he would also be commemorated by a colleague. In addition, the poem ends with two concluding verse portions, one (*Coronis*), addressed to the general reader, the other (*Poeta*), a farewell to those commemorated.⁴³ In the *Coronis* Ausonius recapitulates the main points of what precedes while justifying possible stylistic faults on the grounds of sentiment. The *Poeta* (no. 26, Peiper), is cast as a personal farewell from a kindred spirit soon to join those whom he had so piously commemorated. Both epilogues connect thematically with the preface; the *Coronis* is also composed in the same metre. A period of at least fifty years, from the 310s to the 360s, is covered by the careers recorded in the *Professores*.⁴⁴ Its initial presentation, I would

Arboreus, Ausonius' Uncle," *Ancient History Bulletin* 2.6 (1988) 145–49. Another is the death of Ausonius' father in 377/8. The subject of *Parentalia* 32, Pomponia Urbica, has been identified as a supporter of Priscillian and a victim of mob agitation in Bordeaux in 385; R. H. P. Green, "Prosopographical Notes on the Family and Friends of Ausonius," *BICS* 25 (1978) 22, on the basis of Prosper, *Chron. s.a.* This is attractive but hypothetical. Nothing in Ausonius' words (discretion allowed) about her death implies either violent or untimely death, least of all a connection with an heretic. The one secure last date is Ausonius' own consulship in 379 (6. 32).

⁴⁰ J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court* (Oxford 1975) 51 f. for career sequence.

⁴¹ *Gratiarum actio* 8. 36: *non possum fidei causa ostendere imagines maiorum meorum ... non deductum ab heroibus genus vel adeo deorum stemma replicare ... sed ... dicere ... patriam non obscuram, familiam non paenitentiam.*

⁴² *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, praef. 1–3: *vos etiam, quos nulla mihi cognatio iunxit, sed fama et carae religio partiae et studium in libris et sedula cura docenti* (not strictly adhered to in the poem itself).

⁴³ R. P. H. Green, "The Text of Ausonius: Fifty Emendations and Twelve," *Rh. Mus.* 125 (1982) 350, regards the *Poeta* as the second half of the *Coronis*, and the whole as a bipartite address to the reader and to the dead.

⁴⁴ A. D. Booth, "The Academic Career of Ausonius," *Phoenix* 36 (1982) 329–43, esp. 339, 341, extending in one case to the 370s; R. P. H. Green, "Still Waters Run Deep: A New Study of the *Professores of Bordeaux*," *CQ* 35 (1985) 491–506; R. A. Kaster,

suggest, belongs to the end of Ausonius' teaching career at Bordeaux and serves the dual purpose of paying homage to his city and colleagues as well as commemorating his own departure for greener pastures. It was then appropriately concluded with the *Coronis*. Years later, perhaps during his retirement in Aquitania, when the prospect of his own death was not far off, Ausonius updated and possibly revised the poem.⁴⁵ At that point, the *Poeta*, strongly reminiscent of contemporary funerary epitaphs, was added.⁴⁶

Lack of specific dedicatory preambles deprived the poet of an opportunity to throw around famous names and to indulge in self-glorification. These particular functions were discharged, in the case of the *Moselle*, through an epilogue and the addition of Symmachus' letter. The *Parentalia* and the *Professores* in themselves served as self-advertisement. That these personal poems were never dedicated, or at least transmitted without a specific dedication, is hardly surprising in view of their nature. They would have been inappropriate subjects of dedication unless addressed to a close family member.⁴⁷ Other aspects of a dedication, such as an apology about the style and an explanation of the poem's topic and circumstances were incorporated in the prefaces proper or the epilogues. In Ausonius' hands, then, the prefaces *per se* and the prefatory dedication became indistinguishable, each appended as it suited the poet's fancy rather than the dictates of the text.

Poems With Specific Dedications

To comply with Symmachus' desire to receive a work specially dedicated to him, Ausonius sent him the *Griphus*, a short poem on the number three, composed long before Symmachus' request and prefaced, upon dispatch, by a long prose letter. The dedication is important, as it throws light on the question of the circulation of "official" and unofficial copies. Ausonius

Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity (Berkeley 1988) 459, for grammarians only.

⁴⁵ *Prof.* 6. 35-39 provides, rather obliquely, the last datable reference, which mentions the execution of Delphidius' wife, a supporter of Priscillian, in 385: Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2. 48; *Dial.* 3. 11.

⁴⁶ R. A. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana 1942; repr. 1962); G. Sanders, "Les chrétiens face à l'épigraphie funéraire latine," in *Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien* (VI Cong. Inter. d'Études Classiques, Madrid 1974), ed. D. M. Pippidi (Bucarest-Paris 1976) 283-99.

⁴⁷ By comparison, one may observe the *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, a catalogue of well-known cities, likewise transmitted without a dedication. There are indications that the *Ordo* had been originally conceived as a work rather limited in scope and only expanded later on. In one manuscript (T) only eleven cities are included, while two others (VP) include a much fuller list which all modern editors prefer. Ausonius himself stated that the city of Aquileia had been added as an afterthought (*non erat iste locus, merito tamen aucta recenti* 64). Perhaps he never found an occasion to dedicate such an eclectic work and it has remained, as it now stands, without a dedication or a preface.

explains the genesis of the *Griphus*, a work which he had composed on a festive evening during a military campaign of the emperor Valentinian I in 367/8.⁴⁸ Before the *Griphus* was formally sent with a dedication to Symmachus it had been in wide circulation for some time, although without the author's permission. In the course of this process various hands introduced into the text revisions of which Ausonius apparently disapproved.⁴⁹ The lengthy preface also enabled Ausonius to display his erudition by referring to examples which he deliberately forbore to include in the poem itself. Most significantly, perhaps, a dedication of the *Griphus* type enabled the poet to bridge the gap between the time of composition and the dispatch of the poem.

On occasions of informal circulation some chosen addressees were expected to react with words of encouragement and admiration, as well as with suggestions for revision. Even when a poem had been in public hands for some time, like the *Griphus*, Ausonius still included the classic request which referred to the judgement of his dedicatee.⁵⁰ Whether or not the recipients exercised the authority invested so trustingly in them remains a matter of speculation. Although requests of this sort have generally acquired the force of a cliché, some addressees may have taken them seriously. At any rate, Ausonius' prefatory letter to Symmachus implies that the *Griphus* was finally about to be "formally" launched.

Latinus Drepanius Pacatus, a rhetor from the schools of Bordeaux and the author of the last speech in the collection known as the Latin Panegyrics, is Ausonius' most frequent addressee in the dedicatory prefaces. A collection of poems, the *Eclogues*, had been sent to him with a verse dedication headed by a quotation from Catullus' well-known dedication to Cornelius.⁵¹ This act of *imitatio* placed Ausonius within a long and venerable tradition of dedicatory prefaces, and enabled him at the same time to produce an apology for any defects in the text (*cui dono lepidum novum*

⁴⁸ *Griphus* 1: *in expeditione, quod tempus, ut scis, licentiae militaris est, super mensam meam facta est invitatio . . .*

⁴⁹ See above, pp. 85–86.

⁵⁰ *Griphus* 1: *iste nugator libellus . . . quem tu aut ut Aesculapius redintegrabis ad vitam aut ut Plato iuvante Vulcano liberabis infamia, si pervenire non debet ad famam.*

⁵¹ Schenkl and Peiper differ markedly in their reconstruction of the *Eclogues*. Peiper assembled twenty-six poems under the title of *Eclogarum liber*, of which twenty deal with the calendar (no. VII. 8–23, 25–26 = Schenkl V. 1–18). In addition, there are three "philosophical" poems (Peiper VII. 2–4 = Sch. XXVIII–XXXI), one based on Hesiod (Peiper VII. 5 = Sch. XXXII), one on weights (P. VII. 6 = Sch. XXX), one on the toils of Heracles (P. VII. 24 = Sch. XXXIII) and one on childbirth (P. VII. 7 = Sch. XXXV). What Peiper and Evelyn White regard as the dedicatory poem of the *Eclogues*, P. VII. 1, Schenkl edited as a separate poem, namely a dedication without an attached text, Sch. XXIII. While it is true that the poem to Pacatus does not disclose the nature of the text originally attached to it, I would tend in this case to support Peiper and Evelyn White in regarding all these poems as parts of one collection, as does Pastorino. This is not to exclude the possibility that some poems did circulate at some point separately, as the content list of the lost Veronensis seems to imply (Reeve [above, note 9] 117, nos. 8, 12–14).

libellum? . . . *at nos inlepidum, rudem libellum* 1, 4). In the address to Pacatus, Ausonius asked his trusted friend to "cover up" the poem's shortcomings.⁵² The request for revisions was probably not an idle one or a "polite farce."⁵³ Pacatus was surely in a position to appreciate and improve on the drafts sent to him. Be that as it may, Ausonius did not feel the need to supply the text with a proper preface and the dedication hints at neither the contents nor the form of what was to follow.

Yet the need to include both a proper preface and a dedicatory one did arise with the *Ludus Septem Sapientum*. Pacatus, the dedicatee, is consulted about the issue of "publish or perish," but the request is couched in so many puns that its seriousness is undermined.⁵⁴ Not that Pacatus was unable to offer just such criticism. He had been a colleague and a friend of many years and would have performed the task with discretion and efficiency. No indication of the date of dispatch is given in the dedication, aside from its title which points to a terminus post quem of 389, after Pacatus' proconsulship of Africa. But the poem itself may have been the product of the years of teaching in Bordeaux, and hence composed long before it was sent to Pacatus. Indeed, the *Ludus* has a verse preface of its own which follows the basic guidelines of presenting the subject matter of the text with a brief erudite digression on the ancient theatre. This seems necessary if indeed the *Ludus* had originated as a school material, for the Greek theatre was obviously unfamiliar to students in late Roman Gaul. The dedication to Pacatus, then, forges a link between author and public and between the time of the poem's composition and its first "public" presentation. The preface, on the other hand, fills the gap of information regarding the form and contents of the poem.

All these functions were performed through the composition of a single prose dedication to a poem entitled *Cupido Cruciatu*s. A letter to Proculus Gregorius, a consular candidate in 383, describes the circumstances of the poem's composition, its source of poetic inspiration, and even its genre, an eclogue.⁵⁵ In spite of the usual protestation of modesty (*mihi praeter lemma nihil placet*), Ausonius clearly expected the praises of his addressee (*certus sum, quodcumque meum scieris, amabis: quod magis spero quam ut laudes*). Gregorius may not have possessed the literary qualification necessary for the type of constructive (and flattering) criticism which Ausonius usually sought. Needless to say, after this dedication, the story of

⁵² *Ausonius Drepanio filio*, Sch. XXIII. 17-18: *ignoscenda teget, probata tradet./ post hunc iudicium timete nulla*, noting the playful tone throughout.

⁵³ Pace Evelyn White, Loeb I xxxv.

⁵⁴ 1-4: *ignoscenda istaec an cognoscenda rearis / adtento, Drepani, perlege iudicio./ aequanimus fiam te iudice, sive legenda./ sive tegenda putes carmina, quae dedimus; 15: correctae magis quam condemnata vocabo; 18: optabo, ut placeam, si minus, ut lateam.*

⁵⁵ The letter even describes the stages of poetical inspiration and composition: (1) A. sees the picture; (2) A. translates visual impressions into verbal forms; (3) A. sends copies to friends.

the punishment of Cupid starts without further ado. Like the first lines of the *Moselle*, the words of the dedication create an atmosphere in which poet and reader could share in the initial visual experience which had set in motion the process of verbal creativity. In this respect, the dedication and the text complement each other, the one leading into the other.

Specific addressees, as one may surmise, were the recipients of both informal and formal/final copies of Ausonius' poems. One of their functions was to offer criticism with a view to revisions before publication; another was simply to afford the poet an opportunity to preface his works with either an explanation of its genesis or its vicissitudes. Literary patronage, such as that sought by Martial and Statius, was hardly ever an issue, for by the time Ausonius came to circulate his poems, either privately or publicly, his political, social and economic position guaranteed his work a kindly reception. The dedication rather indicates the spread of a literary network in which the sending, dedicating and the exchange of works acted as an instrument of maintaining *amicitia*.

Multiple Dedications

When the *Cento Nuptialis* was sent to Paulus, Ausonius decided to frame it with a lengthy prose dedication at the beginning and a conclusion in which verse and prose sections alternate. This somewhat curious imbalance echoes the work itself in which the pastiche of Virgilian verses is "relieved" by a brief prose interlude preceding the most erotic section of the poem. The *Cento*, as the dedicatory epistle indicates, has an interesting history: It was composed in one day as a response to a challenge by no less a person than the emperor Valentinian I. When the *Cento* was first presented, in the form of an oral recitation, it was suitably headed by a verse dedication to the emperor and his son Gratian. When it was finally dedicated to a fellow poet (Paulus), the *Cento* was preceded by a long exposition on the meaning and the history of the genre, both of which seem quite superfluous as far as Paulus, himself a poet, was concerned. But there was considerable interest among contemporaries in the *Cento* and its possible adaptations to a variety of purposes.⁵⁶

The lengthy dedication to Paulus enabled its author to explain the circumstances of the poem's initial presentation when it had been dedicated to the two reigning Augusti. This was surely the prime motivation of the long dedication, written years after the events described. The poem itself may have been written as early as 367/8, at a time when the type of flattery in the preface was particularly useful to poet and addressees alike. In August 367, after a brief illness, Valentinian I promoted his eight-year old son to

⁵⁶ Proba's *Cento* is the best known example of Christian adaptation of Virgil in the fourth century. In general, F. E. Consolino, "Da Osidio Geta ad Ausonio e Proba: le molte possibilità del centone," *Atene e Roma* 28 (1983) 133-51.

the rank of an Augustus, a constitutional novelty as Ammianus Marcellinus remarked.⁵⁷ In view of the availability of older and much more experienced candidates, and the lack of decisive military victories over the enemies of the empire, the dynasty just established needed all the support it could get. Ausonius' preface to the *Cento* served therefore as propaganda for the Augusti, and as advertisement for a poet who could exercise both talent and discretion. The dedication, composed when circumstances changed, and possibly after the death of Valentinian I in 375 and during the reign of Gratian (375–383), allowed the vain author to name-drop in a "humble" and socially accepted manner, and illustrated his own position and poetic reputation.

By way of apology for trivialising Virgil, Ausonius concluded the *Cento* by citing all the poets who, like himself, mixed the serious with the frivolous. He craved the indulgence of his potential readers by offering Martial's well-known apology of blameless life in spite of blameworthy erotic verses (1. 48). With this ending Ausonius included an autobiographical element which further reinforces the image fostered in the dedication while imbedding in the reader's mind the *jeu d'esprit* in which, after all, the poem had been conceived.

Perhaps the most spectacular example of the use of multiple prefatory pieces is the *Bissula*. The three short poems, and a fragment of a fourth, which at present constitute the whole of the *Bissula*, are prefaced by no less than three dedications, two to the same person (one in prose and one in verse) and one to the general reader. The first is a letter explaining the act of dispatch and offering an apology for stylistic faults, two matters which Ausonius briefly repeats in his verse *praefatio* addressed, like the prose letter, to Paulus. Luckily for Ausonius, the name of his Germanic mistress scans, as does that of her tribe (the Suebi), facts which enabled the poet to introduce her twice, once in each of the dedications. The relatively long prose letter, somewhat out of proportion to the length of the poems enclosed, also introduces Paulus as one initiated into the "mysteries" of Ausonius' poetic sanctuary. Owing to these terms of intimacy Paulus had access to the most private compositions of his "mentor," one of which was now dedicated to him.⁵⁸

If this was not enough to alert potential readers to the nature of the *Bissula*, Ausonius appended a third dedication, *ad lectorem huius libelli*, in which the public is enjoined to read these verses in the spirit in which they had been written, and preferably after a cup or two of some suitable drink. Under the combined influence of alcohol and light words, even the most sober of readers would be happily plunged into a sleep from which the

⁵⁷ Amm. 27. 6. 16.

⁵⁸ *Bissula* 1, Ausonius Paulo: *poematia, quae in alumnam meam luseram, rudia et incohata ad domesticae solacium cantilenaе, cum sine metu et arcana securitate fruerentur, proferri ad lucem caligantia coegisti.*

experience would emerge as a bygone dream. One wonders if this triple dedication had been conceived as a parody on the process of initiation into a *mysterium*, and a series of formal warnings aimed at different levels of *profani*. In the poems themselves, however, there is no trace of parody although it may appear idle to deny that the whole may well have been written tongue in cheek. Be the intent serious or light, the dedications to Paulus reflect the close relationship between author and addressee, particularly in view of the private nature of the verses enclosed. It seems hardly surprising that the *Bissula* and the *Cento*, both the most "erotic" of Ausonius' poems, were eventually dedicated to Paulus. They would have been ill suited to any of the "political" addressees, when the act of dedication was a calculated move to gain prestige rather than a gesture of friendship.

The collection of poems on various school topics known as the *Technopaegnon* presents a complication. It was dedicated at least twice, once to Pacatus (V) and once to Paulinus (Z), a pupil and friend, and later bishop of Nola, both in prose (XXVII. 1 and 2). This last is now followed by a short poem (3) whose verses start and end with a monosyllable, and by another poem (4), variously entitled *versus monosyllabis terminati exordio libero praefatio* (Sch. XXVII. 4) or *praefatio monosyllabarum tantum in fine positarum* (Peiper XII. 4) and composed in both prose and verse.⁵⁹ In fact, this is a second dedication to Pacatus who is once more addressed at the very end of the collection, on a final note of polite apology.⁶⁰

Through the confusion it seems possible to discern several stages of composition and circulation: (a) A poem composed of verses starting and ending with the same syllable (3) was sent with a dedication to a beloved pupil (Paulinus), perhaps when Ausonius was teaching him at Bordeaux, before 366/7.⁶¹ The dedication is a model of its sort, organised along the best guidelines of the classical rhetorical preface, stating the title of the work enclosed, its contents, the difficulties involved in the composition, an apology for imperfections, and an invitation to imitate this type of literary effort: indeed, just what one might expect from a teacher to a student. (b) A dedicatory preface (4), not dissimilar in contents and form, was composed in honor of Pacatus, and preceded a collection of poems ending with a monosyllable. Since, however, Pacatus was a colleague and not a pupil, the act of dispatch was anticipating a similar gesture on the part of the dedicatee. The concluding verses of this dedication serve as a sample of what was to

⁵⁹ Following Schenkl's arrangement (XXVII. 4) rather than Peiper's division of the dedication into two distinct sections, XII. 4 + 5.

⁶⁰ Sch. XXVII. 13 (*Grammaticomastix*) 21-22: *indulge, Pacate, bonus, doctus, facilis vir, I totum opus hoc sparsum, crinis velut Antiphilae. pax* (reading of V: *Pauline Z*). For Evelyn White, Loeb I xl, these are indications of a "deliberate revision."

⁶¹ The phrase *inertis mei inutile opusculum* (*Tech.* 3) does not refer to the years of leisurely retirement in the 380s and early 390s, as is usually assumed. To judge by Ausonius' usual facility of composition, he would have needed no more than one peaceful weekend to put together sixteen verses.

follow. Both dedications, then, conform to school-book rules and precedents, each discharging the functions usually associated with a rhetorical preface. (c) Years later, the poem sent to Paulinus was combined with those sent to Pacatus to form the present *Technopaegnion*, which was headed by a second prefatory dedication to Pacatus. Why this was necessary remains unclear since, like its predecessors, this epistolary preface comments on the nature of the text enclosed and specifies the title of the entire collection, now extended from a single poem to several poems. If the title of this third dedication (*Ausonius Pacato Proconsuli*) is original and contemporary with the time of composition, the *Technopaegnion* could not have been sent to Pacatus before 389, the date of Pacatus' African proconsulship. On the whole, the amount of repetition in all three is remarkable, particularly as each is conceived as a smooth and direct transition into the main body of the work.

Just how flexible and virtually autonomous the vehicle of personal dedication or dedicatory preface has become in late antiquity is borne out by the example of Ausonius. For him, the composition and dispatch of a dedication offered an opportunity to "tell the world" about the author, to vaunt his highly-placed contacts, and to impress the readers with poetic versatility if not with context—so much so that many of the dedications can be read on their own, independently of the text to which they were attached. In this respect, it seems useful, if not essential, to draw a clear distinction between the time of the dedicatory presentation and that of the text's composition. And this is not as self-evident as may at first appear. Editors of Ausonius have traditionally adopted a system of dating which invariably relies on the last datable reference either in the dedications, prefaces, or the texts themselves. Yet, such a method does not take into account all the factors involved in the process of composition, dedication, publication and dissemination.

By way of a brief conclusion, contemporary prefaces by two authors influenced by Ausonius can offer some useful correlations and a point of departure for further study. Prudentius' preface has already been mentioned. Cast as an autobiography, it fails (deliberately) to refer to the author's own name, his home and his family. It does contain, albeit in a vague manner, a list of his "earthly" achievements as well as a reference to his written works, such as the *Cathemerion*. Poetry, in the hands of Prudentius, is regarded not as a tool for displaying one's own status or talent, but as a religious vocation. Nor, obviously, is the preface dedicated to a mortal but to God alone. It is as though Ausonian prefaces were recast as anti-heroic compositions with the author submerging his personality and even individuality in a sea of humility and modesty.

Ausonius' own grandson, perhaps the dedicatee of the *Protrepticon*, Paulinus of Pella, combined in his prose preface elements found in the prefaces of both Ausonius and Prudentius. The *Eucharisticon*, moulded as a confession and profession of faith, is dedicated to the public, or general

reader, and attempts to explain the reasons behind its composition. As Paulinus explains in the preface, the *Eucharisticon* is an autobiography of an essentially unworthy subject, with no claim to fame in any sense of the word. But the true source of inspiration was God's unmistakable presence throughout the vicissitudes of his life and in this alone lies the justification of the act of writing. For, in spite of wasted years, this act has in itself the redeeming virtue of reconciling poetry with piety.

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg