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VIRGILISING ROME IN LATE ANTIQUITY: CLAUDIAN AND SERVIUS

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This paper is concerned with two contemporary late antique receptions of Virgil: one by Claudian, the other by Servius. Claudian was court poet to the emperor Honorius, and Servius is known for his commentary on Virgil. Claudian and Servius lived and worked during the reign of Honorius, a time which witnessed a mix of competing cultures and practices.

The poet Claudian was highly regarded in his own time: 'in 400 or 401, the emperor Honorius, at the request of the senate, had a statue of the poet set up in the forum' (Levy 1971: 260) made of bronze, only the base of which has survived. The surviving base has an inscription mostly in Latin, the final part is an elegiac couplet in Greek, which reads:

> Εἰν ἑνὶ Βιργιλίοιο νόον
> καὶ Μοῦσαν Ὁμηρου
> Κλαυδιανὸν Ῥώμη καὶ
> Βασιλῆς ἔθεσαν
>
> Rome and its rulers have set up Claudian as the mind of Virgil and the Muse of Homer combined in one][1]
> (Lineation as original; CIL VI·1710)

This inscription brings together the political power of the court with the cultural power of Rome. It grants Claudian a special status, authorised by both Rome and the court, as a new national poet, combining the qualities of both Virgil and Homer, national poets of the West and the East. Although we know little about his life, it is generally agreed that Claudian, a native Greek speaker, arrived in Rome from Egypt, probably around 394 CE, (Barr 1981: 7). He wrote poetry in consciously classical Latin for his patron the general Stilicho, the real power behind the young emperor Honorius. Thus, for these poems' initial performances, the Christian court would have been Claudian's immediate audience, as well as the 'senatorial aristocracy of Rome', as Andrew Gillett suggests (in Grig and Kelly 2012: 269). However, Cameron suggests that, after the poet's assumed death, Stilicho collected and published those poems in which he himself featured (Cameron 1970: 252). Contemporary poets such as the Christian Prudentius appear to have been familiar with Claudian's political poems (Hall 1969: 65), and Hall suggests that they were 'widely known in every part of the empire during the fifth century' (Hall 1986: 55). Clearly, Claudian was perceived to be successful in a potentially difficult task: his poetry would have had to appeal to two rather different sets of people, the court of the Christian emperor and his Vandal general, and also, as Dewar suggests, the 'fabulously rich, deeply conservative, and, in many cases, aggressively pagan' senators of Rome (Dewar 1996: xlv). The inscription claims that he had 'the mind of Virgil', and that, at least in Latin, it was his ability to use Virgil's verses which were so highly praised.

While Claudian worked for the court, Maurus Servius Honoratus worked predominately for the cultured elite in Rome. He was a highly influential commentator on Virgil, who worked as a teacher and writer in Rome sometime between 390 and 410. Bruggisser (1999: 90) and Cameron (1966: 37) place the broadest estimate for his life span at 354-430, while Murgia (2003) has argued that the work must have been completed by 410. He is identified as the author of an extended commentary on the works of Virgil (the so-called 'S-text' in Roman type of the text published by Thilo and Hagen in 1881). Servius was, like Claudian, very successful and highly regarded in his own time: probably some forty years later (according to Cameron 1966: 37), Macrobius placed Servius as one of the dinner guests in his *Saturnalia*, among rich and famous men such as Praetextatus and Symmachus. Servius is highly praised at numerous points in the dialogue: at one point, his host Praetextatus calls him 'doctissimus doctor' [most learned teacher] (*Saturnalia*: 6·7·3). He, too, is presented as a pagan, and there is no trace of Christianity in his work either. Servius spent much of his time teaching the young sons of wealthy and powerful Romans of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. His readings of Virgil will have been familiar to his contemporaries, and may be seen to reflect the ways educated Romans

were brought up to read their national poet. Like Claudian, Servius portrays an ancient pagan Roman conservative and stable self-image, through a strong sense of continuous literary heritage. However, Servius wrote a commentary on Virgil within an educational context, whilst Claudian wrote panegyric, in the context of the court.

Both writers worked at a time when Rome was represented as a place where the Roman elite were absorbed in literary pursuits. Woolf argues that the image of Rome was of a 'city of letters'. It was, he suggests, 'a city filled with elite littérateurs perpetually engaged in reading, writing and discussing literary texts to the exclusion of more mundane activities' (Edwards and Woolf 2003: 16). This image was constructed around a large group of Roman senators and noble men, both extremely rich and conservative, who imagined the literary image of Rome as a cultural capital and pagan city. This literary image of Rome served to identify Roman elite, even if they did not live in Rome. Since engagement in literature was an identifying factor of the Roman elite, which was required for public office, literary education was highly sought after. Children studied traditional Roman literature at school, particularly Virgil (McGill 2005: xviii), making his poetry part of a common and received cultural heritage of the educated classes (Rees 2004: 5). The literature taught at school was exclusively classical, and so, as a result, the literary image of Rome was grounded in images of the past, especially, perhaps, for those who did not know the city well first hand. Roger Rees has suggested that the fourth century experienced not so much a revival of Virgilian interest as 'a new energy and variety in the way Virgil was read, understood, and inscribed' (Rees 2004: 6). This interest in Virgil was partially motivated by their reading of Virgil's representation of Rome, especially if they lived in other centres of the empire. Woolf has argued that Rome was 'represented as a cultural capital to the readers of Latin literature'. He suggests that there seems to have been 'a sustained cultural project to give the city of Rome a central place in Latin literature by writing it up as a literary capital' (Edwards and Woolf 2003: 205-6). This literary image of Rome meant not only that education was crucial for being accepted by the Roman elite but also that the empire could be 'governed from wherever the emperor happened to be' (Edwards and Woolf 2003: 16), which was frequently not Rome itself, and covered a wide range of languages and cultures.

Claudian and Servius worked within this literary context, but they wrote in different genres and for different purposes. Claudian was a court poet who could navigate the changing balance of shifting power, coming from outside Rome and spending the greater part of his poetic career outside the city. By contrast, Servius was part of the more stable environment of the wealthy Romans: the senators and Roman aristocracy whose sons he taught.

Claudian's poetry, whether panegyric or invective, addresses the contemporary political situation and the figureheads of politics, always with his patron Stilicho firmly in mind. His portrayal of political figures varies, depending on whether, at that point, they received Stilicho's favour or not. Claudian also reshapes political situations to praise Stilicho: he 'insists on the unity and concord between East and West — even when relations were in fact strained almost to breaking point' (Cameron 1970: 368). Claudian and Servius can thus be seen to exemplify a moment in late antique culture when the past was presented as an idealised world, and was transposed onto the present day to mask the changing upheavals of the contemporary world. Cameron has suggested that it was through the study of traditional Roman literature that late antique Romans 'discovered Rome … Rome of the past' (Cameron 1970: 360). Jacqueline Long has demonstrated that it is Rome's history and past which make it a unique city in Claudian's poetry (Long 2002). Claudian builds up imperial power drawing on Virgil's image of Rome as an ideal city, thus his own model of Rome was informed by his reading of Virgil. Servius also builds up a form of imperial power through Virgil, but he focuses on the stability of Virgil's ideal Rome, suggesting a continuation of the imagined Augustan era.

It is likely that Claudian was commissioned and paid (Dewar 1996: xvii) to write his *Panegyricus de Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti* [*Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of the Emperor Honorius*], in which he presents an ideal city, to celebrate court power. The poem was probably recited in the palace of Augustus with Roman senators as well as members of the imperial court in the audience (Dewar 1996: xlv). MacCormack observes that the 'themes of the *adventus* of 404 are triumph on the one hand, and the relation between emperor and Rome on the other' (MacCormack 1981: 52), though the triumph relates more to Stilicho's achievements, while the official *adventus* is Honorius's own. Honorius had visited Rome once before, aged four, in 389 CE, with his father Theodosius, who had

been emperor of the eastern empire. Claudian does two things with his narrative: he present Honorius to the city, while simultaneously suggesting that Rome is Honorius's city. Honorius became western emperor in 395, and this entry, nearly ten years later, was his first official visit in that role. His previous consulships had been inaugurated in Rome's political rival cities: Milan and Constantinople (Dewar 1996: 63). The poem therefore describes an imperial '*adventus*': the traditional regal '*adventus*' [entry] gave occasions for the rare and significant meeting of the worlds of the imperial court and of the ancient city of Rome. Ewald and Noreña classify the 'major imperial rituals' of Rome as 'the adventus, the triumph and the funeral' (Ewald and Noreña 2010: 40), illustrating the public impact of such rituals. These were also moments which the court poet would be expected to record for the benefit of both the court and state. The Western Emperor had not held court or even resided at Rome for many decades by this time, and so the occasion celebrated the ceremony of an official visit as well as being the traditional statement of ownership and authority. The ceremony of the military triumph had been held many hundreds of times in Roman history, and McCormick states, was 'quite distinct' from an *adventus* in the early empire (McCormick 1986: 16). However, both Beard and MacCormack suggest that in the late antique period it is sometimes conflated with the *adventus* (Beard 2007: 324 and MacCormack 1981: 51), as Versnel comments that 'Honorius in 403 AD combined his accession to the consulate with the last official triumph known to us' (Versnel 1970: 1). Chaniotis, however, asserts that 'the establishment of the principate introduced new ritualised forms of communication between subjects and emperor, for example, the celebration of the *adventus* of the emperor in a city' (Chaniotis in Hekster, Schmidt-Hofner and Witschel 2009: 6). In the light of these statements, Honorius's ceremonial entry into Rome could be classed as an *adventus*, rather than a triumph, because he was not celebrating a military victory, but making a state visit.

Claudian's poem presents an image of court power unquestionably reestablished in Rome. Servius's *Commentary* presents an image of Rome which is also highly idealised, but for the education of the next generation of Rome's aristocracy and senators. To highlight the way in which both writers use Virgil to construct their respective images of Rome, I will focus on how both make use of book 8 of the *Aeneid* to create an image of Rome and the emperor. Book 8 contains two episodes in which Rome is described in detail: the first is when Aeneas visits Evander's settlement on the Tiber, Pallanteum; the second forms the description of Rome's history and Augustus's triumph on Aeneas's shield.

THE ANCIENT CITY: PALLANTEUM

Claudian sets the scene at the start of the poem with a consideration of how this particular consulship of Honorius will be better than others simply because it is inaugurated at *Rome*, rather than elsewhere. The Rome he imagines is a city of the past, of Virgil's legendary past:

> qualis erit terris, quem mons Evandrius offert
> Romanis avibus, quem Thybris inaugurat, annus?
>
> Of what sort of a year will it be for the lands, a year which Evander's hill confers with Roman portents, which the river Tiber inaugurates?
> (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 11-12)

His imagery recalls Virgil's verses at the start of *Aeneid* 8, as he defines Rome not through its current buildings or people, but through its geographical features (a river and hill), which are linked to the ancient Roman practice of augury, telling the future by interpreting the flight of birds. Claudian has chosen not to name one of the seven hills of Rome, or to refer to the Palatine hill by that name: rather, he has specifically chosen to use an earlier name, one which evokes Rome's prehistory. The river Tiber explains to Aeneas where he needs to go:

> Arcades his oris, genus a Pallante profectum,
> qui regem Euandrum comites, qui signa secuti,
> delegere locum et posuere in montibus urbem
> Pallantis proaui de nomine Pallanteum.
>
> On these shores, people descended from Pallas, the Arcadians, companions of King Evander, who followed his standards, chose this

> place and positioned their city on the hills, calling it Pallanteum from the name of their ancestor Pallas.
>
> (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8·51-54)

The *Aeneid* takes place before the foundation of Rome; hence the Tiber describes the city of Pallanteum in terms of its foundation by King Evander. For Claudian, it is auspicious that Honorius is starting his sixth consulship in Rome, despite the fact that the court was not based there. He is perhaps also developing Virgil's focus on naming: Pallenteum is so called from Evander's ancestor Pallas, while Claudian suggests that a year named after Honorius ('tui cognominis', [with your name] *Sixth Consulship,* 13) will be particularly renowned. In addition, by calling the city 'Evander's hill', Claudian adds a sense of history and legitimacy both for the resident Roman aristocracy and the visiting court, reminding both audiences of Virgil's narrative of Rome's development.

Servius takes a historical-mythological approach when commenting on this line of text: he needs to educate his readers by filling in the backstory and explaining who exactly Evander is and where he came from.

> Evander Arcas fuit, nepos Pallantis, regis Arcadiae. … dimissa provincia sua, venit ad Italiam et pulsis Aboriginibus tenuit loca, in quibus nunc Roma est, et modicum oppidum fundavit in monte Palatino.
>
> Evander was an Arcadian, the grandson of Pallas, king of Arcadia. … After he had to abandon his province, he came to Italy where he conquered the natives. He ruled the place where Rome is now, and founded a modest town on the Palatine Hill.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·51)

Servius (imitating Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8·347) does not leave his mythical and historical explanation entirely in the past, however: he tells us that this was in the place 'in quibus nunc Roma est' [where Rome is now]. Servius's comment also provides the link which Claudian creates in referring to the Palatine directly as 'mons Evandrius' [Evander's hill]. While Servius is providing the link between Virgil's text and 'now', Claudian imagines his present Rome back in Aeneas's time through his description.

However, as Claudian's focus shifts to the central part of the city where Honorius and the court were making their entry, he describes the urban and built up nature of contemporary Rome. He envisages the imperial palace in all its glory,

> attollens apicem subiectis regia rostris
> tot circum delubra videt tantisque deorum
> cingitur excubiis!
>
> The palace, lifting its crown above the rostra below, sees around it so many shrines and is surrounded by such great gods on guard!
>
> (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 42-44)

Claudian gives us an image of Rome operating as both the seat of the empire and of culture. Catherine Ware has observed how 'power and cult are indivisible' (2012: 53) in this passage, as the guardian gods are surrounding the palace, and thus become intrinsically part of it. Ware's analysis very consciously places the palace in its physical geographical location, with temples to the gods around it.

Dewar observes that the word 'regia' [palace] could recall Virgil's use of 'regia' to describe 'Evander's hut on the Palatine' (1996: 91). If we compare Claudian's description with Virgil's, there is a considerable contrast in the tone and image:

> ad tecta subibant
> pauperis Evandri, passimque armenta videbant

> Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.
> ut ventum ad sedes, 'haec' inquit 'limina victor
> Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit'.
>
> They came to humble Evander's home, and saw cows everywhere in the Roman forum and mooing in the exclusive Carinae district. As they came to the house, Evander said, 'victorious Hercules bent down to go through this doorway, this palace received him'.
> (Virgil, *Aeneid* 8·359-363)

The palace here is clearly a small dwelling, as Hercules (and subsequently Aeneas, also a tall hero) had to bend down to go in through the door, and not the grand building which Claudian sees lifting itself above the others in the current city of Rome. However, it is also not surrounded by gods guarding it in temples: instead there are cows standing all over the place mooing. There is perhaps some irony in the fact that the temples surrounding the palace in Claudian's description were no longer the places of official state worship, and formal sacrifice had been banned by Theodosius some years earlier in 391 (though the fact that such edicts were continually reissued throughout this period is perhaps an indication that some cult practices were still happening). Evander is also 'pauper' [humble, as well as financially poor], in contrast to Honorius and the court's own considerable wealth.

Servius highlights the mythological background of Virgil's poem. He starts by pointing out that

> PASSIMQVE ARMENTA VIDEBANT quae post mortem Caci passim nullo timore vagabantur.
>
> 'THEY SAW COWS EVERYWHERE' after Cacus's death they wandered everywhere without fear.
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·360)

Once again, Servius's Commentary focuses on a mythological explanation for the presence of the cows, and its relation to the story which Evander has recently told about the monster Cacus. He does not draw our attention to the evident irony of the cows in the middle of a busy city centre. Kaster has noted how Servius 'finds Augustus lurking' (2012, 48) in his comment about the Carinae district, 'nutritus in Carinis' [Augustus grew up in the Carinae] (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·361). Like Claudian, Servius needs to make the ancient image of prehistoric Rome grander and more urbane, drawing out the references to 'modern' Rome, whether Virgil's or their own. But Servius is equally conscious of making clear the links in geography to the Rome he and his readers are familiar with:

> Romanum forum est ubi nunc rostra sunt.
>
> The Roman forum is where the rostra are now.
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·361)

Here Servius draws our attention to the location of the ancient part of the forum and what is in that place in his own time. The mention of the 'rostra' [speakers' platform] links us back to Claudian's observation of the palace's height above the rostra. Claudian is concerned to make the palace more important and significant than the buildings around it, but also part of the built urban scene.

We have seen how Claudian places his contemporary Rome in Evander's prehistoric settlement. However, he also places the emperor himself in Virgil's landscape. He addresses the emperor, and entreats him to recall his earlier visit to the city, when he was four years old, as if it was his real and spiritual home:

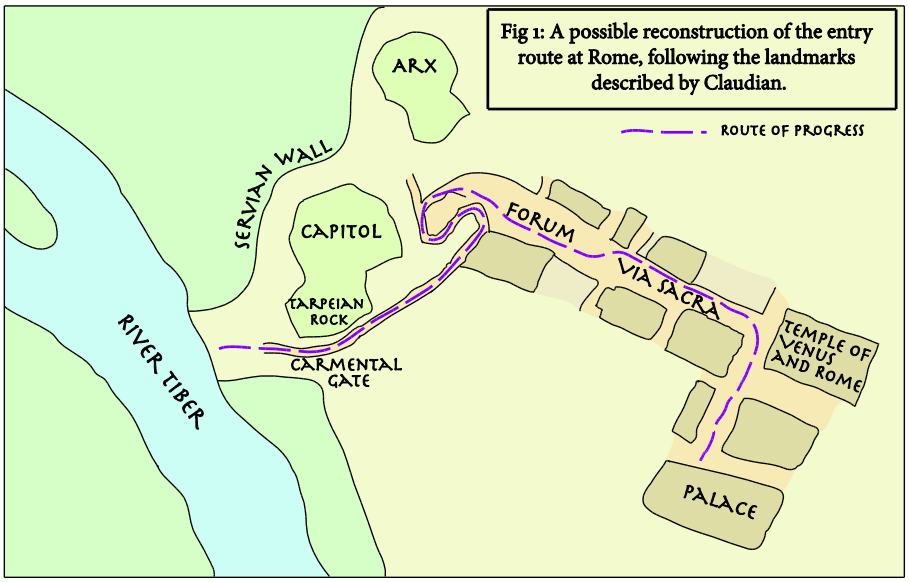
> agnoscisne tuos, princeps venerande, penates?
> haec sunt, quae primis olim miratus in annis
> patre pio monstrante puer.
>
> Do you recognise your 'penates', your home city, honourable ruler?

> These are the 'penates' which you once marvelled at in your earliest years as a boy when your pious father showed you them.
> (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 53-55)

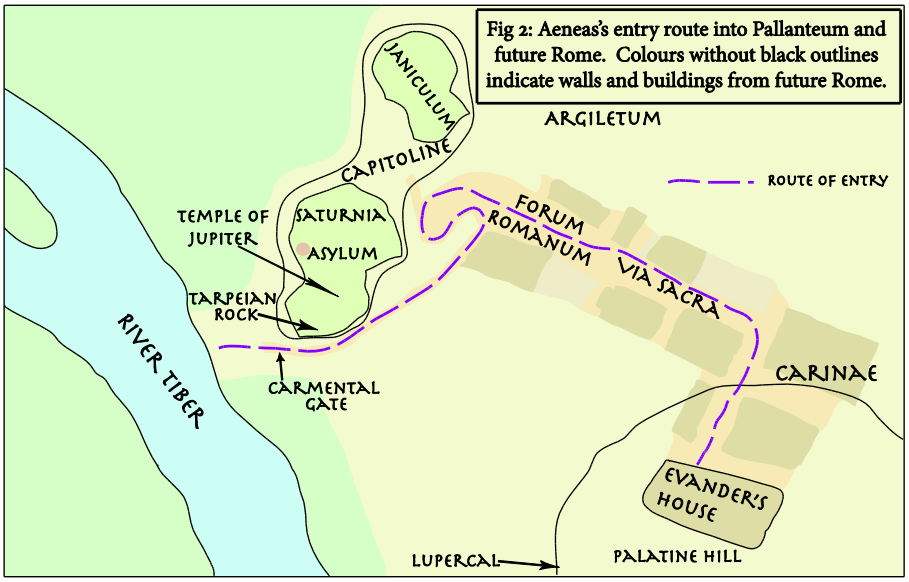
The parallels elicited between Theodosius's entry when Honorius was a child and the current entry were perhaps to try to encourage Honorius to see the city as his own, his true home, rather than just being an occasional visitor. However, this is also something Claudian does through his language. The word 'penates' is a complex one. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* gives several definitions: the gods of the Roman larder, the gods of the state (which Aeneas brought from Troy), a person's home, a dwelling, a family line (OLD 1968: 1321). Claudian uses the word 'penates' here primarily to stand for 'home', perhaps in the sense of the city or place where you really come from. However, it is an odd thing to say, given the fact that Honorius had only ever been to Rome once before (when he was too young to have remembered anything substantial), and that for many years already, Roman emperors had not lived at Rome, but in Constantinople, where they were also buried. Claudian is drawing not just on the literal 'home' of the word, but also on the idea of his inheritance, his family line inherited directly from Aeneas, and perhaps even the image of the gods of the state which Aeneas brought from Troy. This is not so unimaginable for a Christian emperor, seeing as Claudian has just described all the pagan 'gods on guard' outside the palace. Claudian's language here is extremely Virgilian, and he draws on more than one point of the *Aeneid.* The words 'pius' and 'penates' are frequently used in the poem, and Claudian's use of them so close together here can be seen to put us in the context of Virgil already. Claudian still represents the idea of Evander showing Aeneas around his settlement, as Theodosius (through 'monstrante' [showed]) takes on the role of Evander:

> monstrat et aram
> et Carmentalem Romani nomine portam
> quam memorant, nymphae priscum Carmentis honorem,
> uatis fatidicae, cecinit quae prima futuros
> Aeneadas magnos et nobile Pallanteum.
>
> he points out both the altar and the Carmental Gate (as the Romans call it), which they commemorate the ancient honour of the nymph Carmentis, the prophetic poet who first sang of the great descendents of Aeneas and noble Pallanteum.
> (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8·337-341)

Not only is Evander showing Aeneas things which he could not recognise, he is actually pointing out one of the landmarks which any *adventus* would go past. The starting point for an adventus may well have been the Carmental Gate (*OCD*, 1154), from which point the procession would have walked through the Via Sacra [Sacred Way] to the imperial palace. Fig 1 shows a possible reconstruction of the route taken by Honorius, using the descriptions Claudian provides.[2]



This route maps out very similarly to Fig 2, which shows a reconstruction of the journey Aeneas makes through Pallanteum, as Evander takes him from the River Tiber where they met, past the Carmental Gate and the Tarpeian Rock into the Roman Forum and finally to Evander's palace on the Palatine hill. Thus Claudian's description here places Honorius in the role of Aeneas, founding father of the Roman people (and therefore also Honorius's supposed direct ancestor).



Servius focuses on the narrative structure of the epic, Roman history, and then also on the elements of prophecy which are referred to.

> MONSTRAT ET ARAM quam matri fecit extinctae. est autem iuxta portam, quae primo a Carmente Carmentalis dicta est, post Scelerata a Fabiis CCCVI, qui per ipsam in bellum profecti, non sunt reversi. VATIS FATIDICAE bene addidit 'fatidicae': nam vatem et poetam possumus intellegere, unde solum plenum non erat.
>
> HE POINTS OUT BOTH THE ALTAR which he made to his dead mother. It's next to the gate which was first called the Carmental gate by Carmentis, later called the Scelerata by the 306 Fabii who set out to

> war through it and did not return. THE PROPHETIC POET Virgil is right to add 'prophetic': for we can infer prophet and poet, hence by itself the meaning is not complete.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·337)

Servius is firstly concentrating on the mythical aspect of why this altar was created, and its location in Rome. He adds the later historical detail about the Fabii (who left for war against the town of Veii in 477 BCE, according to Livy), which connects Evander's settlement with later Roman history which he expects his students to learn. Finally, he focuses on the word 'vates' which can mean both prophet and poet, to explain why Virgil needs to add the adjective 'fatidicae' [prophetic]. Servius is concerned with the practical nature of understanding the narrative, its mythological and historical background, and understanding how it fits in with early Roman history. It is not just Evander showing Aeneas the town of Pallanteum, and by extension, Virgil showing the reader: Servius also takes his students through Pallanteum and relates it to Rome historically, creating a sense of the importance of the city's geography for the understanding of the state and a Roman citizen.

Claudian's description and language refers closely to another Virgilian episode, this time from the first book of the *Aeneid*. On the shores of north Africa, Aeneas meets his mother Venus, who is in disguise as a Spartan hunting girl. He briefly describes his wanderings, and he explains that 'matre dea monstrante viam, data fata secutus' [I followed the fates I'd been given, with my goddess mother showing me the way] (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1·382). Claudian's description of Honorius, who visited Rome as a boy, 'patre pio monstrante' [when your pious father showed you] (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 58) echoes Aeneas's words clearly. Claudian allocates Theodosius the role of the 'pater pius' [pious father] as opposed to Venus's 'mater dea' [goddess mother]. The substitution of the adjective 'pius' for 'deus' is an interesting one: although it had earlier been customary for emperors to be granted explicit deification after their deaths since the time of Augustus, this did not happen by the time of Honorius. About 15 years earlier, Pacatus Drepanius appears to have revived the expression in his panegyric for Theodosius in the context of court ceremony: 'deum dedit Hispania quem vidimus' [Spain has given us the god we see] (*Panegyrici Latini* II(12), 4·5). However, Claudian does not follow Pacatus's example: instead, he has chosen the adjective 'pius' which links Theodosius with Aeneas's special quality. The link also adds an aspect of divine right to Theodosius's tour of Rome for Honorius: if Venus can be described as showing Aeneas the 'right' way in order for him to carry out his fate, then Theodosius, by extension, has shown Honorius the 'right' way to travel through Rome and to observe its special landmarks.

Servius comments at length on this line in the *Aeneid*, as it holds a number of significant meanings for him.

> MATRE DEA MONSTRANTE VIAM hoc loco per transitum tangit historiam, quam per legem artis poeticae aperte non potest ponere. nam Varro in secundo *Divinarum* dicit ex quo de Troia est egressus Aeneas, Veneris eum per diem cotidie stellam vidisse, donec ad agrum Laurentem veniret, in quo eam non vidit ulterius: qua re terras cognovit esse fatales: unde Vergilius hoc loco 'matre dea monstrante viam', item 'nusquam abero' et 'iamque iugis summae surgebat lucifer Idae'. quod autem diximus eum poetica arte prohiberi, ne aperte ponat historiam, certum est. Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quia videtur historiam composuisse, non poema.
>
> WITH MY GODDESS MOTHER SHOWING ME THE WAY in this place he touches on history in passing, which by the rules of poetic art he cannot treat openly. For Varro says in the second book of the *Divine Antiquities* that from the point when Aeneas left Troy, he saw the star of Venus by day every day, until he came to the Laurentine field, at which point he saw it no longer. From this he learnt that it was the ordained land. Hence Virgil says here 'with my goddess mother showing me the way' and likewise, 'I shall never be absent' and

> 'already the daystar was rising over Ida's peak'. But, we have said that it was certain that he was prevented by poetic art, so that he did not treat history openly. For likewise Lucan does not deserve to be in the number of poets, because he seems to have composed history, not poetry.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid* 1·382)

Servius relates his interpretation to Varro's analysis (in a now lost work) in which Venus is rationalised as the day star, Lucifer, and justified through a number of references to the daystar elsewhere in the *Aeneid.* Servius is drawing a distinction between Virgil, whose subject matter was entirely mythical, and the Neronian Lucan, whose *Pharsalia* recounted the story of the civil war in epic format. Lucan's other writings are now lost, but, according to Statius's *Silvae*, Lucan wrote a number of other poems, some of which may well have been panegyrics, possibly in support of his emperor Nero. Servius could here be defining his curriculum: literature which obeys the rules of poetic art and therefore is suitable for teaching, as opposed to poetry which is overtly political, perhaps like Claudian's. Servius's explanation of Venus as the day star watching over Aeneas resembles Claudian's image of Theodosius's soul watching Honorius's actions from up in the sky 'ab aethere' (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 102). Such an image provides a poetic means by which both absent parents can be imagined as looking after their ruling children, and ensuring that their actions on earth are in accord with parental wishes.

AUGUSTUS'S GOLDEN CITY OF TRIUMPH

The latter part of the poem, in which Honorius is triumphantly welcomed into the city following Stilicho's recent military victories, can be read to reflect the Rome of Aeneas's shield. This Rome, in contrast to Evander's Pallanteum, is very urban, rich and powerful. It is perhaps therefore also closer to what Honorius (and indeed Claudian and Servius, if they were present in the audience) saw in the centre of the city on formal state occasions such as Honorius's entry. Catherine Ware (2012: 136-9) has argued that one section near the beginning of Claudian's poem (lines 39-53) structures itself around the shield of Aeneas. Thus she reads the 'regia' [palace] of line 42 in Claudian's account of the palace lifting itself above the rostra as mapping onto the top of Aeneas's shield, where 'Romuleoque recens horrebat regia culmo' [the newly-built palace, bristling with Romulus's thatch] (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8·654).

To return, then, to the centre of Rome. Claudian imagines, or is perhaps describing, how the young emperor is seated on the throne and commands those present.

> hic est ille puer, qui nunc ad rostra Quirites
> evocat et solio fultus genitoris eburno
> gestarum patribus causas ex ordine rerum
> eventusque refert veterumque exempla secutus
> digerit imperii sub iudice facta senatu.
>
> This is that boy who now calls the Roman citizens to the rostra, and, supported by his father's ivory throne, he relates the affairs and outcomes of his actions in order to the senate fathers, and following the examples of the ancients, he arranges the deeds of rule under the judgment of the senate.
>
> (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 587-91)

Here, although Honorius's youth is emphasised by the word 'puer' [boy], we have a picture of an emperor in control and commanding authority. The project *Visualizing Statues in the Late Antique Roman Forum*, which has tried to reconstruct the statuary of late antique Rome in situ, suggests that, at this point in the event, an audience looking at the rostra 'witnessed Honorius in person flanked by one statue depicting the emperor and another representing Stilicho, both of silver plated bronze' (Kalas 2012: 13). Such a rich and metallic sight would have added force to Claudian's imagery, depicting visually what the poet has described in his panegyric.

Earlier, Claudian described the 'subiectis regia rostris' [palace above the rostra below] (42): although the emperor was not in either location at that stage in the poem, the description created a clear hierarchy between the palace and the rostra. Here, although Honorius is not in the palace itself, he is on his 'solio genitoris eburno' [father's ivory throne], placed therefore above the citizens who are in the rostra. Claudian's opening phrase 'hic est ille puer' [this is that boy] (587) recalls Virgil's description of Augustus in the parade of future heroes of Rome in the underworld: 'hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,' [this is the man, this is he who you more often hear promised to you] (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6·791). Here, Honorius is being likened to his (supposed) ancestor, and made into a younger version of Augustus. Claudian uses the word 'Quirites': this word specifically is applied to Roman citizens 'collectively in their peacetime functions' (OLD 1968: 1559), so he creates an image of a peaceful empire, in which the order is stabile and constant. Claudian's image is not realistic, any more than Virgil's image of Augustus (who in the next line on the shield has flames coming out of his head to indicate his divinity). According to Heather, by this point, emperors 'didn't go to Rome very much … because they needed to operate elsewhere … the imperial court — wherever it might be — was the distribution centre for everything that aspirational Romans desired' (Heather 2005: 27), rather than the Roman Senate, which, as Dilke suggests, 'was little more than a rubber stamp and part of the propaganda machine' (Dilke 1969: 7). However, Claudian's audience are not just members of the court: senators would also have been present, and Claudian is careful not to offend those whose city the court is currently in. In his verse Claudian is trying to unite the two very different sides of the audience, to give the impression of a united front.

Servius, on the other hand, breaks down the image presented in these lines to explore how Virgil creates a politically unified picture of the emperor:

> sed quia belli civilis triumphus turpis videtur, laborat poeta ut probet iustum bellum fuisse, dicens Augustum esse 'cum patribus populoque penatibus et magnis dis', contra cum Antonio auxilia peregrina et monstruosa Aegypti numina. et re vera in exercitu Antonii omnes barbari fuerunt.
>
> but because a triumph of a civil war seems disgraceful, the poet strives to prove that the war was just, saying that Augustus was 'with the senators and people, with the penates and great gods', against the foreign auxiliaries and monstrous gods of Egypt with Antony. And in fact in Antony's army they were all barbarians.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·678)

Servius does not read the text as a context of power which might threaten Roman unity. He unpacks Virgil's imagery by showing how Virgil has turned a civil war into a foreign war. Servius explained at the start that one of Virgil's key aims was to praise Augustus, therefore for Servius Virgil cannot show Augustus fighting a civil war and winning a victory over fellow Romans. Servius shows how Virgil needs to present the war as 'iustum' [just], hence he must be supported by the senators, the Roman people, and all the gods. The army in Servius's day was full of so-called 'barbarians': Honorius's key general Stilicho was a Vandal, who enlisted 'large numbers of recently defeated barbarians' (Liebeschuetz 2006: 266). However, Servius tells us that 'in exercitu Antonii omnes barbari fuerunt' [in Antony's army they were all barbarians]. Perhaps this is a moment of historical distance, in which Servius (and his audience) are aware of the differences in the army between Augustus's time and their own. Nonetheless, Servius's comment serves to break down the narrative which constructs a war between the Roman people and emperor against foreign and uncontrollable barbarians. Servius's comment regarding the penates and gods demonstrates his awareness of literary context:

> PENATIBVS ET MAGNIS DIS alii unum volunt esse, alii separant, ut magnos deos accipias Iovem Minervam Mercurium, quos Aeneas de Samothracia sustulit.

> WITH THE PENATES AND THE GREAT GODS some want there to be one,
> others separate them, so you may read the great gods to be Jupiter,
> Minerva and Mercury, which Aeneas brought from Samothrace.
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·679)

Not only does he tell us that other readers disagree over whether this should be one or many, but he relates it back to book 3, where Aeneas explained that he finally left Troy as an exile, 'cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis' [with my companions, and my son, and the penates and the great gods] (Virgil, *Aeneid* 3·12), which is when Servius first defined the 'great gods' for his reader. Servius's comment therefore, can also be seen to link Augustus with Aeneas, as he goes forth with the same sets of gods, though Aeneas's companions and son have become Augustus's senators and Roman citizens, making Augustus a father of Rome as well. It is worth noticing Servius's intense familiarity with Virgil, which allows him to notice such textual echoes: this is the sort of education that wealthy Romans received, and Claudian, even though he came from Egypt, would have been trained to read Virgil in a similar way.

The final image of Augustus on Aeneas's shield is one of Augustus entering the city of Rome in triumph, and celebrating.

> at Caesar, triplici invectus Romana triumpho
> moenia, …
> ipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi,
>
> But Caesar, carried into the walls of Rome in a three-fold triumph, …
> He himself sitting on the snow-white threshold of glittering Apollo,
> (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8·714, 720)

Augustus is seated on the threshold like Honorius on his throne in Claudian's description: both are enthroned in government, as Honorius talks to the senators, and Augustus receives gifts from all over the empire. This image is one which Claudian adapts towards the end of his panegyric, as he relates the final part of Honorius's homecoming.

> hinc te iam patriis Laribus Via nomine vero
> Sacra refert.
>
> From here, the truly named Sacred Way now restores you to your ancestral home.
> (Claudian, *Sixth Consulship*, 603-4)

Claudian presents Honorius as returning to his true home. His use of the word 'Lares' to stand for 'home', and the adjective 'patriis' [ancestral], imply that this is traditional. This word can mean 'the tutelary god of the hearth or home', 'a public deity, protector of the state', and, metaphorically, 'a dwelling, home' (OLD 1968: 1002). Claudian's use of the word combines ideas of state, home and the traditional gods, and highlights the message that the palace in Rome is Honorius's true home because it is the right place for the emperor to be, the place where emperors have lived by tradition for many years.

Dewar (1996: 399) has suggested a ring composition between 'Laribus' here and the description near the start of the poem, where we are told, 'non alium certe decuit rectoribus orbis | esse Larem' [certainly nowhere else was proper to be the home of the world's rulers] (39-40). This links the opening of the journey with its end, and strengthens the meaning of the term 'Lar' in both ends of the text, as it frames the poem. The image Claudian gives us is not one like Augustus coming into Rome in a 'triple triumph': rather it is one of finally returning to the real imperial home. Claudian describes how it is the Sacred Way (which is also the grammatical subject of the sentence) which can return the emperor to his home: this suggests that it is the power of Rome itself as a city to take the emperor back to where he belongs.

Servius provides a historical gloss on Virgil's phrase 'triplice triumpho' [in triple triumph]:

> TRIPLICI TRIVMPHO tres enim Augustus habuit triumphos: nam primo die triumphavit exercitus qui Antonium vicerat, secundo qui Dalmatas vicerat, tertio ipse cum Alexandrino est ingressus triumpho.
>
> IN TRIPLE TRIUMPH for Augustus had three triumphs: for on the first day the army who had beaten Antony triumphed, on the second day the army who had beaten the Dalmatians, on the third day Augustus himself entered with his Alexandrian triumph.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·714)

Servius breaks down the threefold triumph into its three separate events, explaining each with its separate victory. This makes the triumph more recognisable, rather than rhetorical hyperbole. There is no evidence in Virgil's description that these events were on separate days, perhaps because it is depicted in one scene on the shield. However, by telling us that the triumph lasted for three days, Servius is making his readers aware of the grandeur of the celebrations. He also gives us information about the building where Virgil depicts Augustus enthroned:

> CANDENTIS LIMINE PHOEBI in templo de solido marmore effecto, quod adlatum fuerat de portu Lunae, qui est in Liguria.
>
> ON THE THRESHOLD OF GLITTERING APOLLO in a temple made of solid marble, which had been brought in from the port of Luna, which is in Liguria.
>
> (Servius, *Aeneid*, 8·720)

Servius's commentary reflects the scene Claudian described in which Honorius sat enthroned, while he spoke to the senate from the ivory throne. Servius's detail about the type and origin of the marble is possibly an indication of its quality and expense from a late antique perspective. This is the final image Virgil gives us of Augustus on Aeneas's shield, as he is installed in majesty. The last perspective Claudian gives us of Honorius is of one who has finally come home, to a place where he belongs.

CONCLUSION

Servius and Claudian wrote literary texts addressing their own turbulent times. Political power was seen to be connected to Rome though did not reside in Rome. Honorius's court ruled from outside Rome, over a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious practices. The nature of Claudian's language and description suggests that court power desired to be represented within the context of traditional ceremonial style when making a formal entry into the ancient capital, with few, if any, Christian references. Claire Sotinel has observed in a paper given in Cambridge (2011), that a similar picture is reflected in the inscriptions on the sections of the city walls which Honorius rebuilt: they contain no references to Christianity, instead CIL 6, 1189 describes the prefect in charge as 'd(evoto) n(uminibus) m(aiestatibus)q(ue) eorum' [faithful to the divine powers and their sovereignty] (CIL 6, 1189 and Dey 2011: 45). Here imperial power has officially designated itself in the Roman pre-Christian traditional style for the purposes of commemoration and celebration.

Claudian's use of Virgil, therefore, may well have been a way in which the imperial court could see itself as being part of Roman tradition, both literary and historical. Servius's comments can give us an insight into the kind of education which Claudian and members of the imperial court may have experienced, and through which they shaped the emerging culture, religion and politics. It may also explain why Virgil remained such an important part of education and why Servius's commentary was seen to be so highly regarded. While Claudian uses echoes of Virgil's language to help him build up imperial praise to support the imperial court and his patron Stilicho (as was his job), he does so by presenting the power of the court as if it derived from the idealised image of Rome. Servius analyses the mythological and historical circumstances which contextualise Virgil's verse as provenance and inheritance for his students. I have tried to show how Book 8 of the *Aeneid* was used by Servius, to

provide his students with historical provenance, and by Claudian to provide a unified narrative of Rome and imperial power. These two literary constructions of an image of Rome served as part of a wider literary engagement, which allowed Rome to be seen as the centre of the empire, even when that empire was ruled from outside Rome and covered different languages and cultures.

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