

# FULGENTIUS

## THE MYTHOGRAPHER

*Translated from the Latin with Introductions by*

LESLIE GEORGE WHITBREAD



# FULGENTIUS

## THE MYTHOGRAPHER

*Translated from the Latin, with Introductions, by Leslie G. Whitbread*

Throughout the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance, the writings of Fulgentius the mythographer, who lived in the late fifth or early sixth century, were extremely popular, much admired, and widely imitated. His influence on poetry, art, preaching, education, and the modes that were employed to adapt classical myth and literature to the requirements of more-or-less Christian patterns of thought was unquestionably profound.

Translations of the five Latin works ascribed to him have long been needed, simply to make a significant influence available to modern historians of medieval and Renaissance art, literature, and intellectual life. But the language of Fulgentius is appallingly difficult. Composed in the decadent Latin of his time, his writing is full of intricate rhetorical excesses of a particular extravagance and complexity that could only discourage the prospective translator, and that have caused some to describe his work as simply untranslatable.

The substance, too, of Fulgentius's five treatises — on the content of Virgil according to moral philosophy, on classical mythology, on the Thebaid, on obsolete words, and on the ages of man and the world — has been found wanting. Charges have been made that both his purposes and his methods are confused and of dubious merit, and that the learning displayed in the convoluted syntax of his pompous and extravagant prose is merely secondhand when it is not just highly suspect.

It is an indisputable fact, however, that whenever such broad literary themes are under study as the development of allegory,

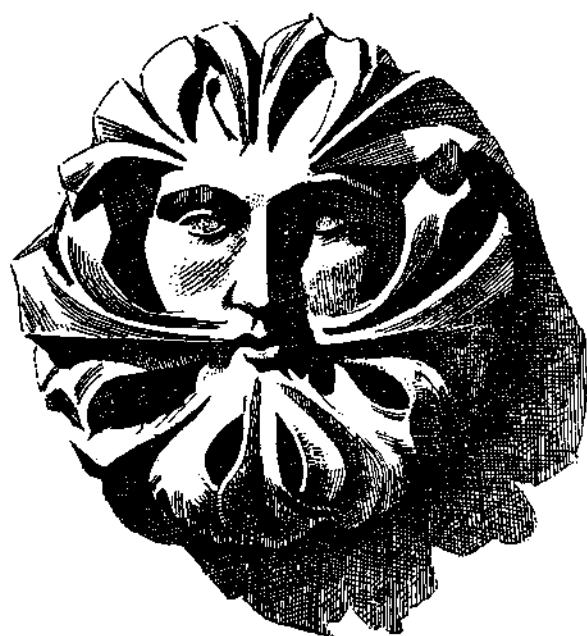
*(Continued on back flap)*







**FULGENTIUS**  
**THE MYTHOGRAPHER**



The Mythologies

The Exposition of the Content of Virgil  
according to Moral Philosophy

The Explanation of Obsolete Words

On the Ages of the World and of Man

On the Thebaid

# FULGENTIUS THE MYTHOGRAPHER

*Translated from the Latin, with Introductions, by*

LESLIE GEORGE WHITBREAD

Ohio State University Press

Copyright © 1971 by the Ohio State University Press  
Library of Congress Catalogue Number: 70-165263  
International Standard Book Number: 0-8142-0162-8  
All rights reserved  
Manufactured in the United States of America

**For Marjorie**





# CONTENTS

Preface	ix
General Introduction	3
THE MYTHOLOGIES	13
Introduction	15
Translation	39
THE EXPOSITION OF THE CONTENT OF VIRGIL	103
Introduction	105
Translation	119
Supplementary Notes	137
THE EXPLANATION OF OBSOLETE WORDS	155
Introduction	157
Translation	161
ON THE AGES OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN	177
Introduction	179
Translation	187
ON THE THEBAID	233
Introduction	235
Translation	239
Indexes	245



## Preface

None of the five Latin works ascribed to Fulgentius the mythographer has, to my knowledge, been previously published in English, or any other modern language. They are, indeed, frequently described as either untranslatable or not worth translating. At worst, the Latin is appalling—decadent, involved, littered with wasteful connectives and rhetorical extravagances, pompous, inflated, pretentious, prolix, infested with Asianic exaggeration. The colors of rhetoric turn psychedelic; enormous sentences confront lucidity like barbed-wire entanglements. And as the style is without grace, so are the purposes and methods muddleheaded and dubious, and the displays of learning secondhand and suspect. Yet, for all the drawbacks, which belong as much to his age as to Fulgentius himself, these are works which through the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance were highly popular, much admired, and widely imitated. It is one of the curiosities of literature how—in the consideration of such broad themes as the development of allegory, the survival of classical mythology, the history of literary criticism, and the medieval interpretations of Virgil—Fulgentius earned his small niche, and not only for his central theses, which (despite their notoriety for modern students) had considerable influence, but also for the peripheral concepts and commonplaces he scatters around them.

The present version has necessarily something of a pioneering character. I have followed the only modern edition, by Rudolf Helm in the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana* (Leipzig, 1898), which provides an adequate text and apparatus but little or nothing in the way of critical or explanatory comment; hence, the fairly copious annotation. I have not aimed at more than a reproduction of Fulgentius's involved style; and I have, therefore, mostly kept to the punctuation adopted by Helm, cumbersome though it may appear in places. In places where ambiguity and obscurity lie thickest, my choice has been to paraphrase rather than perpetuate the darkness; but I am very conscious of having groped my way, and I have sometimes noted the original in the hope that others may find more light.

My first interest in Fulgentius I owe to Professor Robert G. Cook of New-

comb College, Tulane University. The stimulus which led directly to the present version owes most to Dr. O. B. Hardison, Jr., formerly professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and now director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., who generously placed at my disposal both his wide learning and his own unpublished translation of Fulgentius's *Content of Virgil*. Of what follows, the best is his. My more intimate debts the dedication expresses.

L.G.W.

February, 1971

FULGENTIUS  
THE MYTHOGRAPHER





## General Introduction

Of the five works translated here, the first three share strong internal similarities and may be considered to belong securely to one author, named, in most early manuscripts, Fabius Planciades Fulgentius. The remaining two texts are *On the Ages of the World and of Man*, assigned in early copies to a Fabius Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius, and *On the Thebaid*, almost certainly a later work, which in the one copy known is assigned to a *sanctus Fulgentius episcopus*, presumably the sixth-century saint Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe in modern Tunisia, whose family names included Claudius and Gordianus.

The identity of this Bishop Fulgentius with our author has been much debated,<sup>1</sup> but appears to rest on somewhat flimsy evidence. Our author was clearly a Christian, familiar with the Bible and with apologist attitudes, introducing Adam and Antichrist into his account of classical mythology, directing his explanation of Virgil to a *levita* or deacon, and mentioning Tertullian among the authorities for obscure Latin words. But in attempting to decide his period, his cultural and geographical background, and details of his career, we are entirely dependent on the incidental references provided in his own works; these give some light, though its focus is far from full or precisely defined. The general flamboyance and decadence of his Latin, the reasonably accurate knowledge he shows of Greek, and his view of classical authors and cults as already receding into antiquity, would suit what is known in general of the state of education, learning, and religion in colonial North Africa of the fifth and sixth centuries;<sup>2</sup> and these are his most likely bounds of place and time. African interests are apparent in Fulgentius's mention in the prologue to the *Ages* of Libyan as "our own language," that is, the language of himself and the unnamed patron he is addressing. In chapter 10 of the *Ages*, Fulgentius repeats a legend, attached to the birth of Alexander the Great, elsewhere found in Egyptian sources. In the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*, he makes a point of describing the medical school and the "narrow streets" of the city of Alexandria; he goes on, 1.1, to an Egyptian story of the first idol; later, 1.20,

he stresses that "as you certainly know for a fact, the Egyptians worship the barge of Isis"; and further on, 2.12, he alludes to the strong wine of Mer-oë in upper Egypt, a detail repeated in the *Ages*, chapter 10, along with the cataracts of the Nile. Several copies of the *Mythologies* and the *Content of Virgil* are addressed to a priest of Carthage. The circumstantial, if graphic, account of his country estate just recovered from the assaults of barbarian "Galagetici," as set out in the opening of the *Mythologies*, most obviously fits the encroachments of the Vandals into North Africa during the century beginning in 439, though neither the Galagetici nor the king whose return he welcomes are known.<sup>3</sup> One may, of course, add that Fulgentius clearly belongs to an age prior to the overrunning of North Africa by the Mohammedans in the century following the death of the Prophet in 632. Fulgentius's literary affinities are most obviously with the Greek and Latin writers of the later Alexandrian age: in the *Mythologies* and the *Content* he is reminiscent of African authors like Apuleius of Madaura (Mdaursch in Algeria) and of Christian apologists such as Tertullian of Carthage and Lactantius; and for the *Ages* he leans heavily on the *Histories* of Orosius, the Iberian disciple of St. Augustine of Hippo.

Many of these circumstances also fit St. Fulgentius the bishop, the year of whose death is established as 532 or 533.<sup>4</sup> The main drawback to identification is that the bishop emerges from his surviving Latin theological tracts and letters as an orthodox opponent of Arianism and Pelagianism who has little in common, except some resemblance of style and a knowledge of Greek, with the interests of our author; and these are features of the age rather than the individual. That the two shared the same age and culture, even family relationship, seems very possible. If they are one person, it would seem logical to take the mythographical works as more youthful productions, though in that event one would have to dismiss as a conventional pose the apparent reference to great age with which the *Content of Virgil* begins.

Our Fulgentius does not regard himself as a Roman, for in the *Content* 5, he tells Virgil to "keep such things for your Romans." In the *Mythologies* 2.14, he subscribes to the Roman ideals of stability, truth, and honor, as against Greek fiction and fantasy; but in the *Ages* 11, he takes a disparaging view of Roman history and historians. His own age is materialistic, witness the prologues to the *Mythologies* and the *Ages*, but it has emerged from pagan idolatry and superstition; and he is aware of a "new threshold of knowledge"—that is, Christianity—denied to the ancients. His Christian

attitudes, particularly in the *Content* and the *Ages*, seem to be orthodox Roman Catholic and opposed to the backsliding of a *hereticus* neglectful of "Mother Church"; see especially his interpretation of the story of Noah and the two birds in the *Ages*, chapter 2. As well as the Bible—mainly, the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles—he is acquainted with such early Christian historians as Eusebius; and the *Ages* regularly reveals a strong anti-Jewish prejudice.

The earliest surviving Fulgentian manuscripts date from the eighth century, and the latest authentic borrowings from other authors include the *De nuptiis Philologiae* of Martianus Capella in the earlier fifth century and the *Historiae adversum paganos* of Orosius, who died ca. 430. The history of the Roman emperors with which the *Ages* closes goes as far as a Valentinian, for whom the likeliest identification from the vaguely worded context would seem to be Valentinian III, who died in 455. In chapter 13 of the same work there is a significant allusion, taken from Eusebius, to the letters that passed between Jesus and King Abgar of Edessa: these documents appear to have been condemned as spurious by Pope Gelasius I in 495,<sup>5</sup> and it seems unlikely that within the sphere of the Roman church such an uncritical allusion as that of Fulgentius would have been made to them long after that year. If, then, our Fulgentius was not the bishop-saint who died in 532-33, he was at least an approximate contemporary and most likely a fellow countryman. The first evident borrowings from our author are details from the *Mythologies* taken by the anonymous writer usually known as Vatican Mythographer I, who also takes details from Isidore of Seville (died 636) and is therefore usually assigned to the later seventh century.

For further personal details of Fulgentius and his career we are dependent on scattered references in the opening prologue to the *Mythologies* and on a few allusions in the *Content of Virgil*. In the first, Fulgentius refers to earlier poems of a satirical nature (a single line seems to be quoted in *Myth.* 2.13); and in the second, he mentions his work on physiology; but none of this survives. In the first prologue to the *Mythologies*, he also speaks of a wife who would be jealous of sharing him with the Muses, but the jesting nature of the passage leaves it open whether a real wife or a metaphorical one—that is, the highly serious purpose of his work—is intended.<sup>6</sup> To judge by other allusions in this prologue, he had considerable experience of city affairs and commercial undertakings, though he does not mention public office. Regrettably, no later commentator provides the least scrap of additional biography; and for this discursive first prologue to the *Mythologies*,

in particular, it must remain a question how much is genuine autobiography and how much is a fictional contribution to the writer's persona.

In sum, there seems little reason to quarrel with the regular assignment of our Fulgentius to the later fifth or earlier sixth century and to a professional career in North Africa. The evidence of the *Content of Virgil* strongly suggests that the career was that of a *grammaticus* or *rhetor*, a teacher of grammar and letters, whose attitudes and interests serve as a complement to the hostile picture of African culture and education given by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, written ca. 400. Not that the mantle of Augustine descended upon Fulgentius, but that Fulgentius seems to be a representative of that "traditional education," as Augustine calls it (*Conf.* 1.16), at once heavily classical and eager for novelties, from which Augustine suffered and later broke away. At one place (1.13), Augustine rather sardonically says that the typical North African school in which literature was taught had curtains across the door, not as a sign of honor but to conceal the errors being perpetrated within; it is tempting to place Fulgentius's astonishing performances behind the same veil. Here is Augustine on his school days:<sup>7</sup>

And yet human children are pitched into this hellish torment, together with the fees which are paid to have them taught lessons like these [he has just mentioned having been told about Homer and his wicked gods]. Much business is at stake, too, when these matters are publicly debated, because the law decrees that teachers should be paid a salary in addition to the fees paid by their pupils. And the roar of the torrent beating upon its boulders seems to say "This is the school where men are made masters of words. This is where they learn the art of persuasion, so necessary in business and debate."

He also speaks of having endured "ordeals of martyrdom" at the hands of his schoolmasters (1.14), and of the parents who "willingly allow their children to be flogged if they are distracted . . . from the studies which are supposed to fit them to grow rich" (1.10).<sup>8</sup>

The references to hidebound methods, harsh discipline, and mercenary concerns find strong echoes in Fulgentius's *Content of Virgil*. He says to Virgil, when the poet appears before him (para. 3), "I want from you only the slight things that schoolmasters (*grammatici*) expound, for monthly fees, to boyish ears." In the context of educating the young he has the somewhat sinister comparison with gold, improved by hammering (para. 10). In his interpretation of the boxing match between Entellus and Dares (para. 17), he says that these two illustrate the habit, in academies, of learning by disciplining and cudgelling. The death of the nurse Caieta (para. 24) he ex-

plains as the end of the strict supervision of teachers, for she is *coatrix aetatis*, "compeller of youth," the ogress of the primary grades.

Two further passages in Augustine's *Confessions* show the importance of Virgil to the school curriculum.<sup>9</sup>

In the later lessons I was obliged to memorize the wanderings of a hero named Aeneas, while in the meantime I failed to remember my own erratic ways.

and

Let me tell you, my God, how I squandered the brains you gave me on foolish delusions. I was set a task which troubled me greatly, for if I were successful, I might win some praise: if not, I was afraid of disgrace or a beating. I had to recite the speech of Juno [in Virgil's book I], who was pained and angry because she could not prevent Aeneas from sailing to Italy. I had been told that Juno never really spoke the words, but we were compelled to make believe and follow the flight of the poet's fancy by repeating in prose what he had said in verse.

Similarly in Fulgentius: before Virgil is prepared to begin his allegorical explanation, he says (para. 10):

But to make sure I am not explaining my fable to ignorant ears, describe the contents of my first book, and then if it is accurate I will explain it to you.

The persona of Fulgentius obliges with a summary of book one in short simple sentences which run like a simplified school reader, the sort of paraphrasing that, for instance, Tiberius Donatus provided in his Virgil commentary for his son, apparently a schoolboy.

From the separate introductions and notes which follow, some impressions may be gained of Fulgentius's lively professional interest in the processes of learning. He ranges, more widely than deeply or accurately, over the liberal arts, leaving a trail of rote erudition: in the *Mythologies*, scraps of astronomy (1.18; 2.14), music and mathematics (2.9, 10), natural history (1.16; 2.16; 3.8), and the like; in the *Content of Virgil*, dialectic and rhetoric; in the *Explanation of Obsolete Words*, bits of assorted folklore and philology; and everywhere a Joycean fascination with words, puns, etymologies, tags from Homer and Virgil, the jargon of physiology, philosophy, and the occult, colloquialisms, antique forms, stylistic devices, and so on, a fascination as exuberant as it is uncontrolled. It is difficult to write in temperate terms of so intemperate a writer as Fulgentius.

In Helm's text of Fulgentius (1898), the only critical edition to have

appeared, the mythographer is credited with five separate works, the last of them only with strong reservations. They comprise, by the English titles adopted here, the *Mythologies*, the *Content of Virgil*, the *Explanation of Obsolete Words*, *On the Ages of the World and of Man*, and *On the Thebaid*, printed in that order. This sequence is assumed to be the likely chronological one, based on internal considerations, but while there is no overwhelming reason to disagree with it, not every link in the chain is equally firm.

The *Content* is clearly later than the *Mythologies*. As a specific case history of a pagan work, with mythological elements in need of allegorical interpretation, it follows naturally after a comprehensive treatment of pagan myths in similar terms. The appearance of Virgil's shade to assist the interpreter parallels, and occasionally echoes, the appearance of Calliope: Fulgentius is addressed by both as *homunculus*, "little man"—that is, a beginning schoolboy—and like a schoolboy he is told firmly by both to keep his ears open. The *Content* opens with an unexplained allusion to the "three natural lives" as dealt with by Virgil in *Eclogues* 1–3; these have already been explained at length as the "contemplative, active, and voluptuary" in the *Mythologies* 2.1. Calliope assists with the *Mythologies*, but in the *Content* not Calliope alone but all the Muses are invoked for what is called a "greater task." Virgil's *Eclogue* 8 deals with "the interpretative aspect of music," and in *Georgics* 4, "he is to the fullest a musician, with the interpretative associations of the subject stated in the final words of the poem"; for a fuller explanation of what is meant by the uncommon term *apotelesmatice* used in these two contexts, we must go back to the *Mythologies* 3.10, where the Orpheus story is being explained in terms of the aesthetic appeal of music and *apotelesmatice* is twice found. Near the close of the *Content*, though Virgil is nominally the speaker, Fulgentius says, "I explained the fable of three-headed Cerberus in my previous work, as an allegory of brawling and legal contention." Here Fulgentius's own *Mythologies* 1.6, with Cerberus explained as quarrelsome in three ways, "by nature, cause, and accident," is clearly meant.

Thus the priority of the *Mythologies* over the *Content of Virgil* is well established. The priority of the *Content* over the *Ages* has to be based on only one passage. As the *Ages* opens, Fulgentius is presenting his work to his unnamed patron in these words:

Be therefore satisfied with this load, which I have garnered for you from the flowery gardens of the Muses, and like Eurystheus you have taken upon yourself the task of making me sweat like Hercules.



This somewhat gauche attempt at elegance seems to be repeated, or adapted, with the Muses confused for the Hesperides, from the opening of the *Content*:

Be satisfied then, my master, with the very slight posy which I have gathered for you from the flowery gardens of the Hesperides; if you are looking for golden apples, be a Eurystheus to some stronger man who will risk his life like Alcides (Hercules).

The *Explanation of Obsolete Words* may, or may not, have been produced before the *Ages*. One section, 58, makes a brief allusion to Mettenia:

*Abstemius* is a word for cautious, as Rabirius says in his satire: "The strong wine of Mettenia shuns the label of being abstemious."

In the *Ages* 11, the reference is fuller:

I say nothing of Fabius, murderer rather than husband of Metennia, he who slew his wife when she was affected by a little strong wine, and did sacrifice with her blood within his own family because of an opened wine-store.

It is at least possible, though far from conclusive, that the fuller reference of the *Ages* came before the brief one of the *Explanation*.

As for the fifth work, *On the Thebaid*, Helm's doubts of its authenticity in the Fulgentian canon are taken up in its separate introduction below and seem to be well founded. Its only obvious link with the other works is that, once Virgil's *Aeneid* is satisfactorily disposed of as an allegorical poem in the *Content*, the way is open for Virgil's successor, Statius in the *Thebaid*, to receive the same treatment; and in the opening of *On the Thebaid*, such a sequence is in fact hinted at. Statius, "a man of admirable activity, has pre-eminently distinguished himself, for in his composing of the *Thebaid* he is the faithful emulator of Virgil's *Aeneid*." The work is thus later than the *Content*. In fact, as will be seen below, it is likely to be an imitation, by a pseudo-Fulgentius who belongs well after Fulgentius's own day.

## Bibliographical Note

Modern criticism of Fulgentius, his canon and background, begins with M. Zink, *Der Mytholog Fulgentius, Beitrag zur römischen Literaturgeschichte und zur Grammatik des afrikanischen Lateins* (Würzburg, 1867). Other early studies include E. Jungmann's series, *Quaestiones Fulgentianae* (Leipzig, 1870), *Coniectanea Fulgentiana* (1872), and *Die Zeit des Fulgentius* (1877); A. Reifferscheid, *Anecdota Fulgentianum* (Brislava, 1883); R. Helm, "Der Bischof Fulgentius und der Mytho-

graph," *Rheinisches Museum* 54 (1899): 111-34; J. Nestler, *Die Latinität des Fulgentius* (Berlin, 1905-6); see further D. Comparetti, *Virgilio nel Medio Evo*, 1 (Florence, 1872; 2d ed. 1896; 3d ed. revised by G. Pasquali, 1937), German transl. by H. Dütschke (Leipzig, 1875), English transl. by E. F. M. Benecke, *Vergil in the Middle Ages* (London, 1895; 2d ed. 1908; repr., New York, 1929, 1967); *Teuffel's History of Roman Literature*, rev. L. Schwabe, transl. C. C. W. Warr, 5th ed. (London, 1900), 2:518-22; U. Chevalier, *Répertoire des Sources Historiques du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1905), 1: 1626-27.

More recent studies include A. Fuzzi, *Piccole Fonti Danterche: Servio, Fulgentio* (Imola, 1909); O. Friebe, *Fulgentius der Mythograph und Bischof, mit Beiträgen zur Synaxis des Spätlateins*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums (Paderborn, 1911) 5.1-2; E. Buonaiuti, *Il Cristianesimo nell' Africa Romana* (Bari, 1928); M. L. W. Laistner, "Fulgentius in the Ninth Century," *Mélanges M. Hrouchevsky*, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (Kiev, 1928), pp. 445-56, reprinted as "Fulgentius in the Carolingian Age," in Laistner's *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. G. Starr (Ithaca, 1957; repr. New York, 1966), pp. 202-15; P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres Grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris, 1943), 2d ed. (1948), transl. H. E. Wedeck, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); P. Langlois, "Les Oeuvres de Fulgence le Mythographe et le Problème des deux Fulgences," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* (Münster, 1964), 7:94-105; N. Tadić, "Une Étymologie Fulgentienne: celle d'Antée," *Latomus* 28 (1969): 385-90.

Shorter accounts include: W. Ramsay, in W. Smith, ed., *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (London, 1846; repr., 1868), 2:187; A. Ebert, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters im Abendlande*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1889), 1:476-82; F. Skutsch, in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Vol. 13 (Stuttgart, 1910; repr., 1912), 7:215-27; W. Kroll, F. Skutsch, W. S. Teuffel's *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 6th ed. (Berlin, 1913), 3: 483-85; M. Schanz, C. Hosius, G. Krüger, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 4.2, *Handbuch der klassischen Altertums-Wissenschaft*, (Munich, 1920; 4th ed., 1935; repr., 1959), 8:196-205; A. Souter, in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949), p. 372; G. B. A. Fletcher, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed. revised (Chicago, 1965), 9:995.

For the numerous debts to Fulgentius in later medieval writers, see the indexes, s.n. Fulgentius, in M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 1-3, *Handbuch der klassischen Altertums-Wissenschaft*, 9.2.1-3 (Munich, 1911-31); and for later works falsely attributed to Fulgentius, *Teuffel's History* (as above), 5th ed., 2:520; H. Liebeschütz, *Fulgentius metaforalis, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der antiken Mythologie*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg (Berlin, 1926), 4:115-16; B. Smalley, *English Priests and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 230-31; and especially P. Lehmann, *Pseudo-antike Literatur des Mittelalters*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg (Leipzig, 1927; repr., Darmstadt, 1964), 13:20-23, 100.

Fulgentian studies are recorded in the annual *L'Année Philologique*, *Bibliographie Critique et Analytique de l'Antiquité Gréco-Latine* (Paris, 1924-).

1. Abbreviated reference is made here and in subsequent notes to authors and titles listed more fully in the bibliographical note appended to this introduction. Among modern critics, Helm (1899), Friebe (1911), Courcelle (1948-69), and Langlois (1964) favor the identification. P. de Labriolle (transl. H. Wilson, *History*

and *Literature of Christianity* [London, 1924; repr., New York, 1968], p. 496) calls the supporting arguments "specious"; Laistner (1928-57) dismisses the identification as "unlikely"; and G. Pennisi (*Fulgenzio e la 'Expositio sermonum antiquorum'* [Florence, 1963], pp.11-61, especially pp.11-15) preferring to place the mythographer in the fifth century, argues strongly against it.

2. See such comprehensive studies as Buonaiuti (1928); H. I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1949); M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (Ithaca, 1951); B. H. Warmington, *The North African Provinces from Diocletian to the Vandal Conquest* (Cambridge, 1954); C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955); G. C. Picard, *La Civilisation de l'Afrique Romaine* (Paris, 1959).

3. The restoration of Huneric to the Vandalic kingdom in 528 was an early guess of critics; but it lacks proof, and other candidates are available. The pro-Arian persecution of Catholics by an earlier Huneric (died 484) was eventually followed by the rule of King Thrasamund (496-523), which was comparatively moderate but marked by the exile of certain African bishops and priests, and was relieved by the more liberal reign of Hilderic. Under both these kings the Moorish factions gave the sort of militant opposition which may be implied by Fulgentius when he says a little later on: "The footprints of the soldiers, as they call them, still mark our walled paths" — with *mauricator* for the usual *muricator* and a possible punning allusion to the Mauri or Moors. The reading *Galagetici* is puzzling; for suggested emendations, see Helm's edition, p.4; also F. Skutsch in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, 13 (1910): 217; Pennisi, as above (1963), pp.28-30. As a further possibility, something like *Galg(a)etuli* might be read, a made-up name having reference to both Gaetulia, the part of North Africa bordering on Mauretania and Numidia, and the Galicia in Spain where some of the (Gothic) Vandals had settled before they penetrated to Africa in 429. A convenient survey of the Vandal rule in Africa, based on Victor of Vita and Procopius, is provided by M. Deanesly, *A History of Early Medieval Europe* (New York, 1956), pp.75-92.

4. The writings of St. Fulgentius are printed in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* 65 (from the early edition of L. Mangeant, Paris, 1684), and in J. Fraipont's *Sancii Fulgentii episcopi Ruspensis opera*, Corpus Christianorum, 91 (Turnhout, 1968). The contemporary life by his deacon Ferrandus is available in an edition and French translation by G. G. Lapeyre (Paris, 1932), and the same author has a full study of his career, *Saint Fulgence de Ruspe* (Paris, 1929).

5. The authenticity of the Gelasian decretal, *De recipiendis et non recipiendis libris*, is disputed; see P. de Labriolle, as above (1924), p.443.

6. If a flesh and blood wife is meant, one may note that in the period in question marriage was considered a matter of conscience and would not have constituted a bar to a subsequent priestly vocation; see H. C. Lea, *The History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, 1867; repr., New York, 1957), pp.52-53. In *Mythologies* 2.1, Fulgentius says that bishops, priests, and monks have replaced philosophers in the noblest kind of life, the contemplative; but, aside from this oblique hint, there seems to be no specific evidence for his having been a priest or monk. If he had been either one when he wrote the *Mythologies*, he would hardly have owned a country estate or been involved in commerce.

7. 1.16, transl. R. S. Pine-Coffin, *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, Penguin Classics, L.114 (Baltimore, 1961), pp.36-37.

8. Pine-Coffin, p.31.

9. 1.13, 17, transl. Pine-Coffin, pp.33, 37.



*THE MYTHOLOGIES*





## Introduction

Fulgentius's chief work is the series of *Mythologies* (*Mythologiae*), in three books, each with a prologue; the first is lengthy and autobiographical, the other two, short and merely introductory. Then there are, respectively, 22, 16, and 12 chapters, each summarizing a classical legend and imposing on it an allegorical interpretation, mostly in terms of ethics and turning on etymologies of the names of the principal characters involved. The surviving manuscripts variously introduce the work as "Three Books of Mythologies," whence the usual modern title, as "Fulgentius on Fables explained from moral considerations (*de fabulis moraliter expositis*)," or as "Fifty Fables explained according to moral philosophy"—adequate titles even though they probably postdate Fulgentius. A few copies add that the work was written "for Catus priest of Carthage"; one substitutes "Cantia priest of Carthage," but Catus or Cantia has not been identified. Once fifty legends have been dealt with<sup>1</sup> on a strictly selective basis and without much sign of schematization, the work ends abruptly without benefit of an epilogue.

The opening prologue is a highly personal, whimsical, digressive, and distended affair, which only gradually achieves its introductory function, a process not helped by the prolixity of the language and the obscurity of the allusions. A summary of what Fulgentius seems to be saying may assist. He begins with apologies to his master for taking up an unpractical and old-fashioned theme in a severely commercial age: at any rate it will not exploit erotic elements, but keep to the philosophical method of Cicero. The writer has been separated from his master through retirement to the country, which he hoped would give him peace and quiet for the task. But even there troubles dogged him: business affairs and tax demands pursued him, and occupation of the property by enemy troops was only just ended. As he walks the neglected and overgrown fields of his farm he turns to rest under a tree, and the birds inspire him to invoke the Muses in verse. They appear before him in a kind of daylight vision; and Calliope in particular encourages him, telling him of her past experiences, first in Athens, then in Rome, now cut off by war, finally in Alexandria, where less serious pursuits than epic have

engaged her, horrified though she was at the bloodthirsty activities of the medical school of Galen. The two reach his home, where the friendly Calliope prepares to stay. Fulgentius is obliged a second time to disclaim any intention of writing erotically: his aim is to strip the Greek tales of their fiction and seek allegorical significances, and he hints at a Christian motive. The Muse offers him the help of Philosophy and Urania, heavenly inspiration, also Satire, but he rejects the latter as likely to cause trouble with his wife in the home. The onset of night inspires some inflated hexameters, at which Calliope indignantly bursts in upon him, tall and gloriously adorned, reminding him of his serious purpose and urging him to heed her serious philosophical explanations. So he proceeds to a preliminary account, an Egyptian story of the first idol, typifying the superstition and credulity which have led men to reverence hollow tales and forms.

The way is now open for the Greek myths, and these follow, retold and interpreted succinctly and selectively in a loosely planned order, mostly using Roman names for the personalities involved. Book one includes the children of "Pollus," that is Uranus, the four major Olympians who represent the elements, ending with Pluto as earth; then the associates of Pluto, that is Cerberus, the Furies, Fates, Harpies, Proserpine, and Ceres; then Apollo and his attributes, horses, the crow, the laurel, the Muses, Phaethon; then Mercury and his attributes; finally a miscellaneous set, dealing with Danaë, Ganymede, Perseus, and Alcestis. Book two covers successively the three goddesses judged by Paris, various stories involving Hercules, Venus, and Ulysses, then again a miscellany, this time Midas, Minerva, Dionysus, Leda, Ixion, Tantalus, and Endymion. Book three collects a number of tales involving pairs of characters, namely Bellerophon and Pegasus, Perdix and Daedalus, Actaeon and Diana, Hero and Leander, Attis and Berecynthia, Cupid and Psyche, Peleus and Thetis, Myrrha and Adonis, Apollo and Marsyas, Orpheus and Eurydice, Phineus and the Harpies, and Alpheus and Arethusa. There is no attempt, in the short apologetic prologues to books two and three, or at the close of book three, to revive or conclude the elaborate framework situation of the opening prologue. Calliope is treated as impersonally as the rest when she appears among the Muses in 1.15, and she is not mentioned in connection with her son Orpheus when he is dealt with in 3.10; it is natural for his age that Fulgentius seems quite unaware of the irony involved in having Calliope, a creature of myth, guide him in explaining myth away. In fact, as in his *Content of Virgil* and *Ages of the World*, the more imaginative aspect of the work is soon allowed to fade.

The little that Fulgentius does say in the opening prologue about his chosen subject and his attitude toward it is reasonably consistent with his methods when he comes down to cases. The myths of antiquity are a safe subject because they are too remote to be questioned or censored by the prevailing spirit of materialism and arbitrary rule, but the erotic approach of Anacreon and Ovid, or that of satire and comedy, is to be firmly avoided. He writes:

What I wish to do is to expose alterations away from the truth, not obscure what is clear by altering it myself. . . . I look for the true effects of things, whereby, once the fictional invention of lying Greeks has been disposed of, I may infer what allegorical significance one should understand in such matters.

He is thankful to belong to a later age which has at least emerged from paganism and can be objective and philosophical about its legends and superstitions. Each fable is summarized, that is, retold shortly with just those details and names felt capable of allegorical interpretation, the summary being at times so condensed or selective that it would mean little to anyone without prior knowledge (the story of Orpheus [3.10] is, for instance, scarcely told at all). Sometimes a preliminary, generalized remark on a point of morality to be brought out in the allegory is prefixed to the fable, an aphorism rather in the style of the openings of Bacon's *Essays*, though less pointed or effectual. This is done, for instance, with the stories of Alcestis (1.22) and the judgment of Paris (2.1), the latter being elaborate enough to constitute a miniature moral essay in itself. The mood is detached and rationalistic: what could one expect of the Greeks except such fantasies which have no value in themselves, but are of value only when they hide universal truths? So the Olympians of book one are the elemental forces: Jove, fire; Juno, air; Neptune, water; and Pluto, earth. In the rest, the cycles of growth and decay, greed and lust, figure prominently: the Furies are the stages of a quarrel; the Fates, those of man's life; the Harpies, those of theft; the Muses, both the organs of speech and the steps to be taken in the acquiring of knowledge; the Bacchae, the progress of intoxication; and so on. The rejection of superstition does not prevent the occasional inclusion of scraps of folklore and antiquarian learning. The interpretations tend to vary with the occasion: Juno is first air (1.3), but later the symbol of the active life (2.1); Apollo is loss by heat in 1.12, but wisdom in 1.22; Erichthonius in 2.11 and Attis in 3.5 are each given two variant explanations or etymologies, while Antaeus in 2.4 and Anteia in 3.1 have to share the same one. And although

the explanations are set out categorically, the prologue to book two allows room for alternative theories, for Fulgentius there says to his patron, "You at least have from my efforts an arena in which you can exercise your own mental talents."

As well as the names and deeds of the mythological figures, their physical features and conventional trappings frequently come in for interpretation. Fulgentius constantly alludes to the traditional visual aspect as encountered in classical art and sculpture, emblems, and other material attributes such as Saturn's scythe; Neptune's trident; Pluto's scepter and watchdog; Ceres' torch; Apollo's chariot, crow, and laurel; Minerva's helmet, shield, breastplate, and owl; Venus rising naked from the waves; and so on. Here, too, a prior knowledge of mythological conventions is assumed. Though the allegory is normally a moralizing one, the categories of natural explanation and demythologizing or euhemeristic rationalism are not neglected: thus Mercury as a planet is dealt with in astronomical terms (1.18); Ganymede carried off by Jove's eagle is a prisoner of war, with the eagle as the enemy's battle standard (1.20); and the Centaurs originated as a cavalry troop (2.14). When no convenient etymology suggests itself, some more famous names are denied this method of explanation: Agave (2.12), Tantalus (2.15), and Endymion (2.16), in addition to Jove, Neptune, and Minerva, are left undissected. Some parade of learning is attempted, but it is mostly traditional rote, and as in other works of Fulgentius the details given of authorities frequently fall under suspicion of being secondhand or invented. Errors occur: Pandora is used for Pandrosos in the story of Minerva, Vulcan, and the birth of Erichthonius (2.11); and Maro replaces Macris as the nurse of Dionysus (2.12). The severely moral tone is somewhat vitiated by the touches of satire, the plays on names (as with Venus, 2.1, and the Centaurs, 2.15), and by the tendency, however natural to Fulgentius's day, to interpret in terms of lust and licentiousness—a tendency also to be found in the *Ages of the World*. Perhaps one can concede a certain grudging admiration for the persistent, if not remorseless, allegorical searching, equally part of his age, and for the endlessly optimistic assertion of hidden morality; one soon feels that however unpromising the particular name or legend, Fulgentius will not fail to find some curious gem in the soil, and his most congenial association is with those medieval interpreters of Scripture who uncovered endless jewels of allegory. In Fulgentius's *Content of Virgil*, essentially the same technique is applied to a popular work of literature; and in the short work *On the Thebaid*, we seem to have a later Fulgentius, mining and sifting just as industriously as ever.

The question now arises, How much of the *Mythologies* may be considered original to Fulgentius, and How much follows tradition or may be traced to specific sources and influences? It is, in the first place, highly unlikely that Fulgentius is translating from any Greek work of mythology, known or unknown. Numbers of known Greek writers are named as authorities, but they are regularly associated with unknown or unlikely titles, and only Homer's *Iliad* is at all frequently cited in the original. This practice and the etymologies of Greek names indicate some knowledge of the language, but Fulgentius more often prefers to explain the Romanized forms of mythological names, and some use of Latin sources and Roman attitudes to myth is far more probable.

Some indebtedness seems likely to the encyclopedic writer Marcus Tarentius Varro (died 27 B.C.) whose voluminous works of scholarship survive only in fragmentary form. In his first prologue Fulgentius refers admiringly to Varro's *ingenia* or scholarship, and in the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* he names him several times as an authority. In particular, what survives of Varro's *De lingua Latina* provides a more orderly treatment which, in details, method, and philosophical interests, parallels Fulgentius. The etymologies of names and places in Varro's book five and his explanations of obscure words of the poets in book seven are less extravagant, to modern views, than those of Fulgentius but often in the same uncritical style. The very occasional overlap may be accidental: Proserpine for both authors is *serpens*, "creeping," or *proserpens*, "creeping forward," Varro's 5.68 and *Mythologies* 1.10; and Juno is from *iuuare*, "to help," in 5.69 as in 2.1. The lost works of Varro perhaps known to Fulgentius included similar word studies such as a *Quaestiones Plautinae*, hard words in the plays of Plautus, also a favorite source for Fulgentius's *Explanation*.

If Fulgentius approves of Varro, he disapproves but is well aware of the manner of Ovid with mythology—the "lamp-light performances" of the *Heroides* as he calls them in the opening prologue of the *Mythologies* with reference to their erotic concern. Yet, in his way, Fulgentius is as occupied as Ovid with lust and its sadness; and in this long prologue especially, the affected and diffuse language may owe something to Ovid's elaborate style. Then, too, the situation as Fulgentius "turned aside, anticipating the benefit of a shady tree," followed by birdsong and a vision of the Muses, may well owe something to Ovidian passages such as *Amores* 3.5.3–4, 7: "At the foot of a sunny hill was a grove thick-standing with ilex, and in its branches was hidden many a bird. . . . I was seeking refuge from the heat beneath the branches of the trees."<sup>2</sup> This is followed by a vision of a white heifer, a

bull, and a cow. Later Fulgentius is visited by the resplendent Muse Calliope as he sleeps; much as in *Amores* (1.5.9–10), the poet sleeps after a sultry day, "when lo ! Corinna comes, draped in tunic girded round, with divided hair falling over fair, white neck."<sup>3</sup> The *Heroides* deals in full with the Hero-Leander story (18, 19) featured by Fulgentius (*Myth.* 3.4), and a number of the mythological stories and figures of Fulgentius have appeared in the *Metamorphoses*. Fulgentius shares Ovid's general air of disbelief in the legends and divinities he is describing. Ovid, it is true, is concerned with stories illustrating transformations and is different from a handbook; Ovid keeps to a kind of chronology, and his order of stories is not the same as that of Fulgentius. He covers many more legends than Fulgentius selects; but his use of the colors of rhetoric is reminiscent of the more imaginative passages in Fulgentius, particularly the long opening prologue. One wonders whether Fulgentius was aware of the sixth-century grammarian Lactantius (or Lutatius) Placides, who turned Ovid's work into a set of prose summaries (and perhaps also produced a summarizing commentary on Statius's *Thebaid*), possibly for the use of schools.

A reasonable case may be made also for the indebtedness of Fulgentius to Cicero's philosophical works, particularly the dialogue *De natura deorum*, for some specific names and explanations as well as for the general tone of detachment and suspicion of superstition. In his opening prologue Fulgentius pays tribute to Cicero's *Republic* and the appended *Dream of Scipio* as models of philosophical approach, and later speaks admiringly of Cicero's "stern invective." A possible debt to Cicero's *Timaean* is noted below for *Myth.* 3.5. The resemblances to the *De natura* particularly affect books one and two of the *Mythologies* together with a few entries in the *Explanation of Obsolete Words*. In the opening prologue, Fulgentius describes his work as "a tale, wrinkled like the furrows of an old woman, which I have just concocted . . . , performing by night lamp," and as "dreamlike nonsense," though not to be put on the same level as Ovid's "lamp-light performances." There is some resemblance to *De natura* 1.34: "For your authoritative Epicurean theories are so much moonshine and are unworthy of the vaporings of old hags as they work by lamplight."<sup>4</sup> Comparable details include items from Cicero's interest in etymologies of the names of mythical beings, for instance, Saturn-Chronos (2.25); Juno, "derived from the verb *iuvare*, 'to aid' " (2.26); Pluto for "the rich" (2.26); and especially the connection between *sol* and *solus* for Apollo (2.27):<sup>5</sup>

But Apollo's name is Greek, and the Greeks look upon him as the sun (*sol*), and identify Diana with the moon (*luna*). Now the word *sol* is related to *solus*,

either as being the "only one" of his huge bulk among all the celestial bodies, or because when he rises the rest are thrown into obscurity and he "alone" can be seen.

Compare *Myth.* 1.12: "For the sun (*sol*) is so called either because it is unique (*solus*) or because it habitually (*solite*) rises and sets each day." Other points of comparison include the name Hippocentaur (2.2) with Fulgentius's *centippi* in the same context (2.14); the cycle of Stilbon, the star of Mercury (2.20), with 1.18; the use of the quotation from Terence in connection with Bacchus and Venus (2.23), compare 2.1; and the association of the creative principle of fire with the teachings of Heraclitus of Ephesus (3.14), compare 1.3 and the *Content of Virgil*, para. 3. In Fulgentius's *Explanation of Obsolete Words*, Tages as an Etruscan authority on divination, sections 4 and 48, is also found in Cicero's *On Divination* 2.23 (and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15); and the Locri and Cortina mentioned together in section five of the *Explanation* could be a confusion of Locri and Crotona, both places in the southwest corner of Italy and both involved in the battle of the Sagra river, around the year 580 B.C., referred to in Cicero's *De natura* 2.3.

What Fulgentius most clearly continues from antiquity is the Roman tradition of the *ars* or compendium, the means whereby much earlier Greek lore was preserved into the Middle Ages in condensed form—the encyclopedic tradition of Cato the Elder, Cicero, Varro, Pliny the Elder; and in the silver age, Cornelius Celsus, Pompeius Festus, Nonius Marcellus, Chalcidius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella.<sup>6</sup> Capella's *De nuptiis* with its ornate proemium provided a model for the mixture of verse and prose, the so-called Menippean style, seen in Fulgentius's opening prologue, and for Fulgentius's habit of listing authorities which often could have been only names to him; the esteem with which Capella's turgid style was later received is evident in the three extant Carolingian commentaries we have on his work, by John Scotus Erigena, Remigius of Auxerre, and a writer variously identified as Dunchad or Martin of Laon. It is no surprise that Fulgentius was favorite reading in the same period. Reminiscences of antiquarian detail are frequent also between Fulgentius and Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, for instance, the interest in Pythagorean number theory as applied to music (*Myth.* 3.9–10); Fulgentius's visions of Calliope and of Virgil as venerable persons from antiquity are a kind of *Χρηματισμός*, or *oraculum*, very much in the tradition of Macrobius.<sup>7</sup>

Fulgentius's *Mythologies* has been traditionally associated with the mythographer Hyginus, whose *Fabulae* (or *Genealogiae*) and *Poetica astro-*

*nomica* are usually assigned to the second century A.D.<sup>8</sup> No safe identification of Hyginus has been made; his *Fabulae*, in particular, were written before the year 207, but the surviving text, as well as gaps and inconsistencies, seems to contain additional matter, including details from Servius on Virgil, as late as the fourth century. Fulgentius clearly postdates him and in a general sense belongs to the same mythographic tradition. There is, however, little sign of Fulgentius's direct interdependence, except from some coincidental overlap of details and the general affinities of two compilers working over the same traditional material and adopting the same euhemeristic and rationalizing approach in which the divinity and religious associations of mythical personages are no longer accepted. Hyginus's *Fabulae* is a retelling of classical myths in summary form, at once more commonplace and more elaborate and comprehensive than the *Mythologies*, which was based on a lost Greek compilation of the later Alexandrian age and contained many misunderstandings due to a faulty knowledge of Greek—a more faulty misunderstanding than Fulgentius exhibits. The style of Latin, like the treatment, is bare and dry, with none of Fulgentius's flights of fancy or elaborate turns of phrase, with only sporadic interest in etymology or allegorical interpretation or the naming of classical authorities, and with a predilection for catalogues, such as genealogies of the gods, lists of place-names, categories of those gods who were most wise, most chaste, involved in fratricide, and so on, which are more suggestive of a reference book. Fulgentius's liking for punning and for antiquarian details, origins of folk customs, scraps of popular lore, particularly Egyptian, does reappear. In a few chapters the two books are sufficiently similar to imply a common source: the summary treatments of the stories of Alcestis (*Fab.* 51, *Myth.* 1.22), Tiresias (*Fab.* 75, *Myth.* 2.5), and Marsyas (*Fab.* 165, *Myth.* 3.9), have a general resemblance; Polus or Pollus as the son of air and earth is shared (*Fab.* preface and 140, *Myth.* 1.2); Hermes is the "interpreter" in both (*Fab.* 143, *Myth.* 1.17); Isis replaces Io (*Fab.* 145, *Myth.* 1.20); Erichthonius has the same etymology (*Fab.* 166, *Myth.* 2.11); the Chimaera is similarly explained (*Fab.* 57, *Myth.* 3.1); and Stilbon or Stilbos for the planet Mercury (*Myth.* 1.8) reappears in Hyginus's *Astronomica* (2.42). But these are mostly traditional rather than special resemblances, and they are outweighed by the contrasts in style, selection, and attitude. Fulgentius is not writing a comprehensive textbook but an allegorical interpretation in terms of ethical concepts. In this respect his interest in lust and its details, while not incongruous in the Christian teaching of his times, contrasts strongly with the modest avoidance of this theme in Hyginus.



One work of antiquity clearly not known to Fulgentius, and one which had he taken to heart its commonsense view of authorship might well have caused the abandonment of his literary labors, is Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* from the first century A.D. Two passages in particular castigate extravagances to which Fulgentius and his age are especially prone. In 1.7.32, Quintilian deals as follows with the excesses of etymological enthusiasts:<sup>9</sup>

I now turn to minor points concerning which enthusiasts for etymology give themselves an infinity of trouble, restoring to their true form words which have become slightly altered: the methods which they employ are varied and manifold: they shorten them or lengthen them, add, remove, or interchange letters and syllables as the case may be. As a result perverseness of judgment leads to the most hideous absurdities.

A little later (1.8.21), he takes aim at the overfanciful interpretation of authors and the inventing of authorities which often accompanies it:<sup>10</sup>

Such abuses occur chiefly in connexion with fabulous stories and are sometimes carried to ludicrous or even scandalous extremes: for in such cases the more unscrupulous commentator has such full scope for invention, that he can tell lies to his heart's content about whole books and authors without fear of detection: for what never existed can obviously never be found, whereas if the subject is familiar the careful investigator will often detect the fraud.

In both places, Quintilian nicely anticipates modern suspicion and rejection of Fulgentius's methods; but in the historical view, the restraint and responsibility implicit in Quintilian's position are far from representative of Fulgentius's age, and would then be found only in exceptional authors such as Boethius and Cassiodorus. One can, in fact, say in Fulgentius's defense what Sir Francis Bacon said of himself—that some part of the blame, at least, lies in the *vitia temporis*, the excesses of his times. In the use of what one would now call extravagant and arbitrary etymology to bolster allegorical interpretations, Fulgentius is typical, not unique. The tradition goes back to Plato's *Cratylus*, and lived on, by way of Aristotle, the Stoics, and the later Alexandrians, throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Before Fulgentius, in addition to the works of Varro and Cicero already mentioned, a similar handling of etymology appears for example, in the little *Sketch of Greek Mythological Traditions*—written in Greek by Cornutus, the first-century Stoic philosopher who served as mentor to the Roman poets Persius and Lucan—and in the Latin *Origo gentis Romanae*, attributed to the historian Aurelius Victor.<sup>11</sup> As to the use of hearsay authorities and the juxtaposition of known names with invented titles, a precedent is found,

and most likely Fulgentius found his precedent, in the *De nuptiis* of Martianus Capella. Fulgentius sins in good company.

It remains to outline something of the remarkably wide and persistent influence exercised by Fulgentius's *Mythologies*, more than his other writings, for many centuries after his time. The earliest traces of borrowing are probably to be found in the compilation of the so-called Vatican Mythographer I, most likely of the seventh century, who, *inter alia*, drew upon Servius's commentary on Virgil and on Isidore of Seville. From Mythographer I much mythological material is borrowed word for word by Mythographers II and III,<sup>12</sup> and all three follow Fulgentius in their emphasis on the hidden meanings of the classical myths. To the seventh century may also be tentatively assigned the anonymous text known as the *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus*, possibly of English provenance and itself, intriguingly, a possible source for the monsters of *Beowulf*.<sup>13</sup> The compiler appears to have made some use of Fulgentius and other early mythographers. For example, he includes Midas and Orpheus among his *monstra*: Midas no doubt for his asses' ears and Orpheus possibly because, as well as the tradition of his dismemberment and the use of his head as an oracle, he shares with Midas Fulgentius's allegorical account of music in *Myth.* 3.9–10. Similarly the Gorgon is identified with stupor, and Fulgentius three times (1.21; 2.1; 3.1) alludes to her as the symbol of paralyzing terror.

In what may loosely be called the Carolingian period, from the eighth through the tenth centuries, Fulgentius's text had perhaps its greatest popularity. In a thorough study,<sup>14</sup> the late M. L. W. Laistner assembled an impressive array of evidence. Both the allegorical interpretations and the exotic language contributed to the appeal. For the *Mythologies* Laistner cites echoes in the commentaries on Martianus Capella already mentioned. The opening sentence is borrowed by Paschasius Radbertus for his *Epitaphium Arsenii*; minor figures influenced include Ermenrich of Ellwangen in his epistle to Grimold and the tenth-century author Gunzo of Novara. The poets Engilmodus, Sedulius Scotus, Milo, Hucbald, various anonymous versifiers, particularly the early-tenth century author of the *Gesta Berengarii*, and compilers of *scholia* to poets such as Heiric on St. Germanus of Auxerre, all tend to pick their rare words and elements of high style from Fulgentius. A few additions are possible even to Laistner's copious material. Something is owed to Fulgentius's work by Carolingian *scholia* on the *Aratea* of the emperor Germanicus.<sup>15</sup> Prudentius, bishop of Troyes in the ninth century,

reassured John Scotus Erigena in a letter that Fulgentius was a master of Greek: "If you are unaware or deny that he had knowledge of the Attic language, read those books of his which are called *Mythologies* or *Content of Virgil*, and you will find he possessed the highest skill in that tongue."<sup>16</sup> A Fulgentius is mentioned by Alcuin as one of the authors available in York library of the later eighth century, but to judge by the echoes in Alcuin's controversial tracts and in Anglo-Saxon writers such as Bede, this was the bishop-saint of Ruspe rather than our author.<sup>17</sup> The Fulgentius entered in the extensive ninth-century catalogue of the library at Lorsch in Hesse is quite likely to be the mythographer.<sup>18</sup> Three copies of the *Mythologies* are recorded from Bobbio and two from Fulda, all from tenth-century catalogues. Extant manuscripts go back to the last years of the eighth century and include one localized at Lorsch of the earlier ninth. By the ninth or tenth century a copy of the work may have been available in England; and a *Mythologiae Fulgentii* listed in the fifteenth-century catalogue of St. Augustine's, Canterbury,<sup>19</sup> may well have been deposited there long before. Walafrid Strabo gives the nickname Fulgentius to his friend Gottschalk, with likely reference to their mutual interest in the mythographer.

As the Middle Ages advanced, a number of spurious works, with such titles as *De imaginibus deorum*, *Fabulae*, *De gestis Romanorum*, *De naturis rerum*, *De ficticiis poetarum*, *De secretis Virgilii*, *De ornatu civitatis*, and the like, were fathered upon Fulgentius, with particular reference to his authorship of the *Mythologies* and the *Content of Virgil*;<sup>20</sup> and his name was more than once applied to the general category of mythographic writing, much as Donatus was to that of grammar.

From the late eleventh century comes an admiring tribute to both the *Mythologies* and the *Content*. In his *Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* 28, the Belgian chronicler Sigebert of Gembloux (died 1112) writes:<sup>21</sup>

Certainly every reader can feel awe for the acumen of mind in him who interpreted the whole series of fables in terms of ethics (*philosophia*), relating them either to the order of things [i.e., natural phenomena] or to the moral life of men . . . and who, referring the whole work of Virgil to natural considerations (*ad physicam rationem*), sought as it were a vein of gold in a lump of mud.

Once again Fulgentius is being hailed as one who helped make pagan lore and literature palatable to Christian views.

From the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, Manitius records borrowings from the *Mythologies* in the verse of Dudo of St. Quentin (died ca.

1017); the *De vita Christophori* of Walter of Speyer (died 1031); the allegorical commentary on Theodulus by Bernard of Utrecht (later eleventh); the commentary on Boethius by William of Conches (early twelfth); and the *Corrogationes Promethei* of Alexander Neckam (died 1217).<sup>22</sup> The twelfth century also saw a lengthy versification, over one thousand lines, of parts of the *Mythologies* by Baudri, abbot of Bourgueil (died 1130).<sup>23</sup>

The fourteenth century is the age of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Chaucer, all of whom are reminiscent to some degree of Fulgentius. Petrarch's library of ancient authors included the *Mythologies*,<sup>24</sup> and his statement of the purpose of poetry in his *Coronation Oration* 2, echoes the Fulgentian technique:<sup>25</sup>

I could readily prove to you that poets under the veil of fictions have set forth truths physical, moral, and historical. . . . Poetry, furthermore, is all the sweeter since a truth that must be sought out with some care gives all the more delight when it is discovered.

A specific echo of Fulgentius's allegory of the judgment of Paris (*Myth.* 2.1), with the three goddesses standing for the three kinds of life, is heard in the opening paragraph of Petrarch's *De viris illustribus* of 1338:<sup>26</sup>

A twofold choice of paths, both equally rash, is open to men, that of greed and that of pleasure. . . . For not only Venus, but also Juno carried off the prize in the opinion of their judges; only Minerva is neglected.

Around the year 1340 a French friend and admirer of Petrarch, the Benedictine Pierre Bersuire (Berchorius, died 1362), included in his *Reductorium morale* a translation of the *Ovide Moralisé* and appended to it a commentary, book fifteen, entitled *De fabulis poetarum*. The *Reductorium* was popular enough to be given an early printing, by Colart Mansion of Bruges in 1484. In his comments on the tales of Ovid, Bersuire concentrates largely on their ethical interpretation, saying in his prologue that he intends "very rarely to deal with the literal meaning, but to work predominantly on the moral and allegorical exposition"; appropriately, therefore, he names and draws upon Fulgentius's *Mythologies* among other sources.<sup>27</sup>

Boccaccio in his encyclopedic collection of myths, the *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* in fifteen books,<sup>28</sup> a widely popular handbook for early Renaissance poets and artists and drawn on extensively by later Renaissance mythographers, makes constant use of Fulgentius, sometimes reproducing more or less literally his account of particular legends.<sup>29</sup> The use he does make of

Fulgentius is not uncritical. Sometimes he is satisfied to accept Fulgentian etymologies and allegorical explanations; and he speaks once of

no less a person than Fulgentius, the Catholic doctor and pontiff; the fact is proved by his book which he himself has named the *Book of Myths*, and in which he recounts and explains the fables of the poets in a highly finished style.<sup>30</sup>

He favors the allegorical approach, the search for meanings *sub cortice*, as he says,<sup>31</sup> and the methods of etymology;<sup>32</sup> and at one point he speaks longingly of retirement to the country in terms reminiscent of Fulgentius's opening prologue.<sup>33</sup> He repeats some of the Fulgentian authorities and scraps of antiquarian learning.<sup>34</sup> But elsewhere he voices suspicion of our author's extravagance, prolixity, and inept handling of legends,<sup>35</sup> or simply dismisses his explanations as incorrect.<sup>36</sup>

It is more difficult to prove what have been called "obvious reflections" of Fulgentius in the poems of Chaucer.<sup>37</sup> It was long ago suggested that the comic anticlimax in the *Franklin's Tale*, 1016-18, had a forebear in the hexameters of the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*,<sup>38</sup> but the resemblance is more likely to be coincidence. Likewise with the moralizing comment in the *Merchant's Tale*, 1375-76,

There nys no thyng in gree superlatyf,  
As seith Senek, above an humble wyf,

once traced back through Albertano of Brescia, not to Seneca, but to Fulgentius's account of Admetus and Alcestis, *Myth.* 1.22, which begins:

As there is nothing nobler than a well-disposed wife, so there is nothing more savage than an aggressive one. For a prudent one offers her own soul as a pledge for the safety of her husband, to the same degree (*quanto . . . tanto*) that a malevolent one counts her own life as nothing compared with his death.<sup>39</sup>

But the notion is perhaps too commonplace for special sources to be required. It may be possible to detect some influence of Fulgentius, even if very occasional and derived through unspecified intermediary sources, in Chaucer's allusion to the Alcestis story in the *Legend of Good Women* (510 ff.) and in the *Knight's Tale*, particularly the series of brief allusions to classical legends which tend to bring in the mythological trappings and, as it happens, recur in much the same order as they are found in Fulgentius: for instance, Mercury with wand and helmet, lines 1385 ff. (*Myth.* 1.18);

the statue of Venus, "naked, fletyng in the large see," 1955 ff. (2.1); the death of Actaeon, 2065 ff. (3.3); and Vulcan surprising Venus and Mars at their illicit love, 2383 ff. (2.7). In the *Knight's Tale*, 1945, "Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage" is reminiscent of how he is interpreted in Fulgentius's *Content of Virgil* as "furious mind."<sup>40</sup> The shorter description of Venus's temple in *The House of Fame*, 130–39, with the goddess again "naked fletyng in a see," lists her attributes as red and white roses, a comb, and doves, all but the white roses and the comb to be found in *Mythologies* 2.1.<sup>41</sup> It seems possible that one or two of Chaucer's minor additions to his source material in the *Man of Law's Tale* reflect at least the Fulgentius tradition: his chronicle *Ages of the World and of Man* is not evidenced as having acquired the continuing popularity of the *Mythologies* or the *Content*, but in its dependence on Eusebius and Orosius it could be classified among the "olde Romayn geestes" rather mysteriously mentioned in this tale (1126); it does, for instance, supply a detailed background and an Old Testament connection for the passing allusions to Semiramis (359), David (936 ff.), and Judith (939 ff.). Likewise Chaucer's use in the *Knight's Tale* of astrological interpretations of the pagan gods, a tradition which goes back to the *Astronomica* of Hyginus and is echoed in the *Allegoriae poetarum* of Albericus of London,<sup>42</sup> may owe something to Fulgentius on Mercury (*Myth.* 1.18).

The voluminous poet John Lydgate (died 1449/50) brings an interpretation of classical myth in terms of moral allegory into such works as the *Troy Book*, *Resoun and Sensuallyte*, and into the *Assembly of Gods*, which is very possibly his. Here, as with Chaucer, Fulgentius may be no more than a distant source, and one of many; but Lydgate's approach to antiquity accurately reflects the long tradition of which Fulgentius is an important pioneer.

Around the year 1430, a generation after Chaucer's death, John Ridevall (or Ridewall), an English Franciscan, composed what he called a *Fulgentius metaforalis*, a mythological treatise purporting to be a sequel to the *Mythologies*, in fact drawn from a medley of sources, Biblical, classical, postclassical, and patristic, with little but the name and reputation borrowed directly from Fulgentius.<sup>43</sup> Fulgentius's plan, however, is followed to the extent that Ridevall's opening prologue also deals with the origins of idolatry, and thereafter each pagan god or goddess is taken to personify some virtue; the separate myths then become texts for a homily, with extracts from Fulgentius and others turned into verse as a mnemonic device.

Popular Renaissance mythologies by Italian authors—such as Lilio Giraldi's *De deis gentium varia et multiplex historia*, published in Basel (1548; repr., Lyons, 1565), the *Mythologia* of Natale Conti, or Natalis Comes (Venice, 1551), and Vincenzo Cartari's *Le Imagini colla Sposizione degli Dei degli Antichi* (Venice, 1556; repr., 1587)—retain much of the interest in philosophical interpretation and etymologizing of names that may be traced from Fulgentius.<sup>44</sup> A little before, Fulgentius is part of the first wave of Italianism to reach Spain. In *Los Doze Trabajos de Hercules*, Enrique de Villena (died 1433) follows the legends of Hercules with a moral allegory in which Fulgentius is occasionally cited; the Marqués de Santillana (died 1458) names Fulgentius in his catalogue of authorities and his epic-dium on Villena.

A number of scattered echoes of Fulgentius or his tradition are furnished from English writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Douglas Bush in his study of Renaissance mythology. In most cases the probability is, of course, that the tradition of Fulgentius, rather than his actual text, is being drawn upon. In Thomas Peend's version of Ovid's *Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis* (1565) reappears the allegorical interpretation given Actaeon in *Myth.* 3.3. E. K.'s gloss to the March eclogue of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) brings back the old physiological notion of the heel being linked by veins and sinews to the genitals, as in *Myth.* 3.7. The *Third Part of the Countesse of Pembroke's Iychurch* (1592), by Abraham Fraunce, includes a derivative handbook of mythology with "philosophical explications," and there the story of Hero and Leander is handled in distinctly Fulgentian terms (*Myth.* 3.4). In his *Ulysses and the Syren* (1605), Samuel Daniel interprets the episode as in *Myth.* 2.8. Fulgentius is cited among the many authorities in the "repository of allegorized myth" which George Sandys added to a later edition (1632) of his translation, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished*, the work which still held interest for Keats and Leigh Hunt. Shakerley Marmion reproduced in verse *A Morall Poem intituled the Legend of Cupid and Psyche* (1637), complete with the Fulgentian allegory (*Myth.* 3.6). Sir Edward Sherburne, in the notes to his translation of Colluthus (1651), is aware of Fulgentius on Peleus and Thetis (*Myth.* 3.7). Finally, there is the intriguing possibility that when Milton places Hercules and Antaeus beside Christ and Satan in *Paradise Regain'd* (1671) (4.560 ff.), he is aware of Fulgentius's view of them, in *Myth.* 2.4.<sup>45</sup>

Manuscripts of Fulgentius continued to be copied through the sixteenth century. The *Mythologies* reached print in 1498, the *Content of Virgil* in

1521, the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* in 1565, the *Ages of the World* in 1694; and, thereafter, editions appeared regularly until the eighteenth century. In his *Historia* already mentioned, Lilio Giraldi, like Boccaccio before him, permits himself a mild expression of doubt concerning Fulgentius: "This author does not seem to me entirely reliable, either for factual accuracy or for propriety of expression."<sup>46</sup> Here, perhaps, we see the tide of acceptance and popularity at last beginning to turn. In collections of antiquarian mythology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Fulgentius holds his place; but in the nineteenth, he begins to be dismissed as essentially trivial and wrongheaded.

One isolated seventeenth-century drawing on Fulgentius is to be found in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) 3.2.3, with reference to the story of Psyche and Cupid; but this is a legend more conducive than most to allegorical interpretation, and one not found in the classical writers of myth before Apuleius and Fulgentius. It may possibly restore some confidence in Fulgentius's higher seriousness that his methods with classical myths found one other seventeenth-century disciple, if an unwitting one with no reputation except for solid and sober learning. When Sir Francis Bacon compiled his small treatise *De sapientia veterum* (1609, translated as *The Wisdom of the Ancients* by Sir Arthur Gorges in 1619),<sup>47</sup> he made no reference to, and apparently had no knowledge of, the mythographer whose basic approach coincided with his; but the mantle of Fulgentius's *Mythologies*, minus only its farfetched elements, dubious authorities, and etymological adornments, descended squarely upon him. Bacon's treatment of thirty-one fables, taken from Ovid, first summarized and then explained, follows his theory outlined in the *Advancement of Learning* that "the secrets and mysteries of religion, policy, or philosophy are involved in fables or parables," though his intellectual honesty leads him to admit that "the fable was first, and the exposition then devised." His interpretation of the fables he selects is in Fulgentius's preferred terms of moral or political allegory: the Cyclops are ministers of horror who deserve destruction; Perseus is war and the methods of conducting it; Endymion, the court favorite; Actaeon, the inquisitive man; Orpheus represents learning; Bacchus, the passions (compare *Myth.* 2.12); Prometheus, human nature; Proserpine, the spirit; the Sirens stand for man's passion for pleasure; and so on. In this unexpected place we may see a brief recrudescence of the old Fulgentian way. But where Fulgentius runs to excess, Bacon is firmly undogmatic. In his preface to the *Wisdom*, Bacon, in fact, may well be alluding to such excess when he writes:



Many may imagine that I am here entering upon a work of fancy, or amusement, and design to use a poetical liberty, in explaining poetical fables. It is true, fables, in general, are composed of ductile matter, that may be drawn into great variety by a witty talent or an inventive genius, and be delivered of plausible meanings which they never contained. But this procedure has already been carried to excess; and great numbers, to procure the sanction of antiquity to their own notions and inventions, have miserably wrested and abused the fables of the ancients.

These words might have served as the last judgment on the reputation of Fulgentius, had Bacon not had something of a successor in the *Mythomystes* (1632) of Henry Reynolds, who applies moral philosophy to the interpretation of individual classical myths as part of his general notion that all myth serves as a repository of hidden truth.<sup>48</sup> Thus, heroes like Hercules, Ulysses, and Aeneas are patterns of the virtues; evildoers like Ixion, Midas, and Tantalus represent such heinous crimes as murder and the effects of lust and greed; Ganymede is man's rational faculty; Proserpine is the cycle of vegetation and the seasons; Orpheus saves truth from barbarity; Jove in his cruelty to Semele is the crushing of grapes for wine; the adultery of Mars with Venus is the alloy made with iron and copper. Reynolds ends such "Physick, as well as Ethick meanings" with a few theological proposals: Rhea and Pandora are types of Eve, and Bacchus stands for Noah. Such notions, and the accompanying disparagement of Bacon as one who hedged in his allegorical views, along with some displays of extravagant etymologizing in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, bring Reynolds in well nigh full circle back to the spirit of Fulgentius.

### Bibliographical Note

The Latin text of the *Mythologies* is available in T. Muncker, *Mythographi Latini*, 2 (Amsterdam, 1681), with much antiquarian commentary, largely reproduced by A. Van Staveren, *Auctores mythographi Latini* (Leiden, 1742; repr., 1747), pp. 593-734. Earlier editions include those by J. B. Pius, *Enarrationes allegoricae fabularum Fulgentii* (Milan, 1498; repr., Venice, 1500[?], and Paris, n.d.); "Philomusus" (Jacob Locker or Locher, d.1528), *Fulgentii in mythologis scholia paraphrastica* (Augsburg, 1521); the anonymous *Fulgentii mythologiarum libri tres* (Basel, 1536; repr., 1543); Hieronymus Commelinus, *Mythologici Latini* (Heidelberg, 1589; repr., 1599); those included with Hyginus's *Fabulae* (Basel, 1535, by J. Mycillus; repr., Leiden, 1608; also Basel, 1539, 1549, 1570, 1578, and Geneva, 1608); and the reprint of the Psyche-Cupid chapter, 3.6, in the anonymous *Apuleius serio castigatus* (n.p., 1624). The only modern edition is by R. Helm, *Fabii Planciadi*

*Fulgentii opera*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1898), pp.3–80, followed in the present work, though limited in apparatus and lacking a full introduction. A list of modern studies of Fulgentius is appended to the general introduction, above.

A selective list of background studies follows. On classical mythology and its interpreters, see: C. V. Daremberg, E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* (Paris, 1875–1919); L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, 3d ed. revised by H. Jordan (Berlin, 1881–83), and *Griechische Mythologie*, 4th ed. revised by C. Robert (Berlin, 1894–1926); W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1884–1937); L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1896–1909); P. Decharme, *La Critique des Traditions Religieuses chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1904); O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, Handbuch der klassischen Altertums-Wissenschaft, 5.2.1–2 (Munich, 1906), and *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1921); H. J. Rose, *Modern Methods in Classical Mythology* (St. Andrews, 1930), *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks* (London, 1957), and *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, 6th ed. (New York, 1958); R.P. Hinks, *Myth and Allegory in Ancient Art* (London, 1939); various entries in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949; 2d ed. 1970); R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Baltimore 1955); H. Hunger, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 5th ed. (Vienna, 1959); M. Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (New York, 1962); J. Pinsent, *Greek Mythology* (London, 1969).

Works on medieval and later treatments of classical mythology in general include: W.P. Ker, *The Dark Ages* (London, 1904; repr., New York, 1958); F. Saxl, H. Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1915–53); F. von Bezold, *Das Fortleben der antiken Götter im mittelalterlichen Humanismus* (Bonn, 1922); E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology* (New York, 1939; repr., 1963); J. Seznec, *La Survivance des Dieux Antiques*, *Studies of the Warburg Institute*, XI (London, 1940), English transl. by B.F. Sessions, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods, the Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, Bollingen Foundation, 38 (New York, 1953; repr., 1961); H. Rahner, *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung* (Zürich, 1945); P. Diel, *Le Symbolisme dans la Mythologie Grecque, Etude Psychoanalytique* (Paris, 1952); P. Renucci, *L'Aventure de l'Humanisme Européen au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1953), and *Dante Disciple et Juge du Monde Gréco-Latin* (Paris, 1954); J. Pépin, *Mythe et Allégorie* (Paris, 1958); A. M. Young, *Legend Builders of the West* (Pittsburgh, 1958); R.P.C. Hansen, *Allegory and Event* (London, 1959); D. Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, 2d ed. (New York, 1963); G.S. Kirk, *Myth, its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and other Cultures* (Berkeley, 1970).

Particular authors and periods: (1) Late classical to the tenth century: A. Mai, *Classici auctores e Vaticanis codicibus*, III (Rome, 1831); G.H. Bode, *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres e Vaticanis codicibus* (Cellis, 1834; repr., Hildesheim, 1968); Hyginus, *Astronomica*, ed. B. Bunte (Leipzig, 1875); Servius, ed. G. Thilo, H. Hagen, *Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1881–1902); M. Manitius, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ovidius und andere römischen Schriftsteller im Mittelalter," *Philologus*, Supplementband 7 (1899): 723–68; R. Schulz, *De mythographi Vaticani primi fontibus* (Halle, 1905); S. Hellmann, *Sedulius Scotus*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 1.1 (Munich, 1906); F. Keseling, *De mythographi Vaticani secundi fontibus* (Halle, 1908); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed W.M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911; repr., 1957); M. Schedler, *Die Philosophie des Macrobius und ihre*

*Einfluss auf die Wissenschaft des christlichen Mittelalters* (Münster, 1916); T. Whitaker, *Macrobius, or Philosophy, Science, and Letters in the Year 400* (Cambridge, 1923); G. Pansa, *Ovidio nel Medioevo e nella Tradizione Popolare* (Sulmona, 1924); Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, ed. A. Dick (Leipzig, 1925); E. K. Rand, *Ovid and his Influence* (New York, 1925); W. Brewer, *Ovid's Metamorphoses in European Culture* (Francetown, N. H., 1933; repr., 1948); L. K. Born, "Ovid and Allegory," *Speculum* 9 (1934): 362-79; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, ed. H. J. Rose (Leiden, 1934), English transl. by Mary Grant, *The Myths of Hyginus* (Lawrence, Kans., 1960); A. J. Festugière, *L'Astrologie et les Sciences Occultes*, 1 (Paris, 1944); J. Engels, *Etudes sur l'Ovide Moralisé* (Groningen, 1945); K. O. Elliott, J. P. Elder, "A Critical Edition of the Vatican Mythographers," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 78 (1947): 189-207; W. H. Stahl, transl., *Macrobius' Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, *Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies*, 48 (New York, 1952), and Stahl's *Roman Science: Origins, Development, and Influence to the Later Middle Ages* (Madison, 1962); F. Munari, *Ovid in Mittelalter* (Zurich, 1960); Remigius of Auxerre, *Commentum in Martianum Capellam*, ed. C. Lutz (Leiden, 1962-65); W. Bühler, "Theodulus' Ecloga and Mythographus Vaticanus I," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 1 (1968): 65-71; P. V. Davies, transl., *Macrobius: the Saturnalia*, *Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies*, 79 (New York, 1969).

(2) Twelfth century: P. Abrahams, ed., *Les Oeuvres Poétiques de Baudri de Bourgueil* (Paris, 1926); C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1927; repr., 1963).

(3) Thirteenth century: Albericus Magnus of London, *Liber ymaginum deorum, De Deorum imaginibus*, ed. A. Van Staveren, *Auctores mythographi Latini* (Leiden, 1742; repr., 1747); Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, ed. T. Wright, *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, 34 (London, 1863); E. Klusmann, *De Alberici mythographi codice Götano II* (Rudolstadt, 1868); R. Raschke, *De Alberico mythologo* (Breslau, 1913); John of Garland, *Integumenta Ovidii*, ed. F. Ghisalberti (Milan, 1933), see also E. Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1924); E. Rathbone, "Master Alberic of London, Mythographus tertius Vaticanus," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1941): 35-38.

(4) Fourteenth century: J. Schück, *Zur Charakteristik des italienischen Humanisten* (Breslau, 1857); Boccaccio, *Il Comento sopra la Commedia*, ed. G. Milanese (Florence, 1863), ed. D. Guerri, *Il Comento alla Divina Commedia* (Florence, 1918); A. Hortis, *Studi sulle Opere Latine del Boccaccio* (Trieste, 1879); G. Körting, *Boccaccios Leben und Werke* (Leipzig, 1880); P. de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'Humanisme* (Paris, 1892; 2d ed., 1907); D. Schöningh, *Die Göttergenealogien des Boccaccio* (Posen, 1900); A. Hauvette, *Boccace, Etude Biographique et Littéraire* (Paris, 1914); *Ovide Moralisé*, ed. C. de Boer (Amsterdam, 1915-38); C. C. Coulter, "The Genealogy of the Gods," *Vassar Mediaeval Studies*, ed. C. F. Fiske (New Haven, 1923), pp. 317-41; C. Landi, *Demogorgone con Saggio di Nuova Edizione della Genealogia deorum gentilium del Boccaccio* (Palermo, 1930); C. G. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry* (Princeton, 1930; repr., New York, 1956); F. Ghisalberti, "L'Ovidius moralizatus di Pierre Bersuire," *Studi Romani* 23 (Rome, 1933): 5-136; Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951); B. Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960); D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer, Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962); B. Sandkühler, *Die frühen Dante-Kommentare und ihr Verhältnis zur mit-*

relativer Kommentartradition, Münchener romantische Arbeiten, 19 (Munich, 1967).

(5) Fifteenth century: Enrique de Villena, *Los Doze Trabajos de Ercules* (Burgos, 1499; facs. ed., Madrid, 1879); John Ridevall, ed. H. Liebeschütz, *Fulgentius metaforalis, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der antiken Mythologie*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, 4 (Berlin, 1926); R. A. van Kluyve, ed., *Thomae Walsingham De archana deorum* (Durham, N.C., 1968).

(6) The later Renaissance: Lilio Giraldi, *De deis gentium varia et multiplex historia* (Basel, 1548); Natale Conti, *Mythologiae sive explicationis fabularum libri x* (Venice, 1551); Vincenzo Cartari, *Le Imagini colla Sposizione degli Dei degli Antichi* (Venice, 1556); A. E. Sawtelle, *The Sources of Spenser's Classical Mythology* (New York, 1896); H. G. Lottspeich, *Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser*, Princeton Studies in English, 9 (Princeton, 1932; repr., New York, 1965); D. Bassi, "Un'Opera Mitologica del Secolo XVI," *Reale Istituto di Scienze e Lettere, Rendiconti* 70 (Milan, 1937): 9-20, on Conti's *Mythologiae*; D. T. Starnes, E. W. Talbert, *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries* (Chapel Hill, 1955); D. Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, 2d ed. (New York, 1963).

(7) Post-Renaissance: see the introductory matter in the collections by Muncker (1681) and Van Staveren (1742-47), above; also J. Brock, *Hyginus Fabeln in der deutschen Literatur* (Munich, 1913); M. Clark, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (New York, 1962), with further references; D. Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry*, 2d ed. (New York, 1963).

1. Abbreviated reference is made, here and in subsequent notes, to authors and titles listed more fully in the bibliographical note appended to this introduction. For editorial variation in the numbering of sections or chapters in the *Mythologies*, see 1, prologue, note 1 below. Fulgentius on occasion shows himself aware of traditional number symbolism: allegorical use is frequent for sets of three in the *Mythologies*, and in the *Content of Virgil*, paras. 12-13, seven and nine are similarly treated. The editor of the *Mythologies* followed below, R. Helm (1898), is no doubt right in restoring its total of chapters to the round number 50, for the traditional significance of which see Curtius (1953), pp.501-9.

2. G. Showerman, ed. and transl., *Ovid: Heroides, Amores*, Loeb Classics (1921), p.463.

3. Ibid., p.335. Another possibility is apoc. 2 (4) Esdras 9:26 ff., in which the prophet in a flowery field has a vision of a woman weeping and wailing.

4. H. M. Poterat, transl., *Marcus Tullius Cicero: Brutus, On the Nature of the Gods, On Divination, On Duties* (Chicago, 1950), p.214.

5. Ibid., p.252.

6. See W. H. Stahl, *Roman Science: Origins, Development, and Influence to the Later Middle Ages* (Madison, 1962).

7. *Commentary* 1.3. For such "oracles," as Chaucer calls them in the *House of Fame* 2.11, see C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge, 1964), p.64.

8. For Hyginus, see the modern editions by B. Bunte, *Hyginus astronomica* (Leipzig, 1875), and Rose (1934), also Grant (1960), an annotated translation of the

*Fabulae* and the *Astronomica*, book two; and for the mythographic tradition involved, Rose's article, "Mythographers," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949), p.594.

9. H. E. Butler, ed. and transl., *Quintilian*, Loeb Classics (1921), 1:125,127.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 157.

11. See further P. B. R. Forbes, "Etymology," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949), pp.341-42.

12. For these three anonymous compilations, see the editions by Mai (1831) and Bode (1834), and the commentaries by Schulz (1905), Keseling (1908), Schanz-Hosius-Krüger (1920), pp.196-205, Elliott-Elder (1947), and Bühler (1968). Their manuscripts date from the 10th century. Mythographer III, who uses source material of the 9th and 10th centuries, is later than the other two and in manuscripts is associated with the 13th-century Englishman Albericus 'Magnus' of London and with Alexander Neckam (died 1217); see further Rathbone (1941), and Seznec (1953), pp.170-79. The detailed correspondences with Fulgentius are given in the footnotes to Helm's edition (1898): in *Myth.* book one alone, details from chapters 2, 5, 7-9, 12-16, 21, 22 are detected in all three Vatican compilers, chapter 17 in Mythographer II, chapters 1, 11, 17 in Mythographer III, and chapters 18, 20 in II and III together.

13. See the editions of the *Liber* by J. Berger de Xivrey, *Traditions Térologiques* (Paris, 1836), and M. Haupt, *Liber monstrorum*, in his *Opuscula* (Berlin, 1876), 2:221 ff.; also A. Thomas, *Bulletin DuCange* (1925), 1:232-45. A critical edition is badly needed. A recent study, *The Mode and Meaning of 'Beowulf'* by Margaret E. Goldsmith (London, 1970), p.75, finds one or two points of similarity between that epic and Fulgentius on Virgil, but without proposing direct influence. J. Gardner (*Papers in Language & Literature* 6 [1970]:227-62) argues at length that the *Beowulf* poet uses the notion of the tripartite soul popularized by Fulgentius on Virgil.

14. M. L. W. Laistner, "Fulgentius in the Ninth Century," *Mélanges M. Hrouchevsky* (Kiev, 1928), pp.445-56, reprinted with corrections and additions as "Fulgentius in the Carolingian Age," in Laistner's *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1957), pp.202-15.

15. See M. Schanz et al., *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 4.2 (Munich, 1920; 4th ed., 1935), 437-40.

16. Cited by P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres Grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1948), p.208, from *Patrologia Latina* 95.1310.

17. See J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books known to the English, 597-1066*, Mediaeval Academy of America, Publications, 76 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p.142.

18. M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe A.D. 500-900*, 2d ed. (New York, 1957), pp.231-32. According to C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1927), p.28, a copy of Fulgentius was owned by Otto III in Italy around the year 1000.

19. M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903), p.369.

20. For these *pseudo-Fulgentiana*, see Liebeschütz (1926), pp.115-16; P. Lehmann, *Pseudo-antike Literatur des Mittelalters*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, 13 (Leipzig, 1927), pp.20-23, 100; Smalley (1960), pp.230-31. The title *De gestis Romanorum* falsely associates Fulgentius with the famous *Gesta Romanorum* of the

later Middle Ages, a work for which, as for Fulgentius, strained allegorical interpretations, in terms of morality and religion, were no bar to widespread popularity.

21. Cited by Seznec (1953), p.89, from *Patrologia Latina*, 160.554; see also Manitius, *Geschichte* 3 (1931): 347.

22. Respectively Manitius, *Geschichte* 2 (1923): 259, 505; 3 (1931): 196, 218, 790.

23. Poem 216, a fragment of 1177 lines, ed. Abrahams (1926), pp.273-303, with notes, pp.303-16; see also Manitius, 3.892.

24. De Nohac (1907), pp.169-71; Bolgar (1954), p.263.

25. Transl. by E. H. Wilkins, "Petrarch's Coronation Oration," *PMLA* 68 (1953): 1246.

26. *De viris illustribus*, Proemium, ed. G. Martellotti et al., *Francesco Petrarca: Prose*, La Letteratura Italiana, Storia e Testi, 7 (Milan, 1955), p.218: "Duplex precepsque utraque hominum via est, cupiditas scilicet et voluptas. . . Sic non Venus tantum, sed Iuno etiam suorum iudicum prelatas sententiis in precio est; Pallas sola negligitur."

27. See Seznec (1953), pp.93 (where the prologue is cited), 174-76; also Ghisalberti (1933); Smalley (1960), p.262; D. Van Nes, ed., *Ovidius moralizatus* (Utrecht, 1962).

28. Edited by Romano (1951); preface and books 14, 15, in English by Osgood (1930); see the studies by Schück (1857), Hortis (1879), Körting (1880), de Nohac (1892-1907), Schönningh (1900), Hauvette (1914), Coulter (1923), and Landi (1930).

29. For instance, *Genealogy* 1.13 (Antaeus); 6.22 (Paris); 10.27 (Pegasus) and 12.25 (Perseus), see Mary Lascelles, "The Rider on the Winged Horse," *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies presented to F. P. Wilson* (Oxford, 1959), pp.189-191; 11.2 (the Muses); 12.1 (Tantalus); 12.52 (Thetis and Achilles), see Starnes-Talbert (1955), p.62. The Polus who appears in *Gen.* 1.6, as "the heaven, child of Demogorgon," is claimed by Coulter (1923), pp.337-38, to be taken from the *Protocormos* of Pronapides, but is more obviously the Pollus of Fulgentius, *Myth.* 1.2.

30. *Gen.* 14.18, transl. Osgood (1930), p.85, with Boccaccio accepting the traditional but doubtful identification of the mythographer with St. Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe.

31. *Gen.* 14.10, 12.

32. See Coulter (1923), pp.326-27; Osgood (1930), p.xxvi.

33. *Gen.* 14.11, transl. Osgood, pp.54-58, with notes, p. 169.

34. For instance, the quotations from "Appollophanes comicus," 8.1, compare *Myth.* 1.2, and "Porphyrus in epigrammate," 3.23, compare *Myth.* 2.1; and the description of the veins leading from the Achilles tendon, 12.52, compare *Myth.* 3.7.

35. For instance, *Gen.* 4.24, Fulgentius *amplissimam et meo iudicio minime opportunam uerborum effundens copiam*; 11.7, where he speaks of leaving Fulgentius "as he goes soaring off into the sublime," *posuisssem Fulgentii expositionem, sed quoniam per sublimia uadit, omisi*; and 13.58.

36. For instance, *Gen.* 4.30, 10.10, 13.58.

37. Robertson (1962), p.370.

38. E. P. Hammond, *Modern Language Notes* 27 (1912): 91-92; F. N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p.724.

39. The proposed connection with Fulgentius goes back to T. Sundby, ed., *Albertani Brixiensis liber consolacionis et consilii*, Chaucer Society, 2d series, 8 (London, 1873); see Robinson, p.714.

40. See B. G. Koonce, *Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in the House of Fame* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 149-50, 155.

41. Koonce, p.92.

42. See W. C. Curry, *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences*, 2d ed. (New York, 1960), pp.149-50, 335.

43. The work has importance for Renaissance art; see Seznec (1953), pp.94-95; the full study and edition by Liebeschütz (1926); and the discussion by Smalley (1960), pp.110-18, 353-58 (citing extracts), who shows that Ridevall's classicizing interests were shared by such figures as Robert Holkot in his *Moralia*, and especially John Lathbury the elder (died 1362), who anticipates Ridevall in his concern with the mythological art and sculpture. For Holkot, see J. B. Allen, "The Library of a Classicizer: the Sources of Robert Holkot's Mythographic Learning," *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie au Moyen Age, Actes du IVe Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale* (Montreal and Paris, 1969), pp.721-29.

44. See the detailed study by Seznec (1953), pp.224 ff.

45. Bush (1963), respectively pp.313-14 (Peend), 93 (Spenser), 123-124 (Fraunce), 226 (Daniel), 254 (Sandys), 241-42 (Marmion), 249 (Sherburne), 295 (Milton). Bush adds as an Italian instance a work known to Milton, the *Adone* of Giambattista Marini (1623), which alludes to the active, contemplative, and voluptuary ways of life as encountered in *Myth*. 2.1. Echoes of Fulgentius in Daniel may also include his *Complaint to Rosamond* (1592); see I. Clark, *Renaissance Quarterly* 23 (1970): 152-62.

46. Cited by Seznec (1953), p.235.

47. See Bush (1963), pp.251-53, and studies by C. W. Lemmi, *The Classical Deities in Bacon* (Baltimore, 1933); P. Rossi, *L'Interpretazione Baconiana delle Favole Antiche* (Milan, 1953).

48. See A. M. Cinquemani, "Henry Reynolds' *Mythomystes* and the Continuity of Ancient Modes of Allegoresis in Seventeenth-Century England," *PMLA* 85 (1970): 1041-49. A text of the *Mythomystes*, minus appendages, is included in E. W. Tayler, ed., *Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England* (New York, 1967), pp.225-58.





## Translation: The Mythologies

### Book 1<sup>a</sup>

#### Prologue

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. The Origin of Idols                        | 13. The Fable of the Crow                |
| 2. The Fable of Saturn                        | 14. The Fable of the Laurel              |
| 3. Of Jove and Juno                           | 15. The Fable of the Nine Muses          |
| 4. The Fable of Neptune                       | 16. The Fable of Phaethon                |
| 5. The Fable of Pluto                         | 17. Of the Tripod, Arrows, and Python    |
| 6. The Fable of Cerberus with the Three Heads | 18. The Fable of Mercury                 |
| 7. The Fable of the Furies                    | 19. Of Danaë                             |
| 8. The Fable of the Fates                     | 20. Of Ganymede                          |
| 9. The Fable of the Harpies                   | 21. The Fable of Perseus and the Gorgons |
| 10. The Fable of Proserpine                   | 22. The Fable of Admetus and Alcestis    |
| 11. The Fable of Ceres                        |  |
| 12. The Fable of Apollo                       |  |

### Book 2

#### Prologue

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. The Fable of the Judgment of Paris  | 9. The Fable of Scylla                             |
| 2. The Fable of Hercules and Omphale   | 10. The Fable of King Midas and the River Pactolus |
| 3. The Fable of Cacus and Hercules     | 11. The Fable of Minerva and Vulcan                |
| 4. The Fable of Antaeus and Hercules   | 12. The Fable of Dionysus                          |
| 5. The Fable of Teiresias              | 13. The Fable of the Swan and Leda                 |
| 6. The Fable of Prometheus             | 14. The Fable of Ixion                             |
| 7. The Fable of the Adultery of Venus  | 15. The Fable of Tantalus                          |
| 8. The Fable of Ulysses and the Sirens | 16. The Fable of the Moon and Endymion             |

### Book 3

#### Prologue

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The Fable of Bellerophon                  | 8. The Fable of Myrrha and Adonis     |
| 2. The Fable of Perdix                       |                                       |
| 3. The Fable of Actaeon                      | 9. The Fable of Apollo and Marsyas    |
| 4. The Fable of Hero and Leander             | 10. The Fable of Orpheus and Eurydice |
| 5. The Fable of Berecynthia and Attis        | 11. The Fable of Phineus              |
| 6. The Fable of the Goddess Psyche and Cupid | 12. The Fable of Alpheus and Arethusa |
| 7. The Fable of Peleus and Thetis            |                                       |

### Book 1

#### Prologue

Although a subject which lacks immediate purpose may produce little real enthusiasm and, where there is no material advantage, may well cease to be pursued for practical reasons (on the ground, that is, that the calamitously wretched state of our times invites no enthusiasm for putting such a subject into words, and has only pity for a drudgery which cannot be justified in poetic fame but serves only for personal edification), I now take up a subject the loss of which you may regret, the statement of which you may need or discover to be necessary, and one which in this age of ours it is pointless for those in power to suppress, or our leaders to commandeer, or private individuals to destroy, or the oppressed to bewail.

For you, Master, are accustomed to treating with indulgence those sad dirges of mine so often ridiculed with the kind of satirical pleasantry that Thalia, the Muse of comedy, flourishing her humor with theatrical epigram, is in the habit of pertly rapping out.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, you will remember, you recently commissioned me to try to soothe your moments of leisure with some agreeable murmuring. For a short space, then, listen while I unfold for you a tale, wrinkled like the furrows of an old woman, which, performing by night lamp and mocking the pretense of sleep, I have just concocted with

a salty Attic flavor. In this you will not see a poet seized with frenzy, but you may be diverted by dreamlike nonsense<sup>3</sup> expounding trifles suited to sleep. In these books of mine you will see neither those lamp-light performances of Ovid's *Heroides*, in which either the shamelessness of someone like Sulpicia<sup>4</sup> or the exotic feelings of Psyche are revealed, nor what forcibly led Theseus, the husband of Phaedra, into the underground cave or carried off Leander as he swam.<sup>5</sup> It will be such things as those of which our Academic orator Cicero has given a lively account, almost making the sleeping Scipio into a citizen of heaven—but what Cicero achieved his own *Republic* may show.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, since the inactivity of rural leisure has committed me to separation from you, Master, and to a kind of exile from city affairs, I could at least avoid those calamitous upheavals of disasters by which public events are endlessly disturbed and think how to secure my rustic ease, so that, remote from the storms and stresses whereby the maelstrom of city life breaks into turbulence, I might devote myself to the calm peace of my little halcyon nest, at rest in the seclusion of a country estate. With the harsh-sounding altercation of conflicts slumbering in the ashes of silence, conflicts in which the barbarian<sup>7</sup> onslaughts had violently disturbed me, I was hopeful of leading a life purified by silence; and yet even there the perverse stab of memories pursued me, and my contrasted state of happiness, which always implants some bitterness in human affairs, shadowed me like a faithful slave. For the tax assessment, producing novel and momentous kinds of impositions, had each day worn down my very doorstep with the feet of those who would accost me,<sup>8</sup> so that, had King Midas been transformed from a human being to pursue riches as he stiffened what he touched into gold, I verily believe I could have dried up the streams of Pactolus itself for the crowds of visitors I mentioned.<sup>9</sup>

Nor was that a sufficient load of miseries. Add to it the aggressive onslaughts which had the very soles of their feet thrust into my house, so that one could not even see the bolts of our doors, blocked as they were with spiders' webs. For these people had taken control of the estates, as we had done of our houses; we could look out on our crops, but not have the benefit of them; it would have been a noble recompense if they had left the places closed for whoever had to remain. But, since for mortal men, evil is never immortal, at last the joy of my lord the king's return dispelled my fears, as the shadows are split apart by the first rays of the sun upon the earth. After those numbing attacks which brought the rust of war's restrictions, one could

look out on the fields and walk round the boundaries. We stepped out in the fashion of sailors whom the longed-for shore has welcomed back after they have been overwhelmed by the violence of storms;<sup>10</sup> and, after our confinement in the house, we not so much stepped out as taught ourselves to walk like outcasts from the surrounding walls. As in that line of Virgil, "Free at last, the stallion gains the open plains,"<sup>11</sup> we gaze upon the fields, in which the footprints of the soldiers, as they call them, still mark our walled paths.<sup>12</sup> And with the fear in our minds not yet erased, we have shuddered at these traces of our enemies; in our memory of them the enemy soldiery had left a legacy of fear.

So in the fashion of the Trojans of Aeneas we pointed out to one another the places where their more evident destructiveness or plundering had left its mark. And so, among the thorny briars of the glades, once kept in order by the hand of the countryman (because of the stoppage and long neglect caused by that fear, the ploughs, a sorry sight and thick with soot, were hung up on the walls; and the necks of the oxen, once fit for hard toil, had now reduced the tough skin of their yoking to a cowlike softness), the neglected land stood with its furrows overgrown and threatened to choke the tops of the olive trees with its thick briars. The wild vine was collecting with its binding, winding, and trailing growth, as if the earth held down by its matted roots would stubbornly refuse the tooth of Triptolemus.<sup>13</sup>

As in this fashion I forced my footsteps across the fields through the advancing thorn and paced through the mounds with their bright and spreading tufts, my enthusiasm for walking began to falter, and eagerness gave place to toil. I turned aside, anticipating the benefit of the shady tree with its interwoven leaves to protect the wanderer from the fiery glances of Phoebus, and in the entwining of its bending branches I gained the shady spot which at its very roots it provided and let me share. Whereupon a certain liveliness of the birds, as with a kind of delicate softness they produced their rapid whistlings through their horny beaks, lured me back to this present task of mine, and the unexpected respite from toil inspired a kind of melodious verse:<sup>14</sup>

Thespian maidens, ye whom, moistened  
with a foam of sounding spray,  
Hippocrene's draught refreshes,  
from your mountain come away,  
Haste to leave the grassy hillsides,  
where each dawn the icy dew,  
Breath of stars on nights unclouded,

lays its drops of sparkling blue;  
Open wide to me your baskets,  
filled with flowers and words of song.  
All the stream of Tempe carries,  
flowing grassy slopes among,  
Cleansing what the hoof of war-horse  
struck out, neighing through the air,  
All that did the Ascrean shepherd  
to the heartless rocks declare,  
All the riches to be gathered  
from your emptied treasure-trove,  
All that Virgil the Mantuan  
sang within the shepherd's grove,  
All that Homer the Maeonian  
laughed at in the frogs' affray,  
All such with its gleaming plectrum  
may the Arcadian lyre display—  
May the wealth of all the ages  
flow together for my lay.

This with its dedicatory verse, enticed the daughters of Pierus, the Muses, wet with spray from the Gorgonean fountain and weeping in the stream of the winged horse.<sup>15</sup> The maidens had been standing in groups of three, shimmering in their long, gossamerlike robes, amply begirt with ivy; and among them the friendly Calliope, the epic Muse, warming this poor heart of mine with a playful touch of her palm branch, stirred the sweet itch of poetry. At her appearance she was heavyhearted, her negligent hair held by a diadem gleaming with pearls, as she gathered up her bicolored robe to the ankle, I suppose because of her travels and to avoid the flowing hem of such fine-woven material being torn in any way by the prickly swish of the grass. She stood close by me; and, prostrating myself, I worshipped the queen of eloquence, in time past made very familiar to me by the testimony of poets and memorable for the wordy stories I relayed with hands swollen from canings in my first steps at school. But, because it was not clearly apparent to me who she was, I asked why she had come.

She replied, saying: "I am one of the maidens of the group on Mount Helicon, enrolled in the family of Jove; and as a citizen of Athens, I was once welcomed in the councils of the Romans, where I brought forth fresh bushes, the tops of which I might implant among the highest stars, thus bequeathing a legacy of lifelong fame, whereby they might the more readily gain a

renowned death.<sup>16</sup> But the inroads of war deprived me of assembling in the citadel of Romulus, and in exile I took up my place of assembly in the city of Alexandria, filling the light hearts of the Greeks with various injections of philosophical notions. After the severities of the Catos, the stern invective of Cicero, and the scholarship of Varro, I indulged my light spirits among the Pellaean peoples<sup>17</sup> with satirical plays, diverted myself with fantastic comedy, delved into serious tragedy, or put together short epigrams. My captivity pleased me, and I am pleased now that the industrious labors of us two should be in holiday mood, for the mind has found things to smile at even among the evils, had it not been that I was shut out by something more cruel than wars, namely the assemblage of Galen, which is linked to almost all the narrow streets of Alexandria, where more surgical hangman's butcherings could be counted than there were houses. For unless one is presented to that guild, they consign to a violent death whomever they claim Charon will soon have dealings with."<sup>18</sup>

A pleasant smile ended this speech, and I reached my roof, where she considered making her stay. Then she said: "Do not be afraid to receive the teaching of the Muses in your own home, for I have heard of the custom of barbarians to ban the business of literature in their houses, whereby those who wrote even their own unspoken name with the first shapes of their letters could reckon on a violent interrogation and the torture chamber."

Then I said: It is not as 'you had heard, but the report was so,' for 'our songs serve as well,' O Muse, 'among the weapons of Mars'<sup>19</sup> 'as to quench one's thirst from a rivulet of sweet leaping water.'"<sup>20</sup> Then to encourage her friendship all the more, I added this line of Terence: "Once that stamp of man drove a trade, a generation or so ago."<sup>21</sup> Now, therefore, literature, as . . . its urns pour forth whatever contents in its storehouse of words Helicon possessed to pass on in due succession.<sup>22</sup>

Pleased with my lines, as if she had seen old Homer himself<sup>23</sup> reciting, she smoothed my hair with an encouraging touch of her palm branch, and, stroking my neck more tenderly than was becoming, she said: "Well, Fabius, you are now a new recruit to the sacred rites of Anacreon;<sup>24</sup> and so that nothing may be lacking for my young beginner, receive like praise for your composition and, insofar as my Satire has sprayed you with a wanton dew of words and the allure of love holds you prisoner, give up what you are turning into words as you sleep,<sup>25</sup> and whatever you are pleased to be inscribing on papyrus from the Nile,<sup>26</sup> and take my words into your receptive ears. Nor will there be wanting from your narrative any emotion which you may ask to be wrung from your bowels."

I replied: "The title of my little work has misled you, noble declaimer. Not through me will the horned adulterer be seized,<sup>27</sup> or the maiden Danaë, deceived by a false shower, be celebrated in verse, as by his own choice the god Jove showed her wealth and tricked with gold one he had been unable to trick by force.<sup>28</sup> I do not write about the thigh of a young lover fed to the teeth of swine,<sup>29</sup> nor in my little work has youthful wantonness been described under a false guise. I am not concerned with him who creeps about as an adulterer in the plumage of a swan, foisting his eggs on maidens as he pours child-bearing seed into their bodies,<sup>30</sup> or with those lamp-carrying<sup>31</sup> maidens, Hero and Psyche, as one wishing to ramble on about such follies of the poets, as, for instance, that the first of these lamented a light that failed and the second one that was burning, Psyche perishing for seeing and Hero for not seeing. Nor do I tell of the maiden Aricina, deceived by a pretense of virginity when Jove sought her, wishing to be greater than in fact he was.<sup>32</sup> What I wish to do is to expose alterations away from the truth, not obscure what is clear by altering it myself, so that this ancient god may keep on with his neighings<sup>33</sup> and the sun, laying aside the fire of its radiance, prefer to be furrowed with the wrinkles of age rather than with rays;<sup>34</sup> and I look for the true effects of things, whereby, once the fictional invention of lying Greeks has been disposed of, I may infer what allegorical significance one should understand in such matters."

She replied: "From what source, little man, do you get such a knowledge of ignorance, and gain such a reasoned view of what is little known? For when you seek out what has lain untouched for centuries, you show yourself wisely familiar with what you can scarcely know at all."

I answered: "If one happens to have at least some knowledge in matters where a degree of ignorance is expected, how much more satisfactory has it been to happen not to have been born to such things, rather than to have been born to them in all their futility. For I consider I have awareness of a new threshold of knowledge denied to you."<sup>35</sup>

She replied: "If such recondite and mystical matters are to be vigorously studied, the full approval of the authorities must be sought; for no trifling must be pursued, whereby we find ourselves patching up correct styles of verse with some frivolous lines. This labor requires a rhetorical ability, lest the construction of such a wonderful work, once undertaken, be abandoned from its vigorous pursuit and fade away just in the very midst of the effort of inspiration. Therefore, Philosophy and Urania<sup>36</sup> will also be my helpers in determining the work, and this gay girl friend of yours<sup>37</sup> will be in attendance to give you consolation; and when these mystic arts of yours

cause you to puff and pant as you labor at them, your Satire will keep you amused."

I answered: "I implore you, bountiful spirit of generosity, do not by any chance entrust to my own home this Satire of yours, to the love of whom you have long since pronounced me a prisoner. For I have a wife who would be livid with envy because of her, so much so that, should she discover her in the house acting like my mistress with wanton ways, she would feel herself obliged to send her back to Helicon with her cheeks furrowed with scratches, in such a state that the waters of the Gorgonean stream<sup>38</sup> would be totally inadequate to cleanse her wounds."

Then shaking with gentle laughter as she struck her thigh two or three times with a blow of her palm branch, she said: "You do not realize, Fulgentius, you uncouth swain of the Muses, how greatly we noble ladies fear satire. Although even lawyers give way under a woman's flood of words, and schoolteachers do not even mumble, although the orator keeps silent and the auctioneer checks his cries, this is the one thing that does impose some restraint on their ragings—but Petronius's character Albucia comes to mind.<sup>39</sup> For with this kind of jesting the whip hand of Saurea in Plautus is broken,<sup>40</sup> and the wordiness of Sulpicilla in Ausonius is wrecked,<sup>41</sup> and in Sallust that of Sempronia, although Catiline took over with a hoarse piece of song."<sup>42</sup>

Earth's territory crossed, and the chill world  
 Warmed by the chariot-wheels, the charioteer  
 Loosed his fire-breathing horses, from their necks  
 Removed the golden reins. Phoebus unyokes  
 His steeds, as Cynthia prepares her team.  
 The brother tests the waters with his foot  
 Up whence his sister rose. With starry cloak  
 Binding the earth, night bids the sky to rest  
 On dewy wings, while all agleam the moon,  
 Its two-pronged diadem adorned with stars,  
 The twin bulls yoked together, mounted up  
 The fresh-laid sky, and mind-deceiving shapes,  
 Phantoms in formless guise, soft pallets fill  
 With lying images—

And, as I can state in very few words, it was night.<sup>43</sup> Having long since forgotten the word night, I was revelling in these lines like a frenzied bard when the lady I had seen before as a guest, making her appearance with a



sudden rush, burst roughly into my bedchamber and, to her surprise finding me lying down with my eyes drooping in a gentle sleep, drove in upon me, her face gleaming with a kind of darting and quite magnificent glow—for she was tall beyond the average look of mortal man. Then, her nostrils flaring, she interrupted this display of peaceful rest, and by her violent rattling of the door threw the snorer into confusion. Her maidenly temper advanced towards me, a riot of flowers, bedecked with copious ivy, determined in aspect and with a heavy bundle of insults in her mouth, her ironic eye darting with such penetrating sharpness that it showed even the deeply concealed thoughts of her mind at the writings of a drunken reveler. The two sides of the Muse balanced one another, for on her more stately right side, aided by a certain majesty, she had displayed pearls of starry whiteness over the top of her exalted brow; a moon-shaped crescent, its points studded with rare gems, held in place her white-tipped diadem, and, covered in an azure robe, she twirled a hollow globe of glass tapering down to a small piece of bone. My eyesight was so stirred by the exalted contemplation of this heavenly vision when, tall as she was and penetrating in her gaze, she had scarcely pushed her thumb at the door. With a delicate withdrawal of one side my elusive companion avoided my human gaze by a half-concealing veil. Her silvery hair gleamed white as snow, and the frown on her much wrinkled brow betokened that she had learnt something distasteful to her. Her entrance was slow and awesome in its weighty deliberation.

Then Calliope moved to the region of speech, saying: "I promised, Fulgentius, you would be generously treated by these guardian spirits; if you served them devotedly, they would, in one swift seizure, transport you from a mere mortal into a heavenly being, and place you among the stars, not like Nero with his verse eulogies, but like Plato with his deep thoughts."<sup>44</sup> Do not expect from them those devices which are the ornament of poetry, the source of lament in tragedy, the spouting of oratory, the loud laughter of satire, or the jest of comedy, but those by which the bitter brew of Carneades, the golden eloquence of Plato, and the syllogistic brevity of Aristotle are distilled.<sup>45</sup> Now, therefore, once you have absorbed the message in your mind, unlock its recesses and allow what you assimilate to enter your ear tubes; but let fade the whole mortal nature which is yours, so that the full span of what is concentrated to strict philosophical propositions may take up residence in those recesses. Let me now first explain about the nature of the gods, whereby such a plague of sinful superstition grows in foolish minds. Although there are those who, rejecting the noble resources of the in-

tellect, merely let their stupid and dull senses nibble at a tiny morsel and let their sleepy brains grow dizzy in a fog of deep stupidity, yet errors of the human senses are not produced except when motivated by chance forces, as Chrysippus remarks: 'Insidious attacks are made by insidious compulsions.' First, then, now the preamble has been completed, let me explain the origin of an idol."<sup>40</sup>

### 1. The Origin of Idols

The author Diophantus of Sparta wrote fourteen books of antiquities, in which he relates that Syrophanes of Egypt, rich in slaves and possessions, had a son born to him. He was devoted to this son, heir to vast wealth, with an affection beyond words, beyond anything required of a father; and when the son was taken from him by a bitter blow of fate, the announcement of a double bereavement for the father left him cruelly stricken, in that the perpetual support of offspring had been denied him and he had met an unexpected check to the further expanding of his wealth. What use to him now was either his prosperity as a father, now condemned to barrenness, or delightful possessions, now curtailed of succession? Not only should he not possess what once he had, but he could not be the one to regain what he had lost. Then, in the grip of grief which always endeavors to relieve its need, he set up an effigy of his son in his household; but when he sought a cure thereby for his grief, he found it rather a renewal of sorrow, for he did not realize that forgetting is the true healer of distress: he had made something whereby he would acquire daily renewals of his grief, not find comfort from it. This is called an idol, that is *idos dolu*, which in Latin we call appearance of grief. For to flatter their master, the entire household was accustomed to weave garlands or place flowers or burn sweet-smelling herbs before the effigy. Also some slaves guilty of wrongdoing, in order to avoid the wrath of their master, would take refuge by the effigy and so assure forgiveness, and as a sure guarantee of favor would place there little gifts of flowers or incense, rather from fear than veneration. So too Petronius, recalling such practices, says: "Fear on earth first invented gods." And Mintanor, the musician in the *Crumatopoion*, the book he wrote on the art of music, speaks of "the god of grief whom the suffering of humanity first fashioned." Thence, therefore, a deep-rooted error, gradually taken up by human devotees, edged forward into what is a pit of perverse credulity.

Despite the authority cited, no source for this anecdote has been traced; it may be no more than a fictional version of the apoc. Wisdom of Solomon 13:9 ff., which has much to say on the devising of idols; see further J. D. Cooke, *Speculum* 2 (1927); 396-410. Like Fulgentius, John Gower (*Confessio Amantis* 5.1525 ff.) attributes the first idol to Syrophanes (Cooke, p.405). Diophantus *Lacedemonum*, of Lacedaemon or Sparta, on antiquities is no doubt the Diofantus *Lacedemonius* on the rites of the gods in Fulgentius's *Explanation* 5, but neither author nor works are known, and we get no farther by linking the name to the mathematical writer Diophantus of Alexandria, who flourished in the 3d century A.D. "Idol," *idos dōlu*, is for *eidōs*, "appearance, shape," and *dōlos*, though this is more usually "deceit" than "grief," the meaning of Latin *dolor*. The Petronius quotation is known as Fragment 27.1, similar to Statius *Thebaid* 3.661; Servius on *Aen.* 2.715; Orosius *Historiae* 6.1; and Chaucer, *Troilus* 4.1408, "Eke drede fond first goddess, I suppose." Mintanor is unknown; for his *Crumatopoion*, compare *χρῶμα*, "color, adornment," and *τέμας*, "subject," i.e., the embellishing of themes.

## 2. The Fable of Saturn

The name of the son of Pollus, and the husband of Ops, is Saturn, an elderly man, with his head covered, carrying a scythe. His manhood was cut off and, thrown into the sea, gave birth to Venus. Let us then hear how Philosophy interprets this. She says thus: Saturn first secured dominion in Italy; and seizing people for his harvest prerogative, he was named Saturn, for glutting (*saturando*). Also his wife is named Ops because she brought help (*opem*) to the hungry. He is the son of Pollus, either for his heavy strength (*pollendo*) or from the wealth of high living (*pollucibilitate*), which we call the human state. Whence Plautus in the comedy *Epidicus* says: "Drink up, we live as sumptuously (*pollucibilter*) as the Greeks." He is depicted with head covered because all crops with their cover of leaves are protected in a shady enclosure. He is reported as having devoured his own sons because every season devours what it produces; and for good reason he carries a scythe, either because every season turns back on itself like the curved blades of scythes or on account of the crops; whence also he is said to have been castrated, because all the strength of crops is cut down and cast into the fluids of the belly as into the sea, just as Venus is produced from these circumstances because they necessarily produce lust. Apollonophanes also in his epic poem writes that Saturn is for *sacrum nun*, because *nus* in Greek means sense, or for *satorem nun*, as for the divine intelligence as it creates all things. Along with him they add four other children, that is first Jove, second Juno,

third Neptune, fourth Pluto. Pollus, they explain as *poli filium*, the father of the four elements.

Pollus is apparently for Coelus, the Greek Uranus, although the Roman Saturn as god of time and reaping is more usually equated with Chronos; possibly *πῶλος*, "sky," is in mind as the equivalent of Latin *caelus*, much as in Hyginus *Fabulae* preface, 10, 140.2. The Plautus reference is not from his *Epidicus*, but from the *Mostellaria* ('The Haunted House'), 22, 24. The sea birth of Venus is similarly explained in 2.1 below. Apollonophanes shares the name of a disciple of Zeno the Stoic (3d century B.C.), mentioned by Tertullian, *De anima* 14.2, but no epic of his is known. *Sacrum nun* may be for Latin *sacer*, "sacred," and Greek *σοῦς*, "intelligence," and *satorem nun* for *sator*, "sower," and *σοῦς*; similarly *poli filium* is Greek *πολύς*, "many," and Latin *filius*, "son, child." The account of the four elements, fire, air, water, earth, in that order, follows straight on. For Saturn in mythology, see R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (New York, 1964); D. B. Loomis, "Saturn in Chaucer's Knight's Tale," in *Chaucer und seine Zeit, Symposium für W. F. Schirmer*, ed. A. Esch, Buchreihe der Anglia, 14 (Tübingen, 1968), pp.149-61.

### 3. Of Jove and Juno

That is, first Jove, for fire, whence he is called Zeus in Greek, for Zeus by interpretation of the Greek can be called either life, or fire, or explained because they say, as Heraclitus claims, that everything is animate through life-giving fire, or because this element gives heat. Second is Juno, for air, whence she is called Hera in Greek. Although they should take air as masculine, yet she is also Jove's sister, because the two elements are truly akin; and she is Jove's wife, because air joined to fire grows hot. For both Theopompus in his Cyprian poem and Hellanicus in the *Dios politia* written by him declare that Juno was bound by Jove with golden chains and weighed down with iron fetters, by which they mean no less than that air joined to heaven's fire produces a union of the two elements down below, that is water and earth, which are denser elements than their two counterparts above.

The traditional notion of fire as the life-giving force is regularly credited to Heraclitus 'the Obscure,' who flourished ca. 500 B.C., as for instance by Cicero, *De natura deorum* 3.14; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 6.5; Servius on *Aen.* 11.196; Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.20.3; and Fulgentius's own Virgil commentary, 3. Hera is taken to refer to both the proper name "Ἥρα and ἀήρ, "air," Latin masculine *aer*. A Theopompus, historian of Chios, mentioned by Tertullian, *De anima* 44.2, was born in 394 B.C., but no poems of his are

known (presumably the poem mentioned is Cyprian because its subject was Venus, worshipped in Cyprus); Hellanicus was similarly a 4th-century historian, of Mytilene, but no work *Dios politia* (for *Διὸς πολιτεία*, "the rule of Zeus"?) is known; *Politeia* was of course famous as a title of Plato, *The Republic*. An elaborate study of Jove in myth: A. B. Cook, *Zeus, a Study in Ancient Religion*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1914-40).

#### 4. The Fable of Neptune

The third element, of water, they explained as Neptune, whom in Greek they also call Poseidon, for *pion idonan*, which in Latin we call making shapes, for the reason that only this element makes for itself shapes of what things are in store, something which is possible for no other of the four elements. He is depicted carrying a trident because his watery office is discharged in triple strength—that is, mobility, productiveness, and importance for drinking. They assign to this Neptune a wife Amphitrite (in Greek we call *amphi* all round), because water is confined by all three elements, that is, both in the sky, in its atmosphere and clouds, and on earth—for instance, springs and wells.

*Pion idonan*, for *ποιέω*, "make," and *εἶδος*, "form, shape"; *amphi* for *ἀμφί*, "about." In Plato's *Cratylus*, Socrates, seriously or not, discusses Poseidon as *ποσί*, "for the feet," and *δεσμός*, "fetter."

#### 5. The Fable of Pluto

They also say that Pluto was the ruler of a quarter of the earth (for *plutos* in Greek they call riches), believing that riches were assigned only to earth. They also said that he was banished to the underworld because this sole product of the earth is more hidden than the other elements. He carried a scepter in his hand because his dominions extended only to earth.

*Plutos*, for *πλούτης*, "wealth."

#### 6. The Fable of Cerberus with the Three Heads

At Pluto's feet they place the three-headed dog Cerberus because the en-  
vies of human quarrels are brought about in a threefold fashion, that is,

by nature, cause, and accident. Hate is natural, as between dogs and hares, wolves and sheep, men and snakes; the passion and jealousy of love, for instance, are causal; what arises casually is accidental, for instance, words between men or a nearby supply of fodder for mules. Cerberus is named for *creoboros*, that is, flesh eater, and he is imagined as having three heads for the three ages—infancy, youth, old age, at which death enters the world.

*Creoboros*, compare *κρέας*, "flesh," and *βρώ*, "food." This last sentence occurs only in one late manuscript.

## 7. The Fable of the Furies

Three Furies are also said to have served Pluto devotedly, the first of them Alecto [the second Tisiphone, the third Megaera]. For Alecto means unstoppable, while Tisiphone is for *tuton phone*, that is, the voice of these same ones, and Megaera for *megale eris*, that is, great contention. The first stage, therefore, is to create rage without pause; the second, to burst forth into words; the third, to stir up a quarrel.

The words in brackets are supplied from what follows. Alecto is taken for *ἄληκτος*, "elusive"; *tuton phone*, for *τούτων*, "of these" and *φωνή*, "sound"; *megale eris*, for *μεγάλη*, "large," and *ἔρις*, "strife."

## 8. The Fable of the Fates

They also assign to Pluto the three Fates, the first of them Clotho, the second Lachesis, the third Atropos. For *clitos* is the Greek for summons, Lachesis is called destiny, and Atropos is without order, pointing to the interpretation that, first, there is the summons of birth; second, one's lot in life, how one can live; and third, the state of death which comes without prescription.

*Clitos*, for *κλυτός* (*κλητός*), "called"; Lachesis, compare *λάχος*, "fate"; Atropos, taken as *ἀ-τροπος*, "without direction."

## 9. The Fable of the Harpies

Virgil places the three Harpies in the lower world, the first of them Aello, the second Ocypete, the third Celaeno. For *arpage* in Greek means pillage;

and they are maidens because all plundering is barren and fruitless; they are covered with feathers because whatever pillage seizes it conceals; and they are able to fly because all plundering is very quick to fly away. Aello in Greek is *edon allon*, that is, carrying off another's; Ocypete is quickly escaping with it; and Celaeno is the Greek for black, whence Homer in the first book of the *Iliad*: "Forthwith thy dark blood shall gush about my spear." They intend to show this as meaning that it is the first stage to covet another's, the second to seize what is coveted, the third to hide what has been seized.

Virgil, *Aen.* 6.289; Homer, *Iliad* 1.303. *Arpage*, for ἀρπαγή, "robbery"; *edon allon*, for ἔδω, "consume," and ἄλλος, "another"; Ocypete, compare ὀχέω, "carry," and πέτομαι, "flee"; Celaeno, for κελαινός, "dark, gloomy," but also associated in the final sentence with Latin *celare*, "conceal."

#### 10. The Fable of Proserpine

They also choose to have Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres, married to Pluto; for Ceres is the Greek for joy, and they also chose her to be the goddess of corn, for where there is plentiful increase of crops, joy must abound. They intended Proserpine for crops, that is, creeping forward (*proserpen-tem*) through the earth with roots, whence she is also called Hecate in Greek, for *hecaton* is the Greek for hundred; and they also explain this name for her in the sense that crops yield fruit one hundredfold.

Proserpine (Persephone), daughter of Jove and Ceres (Demeter), was abducted by Pluto and became the queen of Hades, but was allowed to revisit her mother for half the year. The same etymology for Proserpine is cited by Varro, *De lingua Latina* 5.68; by Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 7.20, 24; and in Fulgentius's own *Content of Virgil* 22. Ceres, for καρπός, "profit, increase"; *hecaton*, for ἑκατόν, "hundred."

#### 11. The Fable of Ceres

It is also said that her mother sought for her, when she was stolen away, with torches, whence the day of Ceres is celebrated with torches, clearly for the reason that at that time crops are joyfully sought for reaping with torches, that is, with the sun's heat.

## 12. The Fable of Apollo

They chose Apollo for the name of the sun, for *appolon* in Greek means losing, because by its very heat it ruinously takes all the sap from green plants. They also chose him as the god of omens, either because the sun turns into clear light everything obscure, or because in its rising and setting the orb gives effect to interpretations of many kinds. For the sun (*sol*) is so called either because it is unique (*solus*) or because it habitually (*solite*) rises and sets each day. They also assign to him a four-horse chariot, for the reason that either he goes through the cycle of the year in the four changes of the seasons or he divides up the space of the day into a fourfold division. From this they have given the steeds these appropriate names: Erythraeus, Actaeon, Lampus, and Philogeus. Erythraeus is the Greek for blushing red, because he rises red-faced on the threshold of dawn; Actaeon means resplendent, because he flashes the more brightly as he impetuously pursues the turning posts of his track; Lampus is burning, because he mounts the track towards reaching the midpoint of day; and Philogeus in Greek is called loving the earth because, bending forwards towards the ninth hour, he inclines to his setting.

*Appolon*, compare ἀπολείπω, "lose, leave behind"; Erythraeus, for ἐρυθρός, "red"; Actaeon, for ἀκτίς, "light, splendor"; Lampus, for λαμπάς, "light, the sun"; and Philogeus, for φιλέω, "love," and γῆ, "earth." The daylight is thought of as divided into four periods of three hours each, the ninth hour being the end of the third period, the late afternoon.

## 13. The Fable of the Crow

They choose to put the crow also under Apollo's protection, either because contrary to the way of nature it alone produces its young by laying eggs at the very height of summer heat, as also Petronius: "So the crow, contrary to the products of the well-known ways of nature, Lays its eggs when the corn is high," or because according to Anaximander in his books on *Orneoscopies*, or according to Pindar, it alone of all the birds has names bearing sixty-four interpretations.

Petronius's Fragment 27.1-2; Anaximander could be the Ionian philosopher of the 5th century B.C., but his *Orneoscopies* (compare ὀρνιθοσκοπία, "observing the flight of birds") is unknown, as is anything by the poet Pindar (died 443 B.C.) on the names of the crow.



#### 14. The Fable of the Laurel

They assign the laurel also to Apollo's protection, whereby they also state that he fell in love with Daphne, the daughter of the river god Peneus. And how can a laurel take root except by the waters of a river? This is chiefly because the banks of this same river Peneus are said to abound in the laurel. It has been called the beloved of Apollo for the reason that those who have written on the interpretation of dreams, like Antiphon, Philochorus, Artemon, and Serapion of Ascalon, set forth in their books that if you place laurel on the head of sleepers, the dreams they see will come true.

Antiphon could be the orator of Rhamnus, who died in 411 B.C.; the other three authorities are untraced, but all four, Serapion, Artemon, Antiphon, and Philochorus, are so listed by Tertullian, *De anima* 46.10, as "testifying to the truth of dreams," and Fulgentius may well have borrowed the list from that source (see also Xenophanes in 1.15 below). Serapion, possibly the Alexandrian medical writer of the 2d century, is not likely to be the one known to Chaucer's Physician, *Gen. Prolog.* 434.

#### 15. The Fable of the Nine Muses

They also assign to Apollo the nine Muses and add him to the Muses as a tenth one, for the reason that there are ten organs of articulation for the human voice, whence Apollo is also depicted with a lyre of ten strings. Also Holy Scripture speaks of a psalter of ten strings. Speech is produced with the four teeth, that is, the ones placed in front, against which the tongue strikes; and if one of them were missing it would necessarily give forth a whistle rather than speech; two lips like cymbals, suitably modulating the words; the tongue, like a plectrum as with some pliancy it shapes the breathing of the voice; the palate, the dome of which projects the sound; the throat tube, which provides a track for the breath as it is expelled; and the lungs, like a sack of air, exhaling and reinhaling what is articulated. There you have the explanation of the nine Muses and Apollo himself as given by Anaximander of Lampsacenum and Zenophanes of Heraclea. Others, like Pisander, the teacher of medicine, and Euximenes in his book *Theologumena*, confirm this explanation. But I also say that the nine Muses are the stages of learning and knowledge, as follows. First is Clio, standing for the first conception of learning, for *cleos* is the Greek for fame, whence Homer: "We heard only a rumor"; and elsewhere, "He heard the mighty rumor from afar in Cyprus."

Since no one seeks knowledge except that by which he may advance the honor of his reputation, Clio is named first, that is the conception of the search for knowledge. Second is Euterpe, whom in Greek we call well pleasing, because it is the first step to seek knowledge, the second to delight in what you seek. Third is Melpomene, for *melenpieomene*, that is, applying persistent thought, as it is the first step to find the need; the second, to delight in what you find needful; the third, to pursue the study of what you delight in. Fourth is Thalia, that is, growth, as if she were called *tithonlia*, that is, putting forth shoots, whence Epicharmus, the writer of comedies, says in his comedy *Dipholus*: "When he doesn't see the shoots appear he is consumed with hunger." Fifth is Polyhymnia, for *polymnemen*, as we say, making much memory, because memory is necessary after growth. Sixth is Erato, that is, *euronchomoeon*, which in Latin we call finding the same, because after knowledge and memory it is right that one should find something similar about oneself. Seventh is Terpsichore, that is pleasant filling, whence Hermes in his book *Opimandra* says: "Both from a fill of food and an empty body"—since after finding you must also discriminate and judge what you have found. Eighth is Urania, that is, heavenly, for after judging, you select what to say and what to reject: to choose the useful and reject the inferior is a heavenly ability. Ninth is Calliope, that is, she of the excellent voice, whence Homer also says: "The voice of the goddess speaking." This then is to be the order: first, to find the need for instruction; second, to delight in what you find needful; third, to pursue what you delight in; fourth, to grasp what you pursue; fifth, to remember what you grasp; sixth, to discover in yourself something resembling what you remember; seventh, to judge what you discover; eighth, to discriminate in what you judge; ninth, to make known in attractive form what you select.

The ten organs of speech are: four front teeth, two lips, tongue, palate, throat, lungs. As to authorities cited, the *lex divina* or Bible is here Ps. 32 (33):2, similarly 91:4 (92:3); Anaximander of Lampsacenum on the Hellespont is presumably the same as the Anaximander of 1.13 above; Zenophanes (no doubt for Xenophanes), and Euximenes with his *Theologumena* (compare *θεός*, "god," and *λόγος*, "account"), are unknown, but Tertullian, *De anima* 43.2, mentions a Xenophanes who wrote on the subject of sleep, and Fulgentius at this point seems to be echoing some of Tertullian's authorities (see 1.14 above). As to Pisander, the name is shared by Pisander of Rhodes, epic poet of the 6th or 7th century B.C.; Epicharmus the Dorian writer of comedies in the 5th century B.C., of whose work only fragments survive (together with a few scraps of a poem *Epicharmus* by Ennius), is also referred to in 3.1 and 5 below (and by Tertullian, *De anima* 46.10, 11); the *Opimandra* of Hermes, presumably for *Ὁ ποιμάνδρης*,

'The Herdsman,' is if genuine more likely to be one of the Hermetic books of Egyptian mythology and magic than the early Christian *Shepherd of Hermas*. The Homer quotations are, in the order of the text, from *Iliad* 2.486, 11.21 ('he' is Cinyras), 2.182 (said of Athene, not Calliope). As to the Muses and their expansive etymologies, taken over admiringly in Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* 11.2, we have: Clio, of history, with *cleos* for *κλέος*, "report, fame," taken as fame, reputation, but with Homeric instances bearing, like Latin *fama*, the primary sense of rumor (the same thing is done in 2.2 below); Euterpe, of lyric poetry, for *eû*, "well," and *τέρπω*, "delight"; Melpomene, of tragedy, for *melenpieomene*, compare *μελέτη*, "study," *ποιέω*, "make," and *μενέος*, "lasting"; Thalia, of comedy, for *titthonlia*, for *τίθημι*, "place," and *λήιον*, "crop"; Polyhymnia, of sublime hymns, for *polymnemen*, *πολύς*, "much," and *μνήμη*, "memory" (compare E. K.'s gloss to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, April eclogue: "her name, which (as some construe it) importeth great remembrance"); Erato, of love poetry, for *euronchomoeon*, compare *εὐρών*, "find," and *δμοιος*, "resembling"; Terpsichore, of choral dance and song, here *τέρπω*, "delight," and *κόρος*, "fill, satiety"; Urania, of astronomy, here compare *οὐράνιος*, "heavenly"; and Calliope, of epic poetry, compare *καλός*, "beautiful," and *φωνή*, "voice." For Fulgentius's interpretation of the Muses, see further L. Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony*, ed. A. G. Hatcher (Baltimore, 1963), pp. 38-39. For ancient and medieval attitudes to the Muses, see E. R. Curtius, transl. W. R. Trask, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York, 1953), pp. 228-46, based on his earlier collections of material in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 59 (1939), 129-88, and 63 (1943), 225-74. Fulgentius's explanation of the names of the Muses goes back ultimately to the catalogue in Hesiod's *Theogony* 76-79, transl. N. O. Brown, *Library of Liberal Arts*, 36 (Indianapolis, 1953), p.55, with notes, p.85. The first two and the last two (Clio, Euterpe, Urania, Calliope) come in Hesiod's order and are similarly explained; the other five are differently arranged and given different, more fanciful explanations.

## 16. The Fable of Phaethon

Apollo is said, by making love to the nymph Clymene, to have sired Phaethon, who, aspiring to his father's chariot, sparked off destruction by fire for himself and the earth. So always the sun uniting with water must give rise to certain creatures which, because they appear bounding up from the earth, are called apparitions (*fanontes*), for *fanon* in Greek means appearing. And even though all things are consumed in the destruction of heat, these creatures must seek the heat of the sun for their growth. His sisters are Arethusa and Lampethusa, who bemoan their brother's destruction by fire with bejeweled and gleaming drops, and shed golden amber from their torn

barks; for a sister is an outgrowth of the complete plant, the family group, and they too are produced by the single union of heat and liquid. So these trees which sweat amber when the sun's glowing heat—as their fruits ripen in the scorching months of June and July—reaches the sign of Cancer and Leo, with a mighty seething through their split barks these same trees pour into the river Eridanus their liquid sap, to be solidified in its waters.

Phaethon persuaded his father the sun god to let him drive the sun chariot for one day; he lost control, threatened heaven and earth with conflagration, and was killed by Jove's thunderbolt, which cast him into the river Eridanus (the modern Po). His sisters, the Heliades, so grieved at his death that the gods changed them into poplar trees near the fatal river. *Fanon* is for φαίνω, "appear"; with unwonted restraint Fulgentius does not etymologize the personal names involved. In the Zodiac cycle, the Crab begins on June 22 and the Lion on July 24.

#### 17. Of the Tripod, the Arrows, and the Python

They also associate Apollo with the tripod because the sun has had knowledge of the past, sees the present, and will see the future. They assign to him a bow and arrows, either because his rays leap forth from his globe like arrows, or because as he shows his rays he cuts through all the darkness of uncertainty. It is related that the Python was slain with arrows, and in Greek easy belief is called *pitbos*. They say that he slew the Python because all false belief is crushed like serpents when the true light appears.

#### *Why He Is Depicted Beardless, Although Called Father*

Because in his death and rebirth his youth is always renewed, or because he never fails in his strength as does the moon, which waxes and wanes.

*Pitbos*, for πειθός; cf. πιστός, "credible, credulous."

#### 18. The Fable of Mercury

If the gods took over thefts, there was no need of a judge for their crimes, since they had the heavenly author of wrongdoing. They say Mercury was in charge of trading, carrying a staff or caduceus wreathed with snakes, fur-

nished with feathered heels, and the divine go-between and thief. Let me explain what his name and appearance mean. They chose Mercury for *mercium-curum*, for Mercury can be called the complete trader.

#### *Why Feathers*

His heels are feathered because the feet of businessmen are everywhere in a rush as if winged.

#### *Why a Staff*

They add a staff wreathed with snakes because commerce sometimes gives control and a scepter, sometimes a wound like that given by snakes.

#### *Why a Cap and a Cock*

He is depicted with his head covered by a cap because any commerce is always concealed. They place the cock also under his protection, either because any businessman is always on the watch or because at his crowing they rise to transact their affairs.

#### *Why Hermes*

In Greek he is also called Hermes, that is, *ermeneuse*, which in Latin we call translating, for the reason that fluency in languages is needful to a trader. He is said to pass through both realms, the upper and the lower, because now he rushes aloft through the winds, now plunging down he seeks out the lower world through storms.

#### *Why a Thief, Why called Swift*

They also choose this god as the patron of thieving because in trading there is no difference for a thief between pillage and perjury or between plunder and sacrilege. The star which is called Stilbos in Greek, and which the pagans associate with him, whereby they have also used his name for one of the days, pursues a more rapid course than all the planets in that it com-

pletes its cycle on the seventh day, something which Saturn can do only in twenty-eight years and Jupiter in twelve; whereby also Lucan says: "And Mercury is stayed from its swift motion."

### *Why He Slew Argus*

Then, too, he is said to have slain Argus, the one encircled with a host of eyes, when he had mown down with a single wound, at one blow from the curved blade of the scythe he carries, this vast crop of eyes in one body, gleaming as they were with lively alertness. What would such a fantastic notion of the Greeks signify except that, with a sly blow of the scythe, the cunning of someone both thief and trader got the better of even a hundred guardians and the same number of artful ones, yet ones useless without barter, whence Argus is the Greek for idle? This is the usual fashion in which Greece and its poetic gossiping, always decked in falsehood and yet lying with good intent, refers to such fabrications,

*Mercurium-cursum*, presumably for Latin *mercatus*, "trading," and *cura*, "care," unless *κύριος*, "lord, master," is meant; *ermenense*, compare *ἐρμηνεύς*, "interpreter." Stilbos, called Stilbon by Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.20, and Ausonius *Eclogues* 5.11 (also Firmicus Maternus [early-4th century A.D.] *Mathesis* 2.1.5 ed. C. Sirtl [Leipzig, 1894], p.39), where one manuscript of the 11th century marginally adds Fulgentius's remarks) is the planet Mercury, compare *στρίβω*, "shine brightly," and Mercury's day is Wednesday. In reality, 12 years for the planet Jupiter and 29 for Saturn are the approximate cycle periods, but that for Mercury is 88 days, not 7. Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.662, is being quoted, Mercury there being called *Cyllenius* from having been born on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia. For Argus, *ἀργός* means both "bright" and "idle." For the genesis of the many associations and attributes of Hermes-Mercury, see N. O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: The Evolution of a Myth* (New York, 1947; repr., 1969).

### 19. Of Danaë

as when Danaë was seduced by a golden shower, not rain but coins,

### 20. Of Ganymede

and Ganymede was seized by an eagle, not a real bird but the spoils of war. For Jove, as the ancient author Anacreon has written, when he had started a

war against the Titans—that is, the sons of that Titan who was Saturn's brother—and had made sacrifice in heaven, as a sign of victory he saw close at hand the auspicious flight of an eagle. For so happy an omen, especially since victory did ensue, he made a golden eagle for his war standards and consecrated it to the might of his protection, whereby also among the Romans, standards of this kind are carried. He seized Ganymede in battle as these standards went before him, just as Europa is said to have been carried off on a bull, that is, onto a ship carrying the picture of a bull, as Isis on a heifer, in the same way onto a ship with that kind of picture. Consequently, as you certainly know for a fact, the Egyptians worship the barge of Isis.

Ganymede, the beautiful Trojan boy, was carried off to Olympus by an eagle of Jove to serve as cupbearer to the gods; the rape of Ganymede by the eagle was a popular subject for art in antiquity, for instance, the bronze group by Leochares the Attic sculptor of the 4th century B.C. Isis on a heifer seems to be an error for Io, the maiden loved by Zeus (Jove) and changed into a white heifer by his jealous wife. But the euhemeristic interpretation of all three—Danaë violated and then paid with gold coins, Ganymede captured by a legion with an eagle standard, and Io equated with Isis and associated with a boat—is also found in Lactantius (early 4th century) *Divine Institutes* 1.11; and this is most likely Fulgentius's immediate source.

## 21. The Fable of Perseus and the Gorgons

They say that Perseus was the slayer of the Gorgon Medusa. They intended there to be three Gorgons—the first of them Sthenno; the second, Euryale; the third, Medusa—and since their story has been written by Lucan and Ovid, poets perfectly well known in the first teaching stages taken with schoolmasters, I have considered it unnecessary to repeat the tale at length. Theocnidus, the historian of antiquities, relates that there was a King Phorcys, who left his three daughters wealthy. Of these Medusa, who was the more forceful, increased her wealth by her rule and by cultivation and husbandry; whence she is called Gorgo, for *georgigo*, for in Greek *georgi* is the name for husbandmen. She is also described as having a snakelike head because she was the more cunning. Perseus, coveting her rich domain, slew her (he is called winged because he came with ships); and carrying off her head, that is, her substance, he grew all the richer by securing her wide territories. Then, invading the kingdom of Atlas, he forced him to flee into a mountain, whence he is said to have been changed into a mountain, as it were,

by the head of the Gorgo, that is, by her substance. But let me explain what the Greeks, inclined as they are to embroider, would signify by this finely spun fabrication. They intended three Gorgons, that is, the three kinds of terror: the first terror is indeed that which weakens the mind; the second, that which fills the mind with terror; the third, that which not only enforces its purpose upon the mind but also its gloom upon the face. From this notion the three Gorgons took their names: first, Sthenno, for *stenno* is the Greek for weakening, whence we call *asthenian* sickness; second, Euryale, that is, broad extent, whence Homer said: "Troy with its broad streets"; then Medusa, for *meidusam*, because one cannot look upon her. Thus Perseus with the help of Minerva, that is, manliness aided by wisdom, destroyed these terrors. He flew away with face averted because manliness never considers terror. He is also said to carry a mirror, because all terror is reflected not only in the heart but also in the outward appearance. From her blood Pegasus is said to have been born, shaped in the form of renown; whereby Pegasus is said to have wings, because fame is winged. Therefore also Tiberianus says: "Pegasus neighing thus across the upper air." Then he is also described as having struck out a fountain for the Muses with his heel, because the Muses either follow their own method of describing the renown of heroes or indicate that of the ancients.

Of the authors mentioned, Lucan deals with the Perseus story in *Pharsalia* 9.620 ff., and Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 4.617 ff.; Theocnidus, if not intended for a more famous name like Theognis or Theocritus, who were not historians, is unknown. The Homer quotation is *Iliad* 2.141, and the Tiberianus is Fragment 2, elsewhere unrecorded. Of etymologies, *georgi* is for γεωργός, "husbandman"; *asthenian* for ἀσθένεια, "illness"; Euryale, for εὐρύαλος, "broad"; and *meidusam* appears to be a solitary example of a reversed etymology, for δυν-, "evilly," and μειδᾶω, "smile." For other references to Pegasus and the Hippocrene, see the tetrameter poem in the prologue above, and 3.1 below. For the ramifications of the Perseus story in folktales, see E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, 3 vols. (London, 1894-96).

## 22. The Fable of Admetus and Alcestis

As there is nothing nobler than a well-disposed wife, so there is nothing more savage than an aggressive one. For a prudent one offers her own soul as a pledge for the safety of her husband, to the same degree that a malevolent one counts her own life as nothing compared with his death; thus the legally espoused wife is taken up either with the honeyed sweetness of plea-



sant ways or with the gall of malice and is either a permanent solace or an endless torture. Admetus, king of Greece, sought Alcestis in marriage; her father had issued an edict that whoever could yoke two opposed wild animals to his chariot might marry her. This Admetus therefore besought Apollo and Hercules, and they harnessed a lion and a wild boar to his chariot, and so he married Alcestis. When Admetus fell ill and discovered he was dying, he sought to avert it by entreating Apollo, who said he could do nothing for him in his sickness unless he found one of his relatives who would voluntarily accept death in his place. This his wife undertook; and so Hercules, when he went down to drag away the three-headed dog Cerberus, also freed her from the lower world. They have explained Admetus as an allegory of the mind, and he is named Admetus as one whom fear (*metus*) could seize upon (*adire*). Also he desired Alcestis in marriage, for *alce* in the Attic dialect of Greek is the word for succour, whereby Homer says: "There is no other strength of mind and no other succour." Thus the mind hoping for succour harnessed two opposed wild beasts to its chariot—that is, adopted two strengths, of mind and body—the lion for strength of mind and the wild boar for strength of body. Then he asked the help of Apollo and Hercules, that is, wisdom and strength. In place of his soul succour exposes itself to death in the form of Alcestis, and strength rescues succour from the shades although it is weakening at the peril of death, as Hercules did with Alcestis.

Admetus was king of Phærae in Thessaly. *Alce*, for ἀλκή, "succour"; the Homer quotation is *Iliad* 3.45. For the legend, see A. Lesky, *Alkestis, der Mythos und das Drama* (Vienna, 1925).

## Book 2

### Prologue

Attentive to your revered command, Master, I have in my destitute state committed this foolishness of mine to your judgment, suspended on the horns of a dilemma whether any reader will praise what I have put together or demolish what I have worked over. But since these matters in no way exalt my reputation or disguise my shortcomings (in the sense that if the reader improve his knowledge by them, he may acknowledge it to God for granting the improvement to him; but if he find worse folly in them, he

may blame it on the one who committed it), these things, therefore, are not ours, but His gift, and whatever improvements may result, their bestowal is of God, not man. Just as it is a sign of malice to keep silent on what I know, so it is not a fault to explain what I have understood. Therefore, if you do learn more about these matters, praise the sincerity of a mind which has not held back what it possessed; and if you were ignorant of these matters before, you at least have from my efforts an arena in which you can exercise your own mental talents.

The parenthesis echoes the *Non nobis, Domine* Ps. 114 (115):1; compare also I Cor. 1:31, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

### 1. The Fable of the Judgment of Paris

Philosophers have distinguished a threefold life for mankind, by which they mean first, the meditative; second, the practical; and third, the sensual—or as we call them in Latin, the contemplative, the active, the voluptuary—as the prophet David declared, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful," that is, does not go, does not stand, does not sit. For the first or contemplative life is that which has to do with the search for knowledge and truth, the life led in our days by bishops, priests, and monks, in olden days by philosophers. With these there is no greed for profit, no insane rage, no poisonous spite, no reek of lust; and if concern for tracking down the truth and meditating on what is right keeps them thin, they are adorned by their good name and fed by their hope. The second kind of life led is the active one, so eager for advantages, acquisitive of adornment, insatiable for possessions, sly in grasping at them, assiduous in guarding them; for it covets what it can get rather than seeks after knowledge, and thinks nothing of what is right when it seizes what is at hand; it has no stability because it does not go about things honorably; in olden times certain despots led such a life, among us the whole world leads it. The life of pleasure, entirely given up to lust, is the sinful kind which considers nothing honorable to be worthwhile, but seeking only the corrupt ways of living is either made effeminate by lust or bloodied by murder or burnt up by theft or soured by envy. This life of an Epicurean or pleasure-lover according to the ancients, what among us seems the natural way of life, is not a punishable offense: since no one pursues the good, no good can be produced. The poets

explain in such terms as these the contest of the three goddesses—that is, Minerva, Juno, and Venus—rivals in the superior excellence of their beauty. They have said that Jove could not judge among these, perhaps because they did not realize that the judgment of this world has preordained limits, for they believed man was made with free will; wherefore, if Jove had judged as God, in condemning two lives he would have committed the world to only one kind. But they pass the decision over to man, to whom a free choice is owed. But the shepherd Paris, being neither straight as an arrow nor sure as a spear nor handsome of face nor wise of mind, did a dull and stupid thing and, as is the way of wild beasts and cattle, turned his snail's eyes towards lust rather than selected virtue or riches. But let me explain what these three goddesses have to say for themselves on the three kinds of living.

### Of Minerva

The first or intellectual life we name in honor of contemplative wisdom; thus they say that she was born from the head of Jove, because the intellect is situated in the brain; and she was armed, because she is full of resource. They associate her with the Gorgon, worn on her breast as a symbol of fear, just as the wise man bears awe in his breast to guard against his enemies. They give her a plume and helmet, for the mind of the wise man is both armed and noble; whence Plautus in his *Trinummus* declares: "It certainly has a head like a mushroom, it covers him completely." She is also enfolded in a robe of three folds, either because all wisdom is many-sided or because it is kept hidden. She also carries a long spear, because wisdom strikes at long range with its pronouncements. The dress has three folds also because all wisdom is concealed from without and is rarely seen. They also choose to put the owl in her charge, because wisdom has its flashes of lightning even in the dark. Whereby they also claim that she was the founder of Athens, and Minerva in Greek is called Athene, for *athanate parthene*, that is, immortal virgin, because wisdom cannot die or be seduced.

### Of Juno

They put Juno in charge of the active life, for Juno is named for getting ahead (*a iuuando*). She is said to rule over dominions, because this kind of

life is so much concerned with riches; she is also depicted with a scepter, because riches and dominions are close kin. They say that Juno has her head veiled, because all riches are always hidden; they choose her as the goddess of birth, because riches are always productive and sometimes abortive. They also place the peacock under her patronage, because the whole acquisitive life of power is always looking to adorn its appearance; and as the peacock adorns its front by spreading out in a curve the star-spangled sweep of its tail, and thereby shamelessly exposes its rear, so the striving for riches and renown is alluring for the moment but eventually exposes itself; whence Theophrastus in his moral writings declared: "Heed what is left behind"; and Solomon: "And in the end of a man is the disclosing of his works." They also connect her with Iris as the rainbow of peace, because just as the man who is coloring various ornaments for the moment takes refuge in the curve of the rainbow, so fortune, though at first glance brightly colored, soon after fades away.

### *Of Venus*

They have taken Venus as the third one, as the symbol of the life of pleasure. Venus they explained either as the good things of life according to the Epicureans, or as the empty things of life according to the Stoics, for the Epicureans praise pleasure but the Stoics condemn it: the first cultivate license; the others want no part of it. Whereby she is called Aphrodite, for in Greek *afros* is the word for foam, either because lust rises momentarily like foam and turns to nothing, or because the ejaculation of seed is foamy. Then the poets relate that when Saturn's genitals were cut off with a scythe and thrown into the sea, Venus was born from them—a piece of poetic folly meaning nothing less than that Saturn is called Chronos in Greek, for in Greek *chronos* is the word for time. The powers of the seasons, that is, crops, are totally cut off by the scythe and, cast into the liquids of the belly, as it were into the sea, needs must produce lust. For abundance of satiety creates lust, as Terence says: "Venus grows cold without Ceres and Bacchus." Also they depict her naked, either because she sends out her devotees naked or because the sin of lust is never cloaked or because it only suits the naked. They also considered roses as under her patronage, for roses both grow red and have thorns, as lust blushes at the outrage to modesty and pricks with the sting of sin; and as the rose gives pleasure, but is swept away by the swift movement of the seasons, so lust is pleasant for a moment, but then disappears forever. Also under her patronage they place doves, for the reason that birds

of this species are fiercely lecherous in their love-making; with her they also associate the three Graces (*Carites*), two turned towards us and one turned away from us, because all grace sets off alone but returns twofold; the Graces are naked because no grace has any part of subtle ornament. They also depict her swimming in the sea, because all lust suffers shipwreck of its affairs, whence also Porphyrius in his *Epigrams* declares: "The shipwrecked sailor of Venus in the deep, naked and destitute." She is also depicted carrying a sea-shell, because an organism of this kind, as Juba notes in his physiological writings, is always linked in open coupling through its entire body.

The quotation from David is Ps. 1:1, that from Plautus's *Trinummus* 851, of a large hat; from Solomon, Ecclesiasticus 11:29 (11:27); from Terence, *Eunuchus* 732, with reference to corn and wine, also cited by Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.60, by Jerome, *Epist.* 54.9, and by Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 21, Cicero perhaps being Fulgentius's direct source, as similarly in the anonymous *Pervigilium Veneris* (see opening prologue above, note 14), line 42: "Both Ceres and Bacchus and the god of poets are in attendance"; for Optatianus Porphyrius (died 304 A.D.), *Epigram* 29, not elsewhere recorded. The specific moral writings of Theophrastus and the physiology of Juba are unknown, though authors so named are on record: a Theophrastus (died 287 B.C.), a pupil of Aristotle, wrote on metaphysics; Juba, king of Numidia (died 46 B.C.), who sided with Pompey, had a son of the same name (died 23 A.D.), who was educated in Rome and acquired a reputation for learning, and a Juba of Mauretania, a writer on metrics whose work is now lost, flourished in the 2d century A.D. Minerva's Gorgon means her wearing the head of Medusa; Athene as *athanate parthene*, for *ἀθάνατος*, "immortal," and *παρθένος*, "virgin," in allusion to her temple, the Parthenon in Athens. Juno is linked to Iris in the sense *Ips*, "rainbow." Venus as Epicurean good things of life presupposes the common noun *venus*, "charm," or perhaps *venustas*, "beauty," or *venia*, "favor," and as the Stoic empty things may be meant for *vanus*, "empty." *Afros*, for *ἀφρός*, "foam"; *chronos*, for *χρόνος*, "time." The sentence on the sea of the belly is repeated from 1.2 above. Pliny, *Natural History* 35.36, describes the Venus *anadyomenes*, "rising from the sea," painted by the great Apelles of Ephesus, who flourished in the 3d century B.C. For the Venus story, see R. Schilling, *La Religion Romaine de Vénus* (Paris, 1954). For the foolish choice of the shepherd Paris, compare Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, July eclogue, 145 ff., and for the Graces, E. K.'s gloss to the April eclogue, 109 ff.; much of Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* is concerned with the lures of all three lives—voluntary (2.153 ff.), active (2.406 ff., 3.108 ff., 4.1 ff.), and contemplative (4.212 ff.).

## 2. The Fable of Hercules and Omphale

Be moderate, I beg you, judges, with the labors to which you commit men. For whatever boyish or effeminate feeling was involved in his love,

the virtue of Hercules fought hard in the battle against lust. For the allure of woman is greater than the world, because the greatness of the world cannot overcome him whom lust tightly held: it attacked through the evil of a woman his virtue which could not be secured by nature. For Hercules fell in love with Omphale, who persuaded him both to soften the delicate shrunken parts of fibers and to whirl the spindle round finely with his thumb. For Hercules is called in Greek, Heracles, that is, *eroncleos*, which in Latin we call the fame of strong men, whereby Homer says: "We heard only a rumor." So too he is said to be the grandson of Alcaeus, for *alce* in Greek is translated as the assumption of power; and he has a mother Alcmena, for *almera*, which in Greek means salty. So from the fire of the mind, from Jove, the assumption of power, from his grandfather Alcaeus, and the saltiness of wisdom, from Alcmena, what else but the renown of valor is produced? Yet he is conquered by lust, for *onfalon* in Greek means the navel, for lust is ruled in the navel by women, as says the Holy Scripture: "Thy navel was not cut," as if to say: "Your sin was not cut off." For the womb is firmly tied to this, whereby the umbilical cord is situated at the same place for securing the newly born. This shows that lust can conquer even virtue that is still unconquered.

Omphale, independent queen of Lydia, held Hercules in bondage for three years, during which time, according to later accounts, he lived effeminately, spinning wool and sometimes wearing women's garments. Hercules had a grandfather, Alcaeus of Lesbos, writer of warlike odes, and for parents, Jove and Alcmena. The quotations are from Homer, *Iliad* 2.486 (using *κλέος* however in the primary sense "rumor" rather than for "renown," compare 1.15 above); and the Bible, *lex divina*, here Ezek. 16:4 ("In the day thou wast born thy navel," etc.). The etymologies are: *eroncleos*, for *ἥρως*, "hero," and *κλέος*, "fame"; *alce*, for *ἀλκή*, "force, strong defense"; *almera*, for *ἀλμυρός*, "salt, bitter"; *onfalon*, for *ὀμφαλός*, "navel"; and *epomphalia* for the umbilical cord; compare *ἐπομφάλιος*, "upon the navel." For the Hercules legends, see B. Schweitzer, *Herakles* (Tübingen, 1922); J. Bayet, *Les Origines de l'Hercule Romain* (Paris, 1926).

### 3. The Fable of Cacus and Hercules

If thieves give out smoke, anyone can spot the despoiler even when he denies it. Thus he thrusts out blackness or smoke so as not to be observed, and the very property which came by theft disappears in smoke. Cacus is said to have driven off some cattle of Hercules, which he concealed by having dragged them by the tails into his cave; but Hercules throttled him to death.

For *cacon* is the Greek for what we call evil. Thus all evil gives out smoke, that is, puts out either what is contrary to the truth, that is, light, or what is offensive to those who see it, as smoke is to the eyes, or what is dark and dismal raillery. And so evil in its manifold forms is two-faced, not straightforward: evil does harm also in three ways, either as aggressive when observed or subtly like a treacherous friend or secretly like an invisible thief. Thus he leads off the cattle, dragging them so that their tracks may be reversed, because every evil person, in order to seize another's property, depends for his protection on the reversing of his traces. Thus he covets the property of Hercules, because all evil is opposed to virtue. Finally he hides them in his cave because evil is never frank or open-faced; but virtue slays the evil ones and redeems its own possessions.

The giant Cacus stole some of Hercules' cattle, dragging them backwards into his cave to hide their traces; but the rest of the herd passing the cave bellowed at those within, and the theft discovered, Hercules throttled Cacus. *Cacon* is for *kakós*, "evil."

#### 4. The Fable of Antaeus and Hercules

Antaeus is explained as a form of lust, whence in Greek we say *antion*, contrary; he was born of the earth because lust is conceived of the flesh. Also he emerged the more agile by keeping touch with the earth, for lust rises the more evilly as it shares the flesh. Also he is overcome by Hercules as by the strength of renown, for he perishes when contact with earth is denied him and when raised higher he could not draw upon his mother's aid; whereby he showed the obvious legendary character of his doings. For when virtue bears aloft the whole mind and denies it the sight of the flesh, it at once emerges victorious. Thus too he is said to have sweated hard and long in his wrestling, because it is a hard struggle when the dispute is with lust and vices, as Plato says in his philosophical writings: "Wise men wage a greater war with vices than with human foes." So too Diogenes the Cynic said when he was tormented by pain in the lungs and saw men rushing past to the amphitheater: "What folly on men's part: they rush to see men fighting wild beasts, and they pass by me struggling with the pain provided by nature."

The giant Antaeus, invincible so long as he remained in contact with his mother earth, forced all strangers to wrestle with him and then slew them; Hercules, lift-

ing him from the earth, crushed him to death in the air. *Antion*, for *antior*, "opposed." The quotation from Plato's philosophical writings (*in moralibus*) and the Diogenes anecdote have not been traced. For Hercules as typifying renown, see 2.2 and 3 above. N. Tadic, "Une Etymologie Fulgentienne, celle d'*Antée*," *Latomus* 28 (1969): 685-90, comments on the implications of Fulgentius's association of Antaeus with lust in terms of his Christian apologist standpoint.

## 5. The Fable of Teiresias

Teiresias saw two snakes coupling; when he struck at them with his staff, he was turned into a woman. After an interval of time he again saw them coupling, and in like fashion struck at them and was restored to his former sex. Thus when Juno and Jove had an argument about their respective degree of love-pleasure, they sought him out to be their arbiter. He said that a man has three-twelfths of love-pleasure, and a woman, nine. In a rage Juno deprived him of his sight, but Jove granted him divinity.

However monstrous a Greek fabrication this is, it can be explained. For they took Teiresias as an allegory of time, as for *teroseon*, that is perpetual summer. Thus in springtime, which is masculine because at that season there is a closing and immovability of plants, when he saw before him the creatures coupling and struck at them with his staff—that is, in the heat of temper, he is turned into the feminine gender, that is, into the heat of summer. They took summer to be in the form of a woman because at that season all things blossom forth with their leaves. And because there are two seasons for mating, spring and autumn, having stopped their conceiving he returned again to his former appearance. For autumn so strips all things in its masculine guise that, with the veins of life-giving sap in the trees firmly checked once more and pulling tight the open network of the leaves, it stamps out its drooping baldness. Then he is sought as a judge between the two divinities—that is, the two elements, fire and air—as they argue on the true meaning of love. He gives an honest judgment, for in the blossoming of plants twice the amount of air as of fire is required; for air combines with the soil and helps produce the leaves and impregnate the shoots, but the sun serves only to ripen the grain. In proof of this, he is blinded by Juno, for the reason that wintertime grows black with dark clouds in the air, but Jove assists with the conceiving of future growth by granting inner forces, that is foresight; for this reason January is depicted with two faces, so that it can see both what is past and what is to come.



Teiresias seeing two snakes coupling killed the female with his staff and was thereupon changed into a woman; seven years later he saw the same thing at the same place, killed the male, and so regained his manhood. His judgment of a dispute on the comparative pleasure gained by a man and a woman from love earned him the wrath of Hera (Juno), who blinded him; in compensation Zeus (Jove) gave him inward sight and a life extended to seven generations. In Latin *ver*, "spring," is neuter, not masculine, but the other two seasons mentioned fit the explanation, *aestas*, "summer," feminine, and *autumnus*, "autumn," masculine. *Terosion* is for *thépos*, "summer," and *dei(r)*, "forever." January was the month of the two-faced deity Janus.

## 6. The Fable of Prometheus

No protection was sought across the lands of earth until stealing finally reached heaven; there, there was absence of silver or gold, but flame could be stolen. They say that Prometheus made man of clay, but made him without soul or feeling. Minerva in her admiration pledged this office, that if there were anything he desired by way of heavenly gifts, he might ask it to assist his task; if it were possible she would carry him up to the gods and thereafter, if he saw anything suitable for his pottery shop, he might be all the more readily taken for a sharp-eyed judge in the matter. She brought away the workman, bearing him up to the sky between the folds of her seven-coated shield; and when he saw all the heavenly substance of life stirred up in flaming vapors, he secretly attached a stick of fennel to the wheels of Phoebus's chariot and stole some fire; implanting this in the puny breast of man he gave his body life. Thus they describe how he was bound and endlessly exposed his liver to a vulture. And although Nicagorus, in the book he wrote called *Distemistea*, describes how he first gave rise to the image and explains the exposing of his liver to the vulture as a representation of spite, compare also Petronius Arbiter, who says:

The vulture picks over the liver within him  
And probes the breast and the intestines;  
But this is not he whom lukewarm poets name,  
But spite and debauchery in the heart;

so too Aristoxenus in the book he wrote called *Lindorecemarium* makes a similar suggestion. Yet I take Prometheus to be for *pronianteu* which in Latin we call divine foresight. By such divine foresight, and Minerva as

heavenly wisdom, man was made and the divine fire they wanted they explain to us as the soul divinely inspired, which according to the pagans is said to be taken from the skies. The liver which Prometheus exposes to the vulture is what we call the heart, because no small number of philosophers have declared that wisdom dwells in the heart, whereby Juvenal says: "The rustic youth feels no flutter in his left breast." Thus they explain the vulture as an allegory of the world, because the world is both impelled by a sudden swift flight and fed with an endless supply of corpses and the newly born. Thus is fed and sustained the wisdom of divine providence, which cannot have an end to itself, nor can the world in any way cease from such food. Then it is told how Pandora was fashioned, for Pandora is the Greek for the gift of all, because the soul is universally bestowed on all.

Prometheus, refusing Jove's offer of Pandora for wife, made the first man and woman of clay, adding the animating fire which with Minerva's help he stole from the sun. He was chained to a rock in punishment by Jove, a vulture feeding daily on his liver. Of authorities mentioned, Nicagorus may be for Nicagoras, the name of an Athenian sophist of the 2d century B.C., writer of a series of lives of the famous, though nothing is known elsewhere of a work entitled *Distemisteia*, compare *Διὸς θεμιότερα*, "customs of Jove"; the four lines of Petronius, not found elsewhere, are known to editors as Fragment 25; Aristoxenus of Tarentum was a philosopher and musician of the 3d century B.C., but no medical book of his called *Lindosecemarium* is known (variant reading *Linidosecemarium*, from *lividus*, "of the liver," and *secare*, "to cut, dissect" ?); the Juvenal line is *Satire* 7.159, with "It is the fault of the teacher that the rustic youth," etc., immediately before what is quoted. Of etymologies, with *pronianteu* compare *πρόνοια*, "fore-sight," and *θεός*, "god"; Pandora is *πανδώρα*, "giver of all." For the legend, see L. Séchan, *Le Mythe de Prométhée* (Paris, 1951).

## 7. The Fable of the Adultery of Venus

The Sun fairly reveals the adultery of Venus, while the Moon is accustomed to keep it secret. Venus lay with Mars, and the Sun, detecting her, betrayed her to her husband Vulcan, who forged steel-hard fetters and, chaining both the deities, showed them lying in their shame. She, in her grief, inflamed with love the five daughters of the Sun—that is, Pasiphae, Medea, Phaedra, Circe, and Dirce. Let us look into what the prating of poets may allude to by this. Certainly for our present age there remains full evidence of this fable, for valor corrupted by lust becomes clear at the witness of the sun, whereby Ovid in the fifth book of his *Metamorphoses* says: "This

god was the first to see." And this valor corrupted by lust is shamefully held in the fetterlike grip of its ardor. She thus inflamed with love the five daughters of the Sun, that is, the five human senses devoted to light and truth and as if made dark by this corrupting of the Sun's brood. For this reason also they chose names of this kind for the five daughters of the Sun: first, as was seen, Pasiphae, that is, for *pasinjanon*, which in Latin we call evident to all, for sight looks into the other four senses since it sees the one who gives utterance, notices what can be touched, looks on what has been tasted, and points to what can be smelled; the second, Medea, for what is heard, that is, *medenidean*, which in Latin we call no sight, for the voice is hollow in the body; third, Circe, for touch, that is, as if one said in Greek *cironcrine*, which in Latin we call judgment of the hands; fourth, Phaedra, or odorous, as if one should say *feronedon*, for bearing sweetness; fifth, Dirce, judge of taste, that is, for *drimoncrine*, which in Latin we call judging what is bitter.

The story of Venus, Mars, and Vulcan is told at length by Homer, *Odyssey* 8.266-369; the Ovid line cited, not book five but from *Met.* 4.172, alludes aptly to the sun god seeing the adultery of Venus and Mars. In making all five women daughters of the Sun, Fulgentius seems to depart from the classical tradition: Medea, Phaedra, and Dirce elsewhere are regularly assigned a different parentage; Hyginus *Fabulae* 148, says merely "To Sol's progeny, however, Venus, because of his disclosure, was always hostile." The etymologies are: *pasinjanon*, for *πᾶσι*, "in all things," and *φανός*, "bright, conspicuous"; *medenidean*, for *μηδέν*, "nothing," and *ιδέα*, "appearance"; *cironcrine*, for *χείρ*, "hand," and *κρίνω*, "judge"; *feronedon*, for *φέρω*, "bear," and *ἡδύς*, "sweet"; and *drimoncrine*, for *δριμύς*, "sharp," and once again *κρίνω*, "judge."

## 8. The Fable of Ulysses and the Sirens

The Sirens are named as deceivers in Greek, for the allure of love is interpreted in three ways, by song or by sight or by habit: some creatures are loved for [the pleasure of their song], some for beauty of appearance, and some for pleasant habits. The companions of Ulysses pass by these with ears stopped up, and he himself goes past tied up. For Ulysses in Greek is for *olonxenos*, that is, stranger to all; and because wisdom is a stranger to all things of this world, so Ulysses is called crafty. Then he both hears and sees, that is, recognizes and sizes up and still passes by the Sirens, that is, the allures of pleasure. And they die just because they are heard, in the sense that all self-indulgent feelings of a wise man die away. Also they are winged

creatures, because they may quickly enter the minds of lovers; whereby they have feet like a hen's, because the indulgence of lust dissipates all it possesses. And finally they are called Sirens, because *sirene* is the Greek for betray.

The Sirens, three sea-nymphs part bird and part woman, by their seductive singing lured sailors to death. When Odysseus's (Ulysses') ship was to sail past them, forewarned he stuffed wax in the ears of his companions and had himself tied to the mast. Failing in their lure, the Sirens perished in the sea. The words in brackets are supplied to complete the sense. *Olonxenos* is for *ὅλος*, "entire," and *ξένος*, "stranger, traveler"; for *sirene*, compare *σῖρω*, "drag" and its Latin equivalent *trahere*, both "drag" and "betray." For Ulysses in legend and literature, see W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*, 2d ed. (Ann Arbor, 1963).

## 9. The Fable of Scylla

They say that Scylla was a most beautiful maiden loved by Glaucus, son of Anthedon. Circe, the daughter of the Sun, thought much of him and, growing jealous of Scylla, put magic herbs in the pool in which she was accustomed to bathe. When she immersed herself in it her loins were filled with wolves and wild sea dogs. For Scylla in Greek is said to be for *exquina*, which in Latin we call violence. And what is violence but lust? Glaucus loves this lust, for Glaucus is the Greek for one-eyed, whereby we call blindness glaucoma. For anyone who loves debauchery is blind. And he is said to have been the son of Anthedon, because Anthedon in Greek is for *antiidon*, which in Latin we call seeing the opposite; thus inflammation of the eyes is produced by conflicting vision. And Scylla is explained as the symbol of a harlot, because all her lustful groin must be filled with dogs and wolves; she is then truly filled with wolves and dogs, because she cannot satisfy her private parts with inroads of any other kind. But Circe is said to have hated her. Circe, as described above, is named for *cironcrine*, judgment of the hand or working skill, as Terence says: "From toil to pleasure, she took the offer, and afterwards set up in the trade." Ulysses also sailed harmlessly past her, for wisdom scorns lust; he had a wife called Penelope the chaste, because all chastity is linked to wisdom.

The sea nymph Scylla was loved by the sea deity Glaucus, who appealed to Circe for aid; Circe fell in love with him and punished her rival by pouring the juices of poisonous herbs into the waters where Scylla bathed. Scylla was transformed into a monster, her lower parts encircled with the necks and heads of six fierce dogs. Odysseus (Ulysses) sailed safely past her on his voyage back to his faithful

wife Penelope. Of etymologies, *exquima* may be for *αἰσχύρη*, "shameful deed" (Scylla is in fact from *σκέλλω*, "rend"); Glaucus is for *γλαυκός*, meaning however "gleaming, gray-eyed" rather than "one-eyed"; glaucoma is taken from *γλαύκωμα*, "cataract"; *antiidon* is *ἀντί*, "opposite, against," and *εἶδος*, "form, what is seen"; and, "as described above," that is in 2.7, *cironocrina* is for *χείρ*, "hand," and *κρίνω*, "judge." The Terence quotation is from *Andria* ("The Woman of Andros"), 78–79, of a harlot, beginning, "As the human mind always runs downhill, from toil to pleasure," etc.

#### 10. The Fable of King Midas and the River Pactolus

King Midas besought Apollo that whatever he touched might turn to gold; since he deserved it, the boon turned into a punishment, and he began to be tortured by the effects of his own wish, for whatever he touched straightway did become gold. This, therefore, was a golden penury and a rich poverty, for both food and drink stiffened and hardened into a gold substance. So he besought Apollo to change his evil choice and received the reply that he should immerse his head three times in the waters of the river Pactolus. From this action the Pactolus is said continuously to carry down golden sands. Clearly poets have sagaciously alluded here to avarice, for the reason that any seeker after avarice when he fixes everything at a price dies of hunger, and such was King Midas; but the greatest contribution of his wealth, as Solicrates of Cyzicos relates in the books of his history, was that, with this total revenue of his, King Midas diverted the river Pactolus, which once ran to the sea, through innumerable channels for irrigating that territory and made the river fertile by the avarice he had dispensed. Midas in Greek is for *medenidon*, that is knowing nothing, for a miser is so stupid that he cannot help himself.

Further references to the Midas story are made in the opening prologue (see note 9) and in 3.9 below, where the etymology, *medenidon* for *μηδέν*, "nothing," and *εἶδον*, "perceive," is repeated (an almost identical one has already been used for Medea in 2.7 above). A historian Solicrates *Cyzicenus* is unknown (*Cyzicenus* for Cyzicenus, native of Cyzicos on the Propontis or Sea of Marmora).

#### 11. The Fable of Minerva and Vulcan

When Vulcan made the thunderbolt for Jove, he accepted a promise from Jove that he might take anything he wished. He asked for Minerva in marriage; Jove ordered Minerva to defend her maidenhood by force of arms.

When they were to enter the nuptial bed, Vulcan in the struggle spilt his seed on the floor, and from it was born Erichthonius with the feet of a serpent, for *eris* is the Greek for strife, and *ctonus* is the name for the earth. Minerva hid him in a basket and entrusted him, with a serpent nearby as guardian, to the two sisters, Aglauros and Pandora. It was he who first invented the chariot. They explained Vulcan as the fire of rage, whereby Vulcan is named as the heat of desire; he made the lightning for Jove, that is, he stirred up rage. They chose him to be the husband of Minerva because even rage is somewhat depleted for the wise. She defended her maidenhood by force of arms, that is, all wisdom by strength of mind protects the integrity of its own habits against fury. Whence indeed Erichthonius was born, for *eris* is the Greek for strife, and *tonos* is not only earth, but can also mean envy, whereby Thales of Miletus says: "Envy is the devourer of worldly fame." And what else but the strife of envy could the weakening rage of wisdom produce? Wisdom, that is, Minerva, hid it in a basket, that is, concealed it in her heart, for every wise man hides his rage in his heart. Minerva placed a serpent close by as a guardian, that is, destruction, which she entrusted to the two maidens, Aglauros and Pandora. For Pandora is called the gift of all, and Aglauros is for *acouleron*, that is, the forgetting of sadness. For the wise man entrusts his grief either to that kindheartedness which is the gift of all or to forgetting, as was said of Caesar: "You who forget nothing except the wrongs done you." When Erichthonius grew up, what is he said to have invented? Nothing less than the racecourse, where there is always the strife of envy, as Virgil says: "Erichthonius first dared to join chariots and four horses." Take note what merit there is when chastity is joined to wisdom, for against it even the god of fire could not prevail.

Erichthonius "with the feet of a serpent," more accurately with serpents' tails for legs; what he invented is the second time called *circum*, "around," meaning "race-track," but a variant reading *currum*, "chariot," seems distinctly possible. Thales of Miletus fits the famous Greek mathematician of the 6th century B.C., but the moralizing remark credited to him is untraced; the flattering remark made of Caesar is Cicero's *Pro Ligario* 12, in fact addressed to Caesar; the Virgil reference is to *Georgics* 3.113-14, although Fulgentius may have met this, and a comment on it, in Tertullian's *De spectaculo* 9. *Eris* is for *ἔρις*, "strife"; *ctonus* for *χθών*, "earth," but in its second citation as *tonos* a play on words seems intended, for *φθόνος*, "envy"; for Vulcan one of the very occasional Latin etymologies is being proposed, here *voluntas*, "desire"; Pandora as *πανδώρα*, "giver of all," repeats the etymology of 2.6 above, but Pandrosos, not Pandora, is more usually the name for the nurse of Erichthonius; for *acouleron*, compare *ἀ-χολος*, "allaying anger or melancholy."

## 12. The Fable of Dionysus

Jove lay with Semele, by whom Father Liber was born; he roared as he came against her with his thunderbolt; whereby the father bearing off the boy placed him in his own thigh and later gave him to Maro for nursing. There were four sisters named, including Semele, namely Ino, Autonoe, Semele, and Agave. Let us investigate what this fable symbolizes. There are four stages of intoxication—that is, first, excess of wine; second, forgetting things; third, lust; fourth, madness—whereby these four received the name of Bacchae: the Bacchae are so called for their raging (*baccantes*) with wine. First is Ino, for *inos*, the Greek word we have for wine; second, Autonoe, for *autenunoe*, that is, ignorant of herself; third, Semele, for *somalion*, which in Latin we call the released body, where she is said to have born Father Liber, that is, intoxication born of lust; fourth, Agave, who is comparable to insanity because in her violence she cut off her son's head. Thus he is called Father Liber because the rage of wine frees men's minds; he is said to have conquered the people of India because that race is certainly given to wine, in two respects, one that the fierce heat of the sun makes them drinkers, the other that in that part of the world there is wine like that of Falernum or Meroë, in which there is such strength that even a confirmed drunkard will scarcely drink a pint in a whole month; whereby Lucan says: "Falernian, to which add Meroë, forcing its stubborn nature to ferment," for it cannot be in any way weakened by water. For nursing Dionysus was handed over to Maro, a form of Mero, for by *merum* is sustained all intoxication. He is also said to ride on tigers, because all intoxication goes with savageness; and minds affected by wine are softened, whence he is also called Lyaeus, distinguished for softness. Dionysus is depicted as a youth, because drunkenness is never mature; and he is shown as naked, either because every wine-bibber becomes exposed to robbery or because the drunkard lays bare the secrets of his mind.

Dionysus, the Roman Bacchus or Father Liber, god of wine and revelry, was the son of Jove and Semele; the mother was destroyed with the babe in her womb, ripped out by Jove, brought to maturity in his thigh, and given to the nymph Macris (rather than Maro as Fulgentius calls her), daughter of Semele's sister Autonoe, to be nursed. Of Semele's other sisters, the Bacchanial Agave helped tear to pieces her own son Pentheus when he was caught spying on a festival in Dionysus's honor in which only women were to participate. The names are etymologized as follows: *inos*, for *oinos*, "wine"; *autenunoe*, compare *autós*, "self," and *agnōstia*, "ignorance"; *somalion*, compare *σῶμα*, "body," and *λύω*, "free";

Liber, Latin *liber*, "free"; Latin *merum*, "strong wine, unmixed with water"; and Lyaeus, for *Avalos*, "the Liberator," a by-name for Dionysus; Agave is not etymologized, presumably because her name most obviously suggests *ἀγαυός*, "noble," and nothing resembling the sense of "insane" required by Fulgentius. The reference to a pint of strong wine is literally to one-sixth, that is, of a *congius*, rather less than a gallon. The quotation from Lucan, *Pharsalia* 10.163, runs in full: "The generous Falernian, to which Meroë [in upper Egypt] brings ripeness in a few years, forcing its stubborn nature to ferment." For the reference to Liber in India, compare Orosius, *Historiae* 1.6. For the cult of Dionysus, see further W. F. Otto, *Dionysus, Mythos und Kultus* (Frankfurt, 1933), transl. R. B. Palmer, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult* (Indianapolis, 1965); H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos, Histoire du Culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1951).

### 13. The Fable of the Swan and Leda

Although love of lust is shameful in all men, yet it is never worse than when it is involved with honor. For lust in relation to honor, not knowing what it sets in motion, is always opposed to dignity. He who seeks what he wishes to be something so divine must beware lest it become what it had not been. For Jove disguised as a swan lay with Leda, who laid an egg from which were born the three, Castor, Pollux, and Helen of Troy. This legend carries the flavor of an allegorical interpretation, for Jove is explained as the symbol of power, and Leda is for *lide*, which in Latin we call either insult or reviling. Thus all power getting involved with insults changes the appearance of its magnanimity. He is said to have changed into a swan because the naturalists, particularly Melistus of Euboea who has expounded the meanings of all the natural scientists, declare that a bird of this species is so filled with reviling that when this bird clamors the rest of the birds nearby become silent. For this reason it is also called an *olor*, as if derived from *oligoria*, which in Latin we call insult. Thus as often as nobility turns to insult, it is necessarily involved with insults. But let us see what is produced from this affair, no less than an egg, for, just as in an egg, all the dirt which is to be washed away at birth is retained inside, so too in the work of reviling everything is impurity. But from this egg are born the three, Castor, Pollux, and Helen, nothing less than a seedbed of scandal and strife, as I once wrote: "And the adulteress shatters both worlds with grief." For they explain Castor and Pollux as symbols of destruction, whence they explain the signs (*signa*) of the Castors in the sea as creating peril; they say that both of them rise up and fall down alternately, because pride always commands but always falls; whereby in Greek *iperefania* is the word for pride. *Iperefania* is strict-



ly the term for appearance above, because, in those two constellations which they call by the name of the brothers, one appears above and the other sinks down, like Lucifer and Antifer; for in Greek Pollux is *apo tu apollin*, that is, seeking to destroy, and Castor is for *cacon steron*, that is, final evil.

For *lide*, compare *λοιδορέω*, "abuse"; Latin *olor*, "swan," is oddly associated with Greek *oliguria*, *δλιγυρία*, "contempt." His own earlier work from which Fulgentius quotes, seemingly with reference to Helen and the Trojan war, is unknown. Castor and Pollux are *signa*, "signs," that is, constellations, perhaps also with a play on *cygnus*, "swan." *Iperefsania* is for *ὑπερηφάνια*, "arrogance," then further disserted into *ὑπέρ*, "over, above," and *φανός*, "light, conspicuous." the final sentences refer to the constellation called Gemini or The Twins (Dioscuri), forming the third sign of the Zodiac, with Pollux as *apo tu apollin*, for *ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπόλλων*, "by destroying," and Castor as *cacon steron*, for *κακόν*, "evil," and *ἔσπερος*, "last." Lucifer, for Latin *lucifer*, "light-bearer," is the Morning Star, the planet Venus, and its opposite number Antifer, compare *ἀντιφέρω*, "oppose," is Hesperus, the Evening Star. For the Dioscuri in legend and folktale, see J. Rendel Harris, *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins* (Cambridge, 1906); F. Chapoutier, *Les Dioscures au Service d'une Déesse* (Paris, 1935).

#### 14. The Fable of Ixion

He who seeks for more than he should have will be less than he now is. Thus Ixion aspiring to marriage with Juno, she adorned a cloud in her likeness, and Ixion making love to it fathered the Centaurs. As there is nothing more attractive than Roman truth, so there is nothing more fanciful than Greek lies. They explained Ixion as for Axion, because in Greek *axioma* is called worth. Juno is the goddess of dominion, as I explained before; therefore, worth striving for dominion deserves a cloud, that is, the mere simulation of worth. For dominion is to last forever, but fleeting temporal power is envious of this and hastily seizing wings, giving the illusion of momentary achievement rather than the truth of it, takes on an empty look like the quality of the wind. So Vatinius the seer was accustomed to say that the honors of the various cities were acted out in a dream like a city farce; and although each one declared it was not concerned, yet the honor of Rome was seen to be preeminent because it was in part true honor, where the rest was ridiculous and fleeting. For I believe that he had read the sentiment of Cleobulus the philosopher when he said: "Life is a farce." Now therefore let us investigate the legend. Dromocritus in his *Theologia* writes that Ixion first aspired to the glory of a kingdom in Greece, and that he first of all men

assembled for his use a hundred horsemen, whence the hundred armed men were called Centaurs (they ought to be called *centippi*, because they are depicted as part horses), but also as a real hundred armed men. So this Ixion, having in a short time seized an opportunist dominion, was driven from its rule; whence they say he was condemned to the wheel, because the full circle of the wheel now brings back down what it holds aloft. By this they wished to show that all who aspire to dominion by arms and violence are one moment held aloft and the next cast down, like a wheel which at no time has a fixed high point.

Ixion, king of Thessaly, planning to seduce Juno was thwarted by Jove, who created a cloud in the form of Juno; making love to it Ixion fathered the monstrous race of centaurs, but was struck by a thunderbolt from Jove and tied to an endlessly revolving wheel. *Axioma* is ἀξίωμα, "honor"; the explanation given for Juno, "as I explained before," is repeated from 2.1 above; *centippi*, a further play on words, is Latin *centum*, "hundred," and ἵππος, "horse." Vatinius the seer, scarcely the political adventurer of that name defended by Cicero, and Dromoclites and his *Theologia* (θεός and λόγος, "genealogy of the gods"), are unknown, as are Cleobulus and his aphorism, given first in Greek then in Latin, but very similar phrasing is used by Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 99, and Seneca, *Letters* 80.7; very possibly Fulgentius took the name Cleobulus of Rhodes who flourished in the 5th century B.C. and became one of the Seven Sages of antiquity.

## 15. The Fable of Tantalus

Tantalus the giant, wishing to test the supernatural power of the gods, presented his son Pelops as a dish for the table; for this he was severely punished. They say that in the lower world Tantalus was stood in a pool, the deceiving water of which tickles his lips with a fleeting touch, and fruits appear before him hanging down to his face, but at his fleeting touch turning to ashes. Thus he seemed to prosper but in fact had nothing: the deceiving water made him thirsty and the fruit forced him to be hungry. Petronius explains this tale briefly when he says:

Poor Tantalus, though impelled by his own cravings,  
Can neither drink the water round him nor seize the hanging fruit.  
This will be the image of the great and the rich man, who has all things in plenty,  
And yet has to choke down his hunger dry-mouthed.

Tantalus the son of Jove, for serving the gods his son's flesh, was punished in Hades by being stood in a river whose water ran from his lips, while over his

head branches with fruit always eluded his grasp. The first, explanatory sentence, to "severely punished," found only in a single 15th-century manuscript, is perhaps a later addition, particularly since its proper names are not etymologized in what follows. The fruit which crumbles to ashes at a touch is the Dead Sea Apples, or Apples of Sodom (Deut. 32:32), as described by Josephus and Tertullian; it replaces the usual classical version of fruit whisked from Tantalus's grasp (similarly Milton in *Paradise Lost* 10.565-66, has Satan and his followers greedily seizing fruit like that which tempted Eve, but "instead of Fruit Chewd bitter Ashes"). The four verse-lines of Petronius are taken from his *Satyricon* 82.

## 16. The Fable of the Moon and Endymion

They chose the moon itself to be Proserpine in the lower world, either because it shines by night or because it takes a lower course and presides over the lands of earth, in the sense that not only the earth but the rocks or the minds of living creatures, and—what may be much harder to believe—even excrement which thrown over gardens at the time of the waxing moon produces little worms, all respond to its wanings and waxings. They also choose Diana, the moon, to rule over woodlands, because she stimulates growth in the sap of trees and fruits. Then, too, wood cut by the light of the waxing moon goes rotten with the sawdust worm-holes of grubs. She is said to have fallen in love with the shepherd Endymion for one of two reasons, either that Endymion was the first man to discover the track of the moon, whereby having studied nothing in his life but this discovery he is said to have slept for thirty years (as Mnaseas has related in the first book of his work on Europa), or that she is said to have fallen in love with the shepherd Endymion because the moisture of the night dew, which the exhalations of the stars and the life-giving moon soak into the sap of the grass, serves well for success with sheep.

As the shepherd youth Endymion slept eternally on Mount Latmus, his beauty warmed the cold heart of the moon, who came down and lay beside him. In Fulgentius's *Explanation* 2, Mnaseas and his book on Europa are cited in connection with an Apollo slain by Jove, see C. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum* 3 (Paris, 1849); possibly Mnaseas of Cyprus, the father of Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy in the 3d century B.C., provided the name. The reference to dew and stars at the end echoes the tetrameter poem in the prologue to book one above, itself borrowed from the *Pervigilium Veneris*. For the legend, see E. S. Le Comte, *Endymion in England, the Literary History of a Greek Myth* (New York, 1944). For the notion of the moon as stimulating the generation and growth of plants and animals, one popular source is Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 41.

## Book 3

## Prologue

The shy glance of ignorance is always begging leave to make excuses for itself, so that, whatever mistakes are made through lack of knowledge, one who deserves critical attacks may be absolved by a plea for indulgence which has always covered over errors. But because writings sent to a kindly judge never think evil of themselves, I have committed my simple wares, Master, to your most openhearted judgment, confident that anything absurd has been passed on, not for you to scorn with your disfavor, but for you to set right with your great learning.

## 1. The Fable of Bellerophon

King Proetus had a wife named Anteia, who fell in love with Bellerophon. When she solicited him to adultery, he refused; and she accused him before her husband. The latter, through his father-in-law, sent him to kill the Chimæra; and Bellerophon slew it, seated on the horse Pegasus which had been born of the blood of the Gorgon. They explain Bellerophon as *for bulefor-unia*, whereby Homer says: "It does not befit a counsellor of men to sleep all night through." Similarly Menander in his comedy *Disexapaton* says: "You have already described, Demeas, our idea of a counsellor." And to complete the proof, Homer in his narrative says this of Bellerophon: "Devising upright thoughts, a most wise counsellor." He rejects lust, that is, Anteia, for *anton* in Greek means opposed, as we say Antichrist for *evan-tion tou christou*, that is, opposed to Christ. Notice also whose wife Anteia is described as being, no less than Proetus's. *Pritos* in the Pamphylian language means heavy, as Hesiod in his *Eclogues* writes: "Heavy with the blood-colored dew of grapes well trampled." And his wife is nothing but sordid lust. Then, too, Bellerophon, that is, good counsel, rides a horse which is none other than Pegasus, for *pegaseon*, that is, an everlasting fountain. The wisdom of good counsel is an everlasting fountain. So, too, is Pegasus winged, because he looks down on the whole nature of the world with a swift perception of its designs. Then, too, he is said to have opened up the fountain of the Muses with his heel, for wisdom supplies the Muses with a fountain. He is born of the blood of the Gorgon because the Gorgon is ex-

plained as fear: she is attached to the heart of Minerva, as Homer says in his book thirteen: "Whereon is embossed the Gorgon fell of aspect, glaring terribly." Thus the interpretation can be one of two kinds: either wisdom is born when fear is ended, as Pegasus from death in the blood of the Gorgon, because folly is always fearful, or "fear is the beginning of wisdom," because wisdom grows from fear of its master, and when anyone fears fame he grows wise. Then he slew the Chimaera, with Chimaera for *cymeron*, that is, the surge of love, whereby Homer says: "The dark billow lifts up its crest." So too the Chimaera is depicted with three heads, because there are three stages of love—that is, the start, the continuation, and the end. For when love first comes, it makes a mortal attack like a lion, whence Epicharmus, the writer of comedies, says: "Lust is a ruler more forceful than the strength of a lion"; and Virgil in the *Georgics* alludes to this when he says: "Forgetful of her whelps, the lioness has at no other time wandered more savagely in the fields." And the she-goat which is depicted in the center of the Chimaera is truly the embodiment of lust, because an animal of this species is most disposed to lust, as Virgil says in the *Eclogues*: "Frisking young goats." So too the Satyrs are depicted with goats' horns, because they can never satisfy their lust. And when the Chimaera is called "behind a serpent," it is explained in this fashion, that after its completion it may give the death-blow of remorse and the poison of sin. So it is in this order of description that it first attacks in love; second, completes it; and third, has remorse from the death wound.

Bellerophon, the reputed son of Glaucus and the rider of the winged horse Pegasus, rejected the love of Queen Anteia of Argos; her husband Proetus invoked the aid of his father-in-law, king of Lycia, in having the youth destroyed; but Bellerophon killed the monster Chimaera by which his own death was hoped for. Medusa, once a beautiful maiden, had given birth to Pegasus in one of Minerva's temples, and her hair was changed to serpents by Minerva, who later set the head of Medusa in her shield. For Pegasus and Medusa, see the prologue to book one (and note 14) and 1.21, above. For *buleforonta*, compare *βουλευόμενος*, "counselling"; *antion* is for *ἀντίον*, "opposed"; *prios* "in the Pamphylian language," that is Asiatic Greek, is equivalent to *βριθύς*, "heavy"; *pegaseon* is for *πηγή*, "a spring," and *del*, "forever"; *cymeron* is *κύμα*, "wave, surge," and *ēros*, "love," though *cymaera* as the text has it in fact means a she-goat (*χιμαίρα*). The Homer quotations are, in order, *Iliad* 2.24 and 61 ("It does not befit a counsellor . . ."), 6.16 ("Devising upright thoughts . . ."), 11.36 (not 13 as the text states, of Agamemnon's shield, "Whereon is embossed . . ."), 9.6–7 ("The dark billow . . ."), and 6.181 ("Behind a serpent," describing the monstrous Chimaera as in front a lion, in the middle a goat, and in the rear a snake). Other

authors include: Menander's comedy *Discepaton*, for *dis*, "twice," and *ēxawarāw*, "deceive," that is, 'The Double Deception,' more usually known as *Samia*, 'The Girl from Samos'; Hesiod, *Eclogues*, fragment 199; Ps. 110 (111):10, similarly Prov. 1:7, 9:10, Ecclesiasticus 1:16, 20, for "fear (of the Lord) is the beginning of wisdom"; Virgil *Georg.* 3.245-46 ("Forgetful of her whelps . . ."), and 4.10 ("Frisking young goats," incorrectly assigned to the *Eclogues* in the text); Epicharmus the Dorian comic writer of the 5th century B.C., of whose work only fragments remain, is also referred to in 1.15 above and 3.5 below.

## 2. The Fable of Perdix

A family association, pleasant in itself, always leads to bias where hard work is involved, and qualities which have been gently trained cause bitterness when something you do not want occurs: it is better to be trained independently in a work free of such cares than for the apprentice to be unexpectedly fear-stricken by the ties of relationship. They say that Perdix was a hunter; they describe him as torn from his mother's love when both unrestrained lust boiled up and the shame of new villainy came about, and as consumed and oppressed by extreme disease. He first invented the saw, as Virgil says: "For at first men cut the divisible wood with wedges." But as Fenestella writes in his *Antiquities*, he was first a hunter. When the bloody destruction involved in the slaughter of wild animals and the loneliness of the roving chase lost their pleasure for the wanderer, and he well realized that his companions of the chase (*contiroletas*), that is, Actaeon, Adonis, and Hippolytus, had been slain by the destructiveness of a wretched death, he decided to put aside the pursuit of his former skill, and he took up with agriculture. For that reason he is said to have loved his own mother like the earth, the producer of all things. Consumed by this labor he is said to have become very poor and lean. And because he dragged all hunters away from the taint of their former art, he is said to have discovered the saw, as if it were a bad word. He has for mother Polycastes, like *policarpen*, which in Latin we call many-fruited, that is, the earth.

Perdix or Talos, nephew and pupil of Daedalus, invented the saw, chisel, and compasses, but was killed by his jealous mentor; Athene (Minerva) pitying him changed him into a partridge (Latin *perdix*). Fulgentius also associates him with the rejection of the nomadic for the agricultural life, and alludes to a story of his incest with his mother, who can then be explained as mother earth. For Actaeon, see 3.3, and for Adonis, 3.8, below. The line from Virgil is *Georg.* 1.144. Fenestella was a poet and annalist of the 1st century B.C., his works men-

tioned by Jerome and Pliny but mostly lost, including his *Antiquities* (*archaisis*); another untraced reference to him occurs in Fulgentius's *Explanation* 59. For *(con)krioletas*, compare *θηρολέτης*, "hunter"; *poliscarpen* is for *πολύς*, "much," and *καρπός*, "fruit."

### 3. The Fable of Actaeon

Curiosity, being allied to danger, will always produce for its devotees injury rather than pleasure. So Actaeon the hunter is said to have spied on Diana as she was bathing, and being turned into a stag he was not recognized by his own hounds and was devoured by their bites. Anaximenes, who discussed ancient art in his second book, says that Actaeon loved hunting, but when he had reached mature age, having considered the dangers of hunting, that is, taking a naked reckoning of his skill, he grew afraid. He had the heart of a stag, as Homer says: "Heavy with wine, having the eyes of a dog and the heart of a stag." But while the excitement of the hunt left him, he did not love the qualities of dogs, for in idly gratifying them he lost all his substance; for this reason he is said to have been devoured by his own hounds.

The huntsman Actaeon, having spied on the goddess Artemis (Diana) and her nymphs as they bathed, was changed into a stag and torn to pieces by his fifty hounds. Anaximenes, the Ionian philosopher of Miletus (mentioned by Tertullian, *De anima* 9.5), flourished in the 5th century B.C., but no work of his on art is known; the Homer quotation is *Iliad* 1.225; the phrase "lost all his substance" may recall the prodigal son of Luke 15:13.

### 4. The Fable of Hero and Leander

Love is often close to danger; and when it has eyes only for what it prizes, it never sees what is expedient. In Greek *eros* is the word for love, while Leander could be said as *lisiandron*, that is, the freeing of men: for release produces love in a man. He swims by night, that is, he risks danger in the dark. Hero, too, is depicted in the likeness of love. She carries a lantern, and what else is love but carrying a torch and lighting the perilous path for the beloved? But it is soon extinguished, because youthful love does not last long. Then, too, he swims naked, for love can strip its followers naked and fling them into danger as into the sea. For both of them death at sea is brought about by the extinguishing of the light, and this clearly signifies that

for either sex desire dies with the extinguishing of the ardor of youth. For dying in the sea they are borne away as into the tears of old age: all the little fire of ardent youth grows cold in the decline of numbing dullness.

The youthful Leander swam every night across the Hellespont to visit Hero, the priestess of Aphrodite (Venus). One night he perished in the waves, and Hero threw herself into the sea. *Eros* is for *ἔρως*, "love," and *lisiandron* for *λύσις*, "release," and *andrōs*, "(of) man." See further M. H. Jellinek, *Die Sage von Hero und Leander in der Dichtung* (Berlin, 1890); W. Frenzt, *Mythologisches im Vergils Georgica* (Meissenheim, 1967), pp.124-29.

## 5. The Fable of Berecynthia and Attis

Nowhere with their false beliefs in demons rather than gods did the Greeks place their gods in a worse light than when they made their sleepy old mother not only a youthful lover but also a passionate one. So much did this envious old woman, inflamed with passion, blaze forth, in her rage not sparing her own services, that when she hoped for the fruit of lust, the aged whore sank under its weight. And although in the minds of women lust may obtain control, yet passion gains control over unsatisfied lust. Let us then explain what the Greeks intended to be meant by these matters. They intended Berecynthia for the queen of mountains; they called her the mother of the gods because they wished the gods to be proudly named; so they called those living on Olympus the highest and the proud; but so they call demons according to Homer when he says: "To the other gods," for *demos* is the Greek for people, and *is* is for one; and they were called demons because they wished to subdue the people and be alone over the people. So for the Romans they were the natives (*indigetes*) as if they lacked nothing (*nihil indigentes*). Thus they say that Berecynthia flourished on the mountains like spring flowers (*verniquintos*), for *quintos* in the Attic tongue is called a flower, whence the hyacinth is for *bioscintos*, which in Latin we call the solitary flower because it is more beautiful than all others. For Epicharmus also says: "Chrysalis advanced, covered with flowers and drunk with wine." So, too, whoever loves a flower cuts it, as Berecynthia did to Attis, for *antis* is the Greek for flower. As Sosicles the Greek writes in his book which is called *Teologumenon*, the mother-goddess wished to be placed in a position of power, whence she is called Cibebe, for *idos bebeon*, that is, firmness of glory; whereby Homer says: "To whom Jove vouchsafed renown." She is depicted as furnished with towers, for all elevation of power is in the head;



she rules in a chariot of lions, for all power is lord over strength; also she carries a royal scepter, for all power is attached to the royal state. The mother is called a god, for the reason that they wish to show precisely that whether natives or gods or demons they are named as divinities by the ancients. Thus the mother is the power of gods; whence Homer, speaking of Agamemnon, says: "Happy son of Atreus, child of fortune, blest of the gods"; and Euripides, comparing Tantalus to Jove in his tragedy of *Electra*, says: "Once happy Tantalus, though I do not mock his fortunes, accounted equal to Jove." Thus the renown of power is always both aflame with love and devoured by envy, and speedily cuts off what it delights in, while it also severs what it hates. Finally all power, now and always, cannot preserve affection among its followers from day to day, and what it loved it soon cuts off through passion or fears through revulsion. Thus they meant Attis to be for *eton*, for *etos* is the Greek for custom. Whatever love there may be among the powerful, it cannot be stable.

Berecynthia is Fulgentius's choice for the much-named Cybele, Cybebe, Agdistis, Dindymene, or Rhea (the Roman Ops, see 1.2 above), the earth mother who loved the boy-god Attis, or Atys. Her jealous rage drove him to a frenzy, and he castrated himself and bled to death, whereupon Jove turned him into a fir tree; for the legends involved, see G. Showerman, *The Mother of the Gods* (Madison, 1901); H. Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen und sein Kult* (Giessen, 1903); H. Graillet, *Le Culte de Cybèle dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris, 1912); M. Mellink, *Hyakintbos* (Utrecht, 1943). Fulgentius may be aware of Virgil *Aen.* 6.784, or Horace *Odes* 1.18.13, 3.19.18, who uses the name Berecynthia with reference to Mount Berecynthus in Phrygia, the site of an orgiastic cult of the Great Mother, Cybele. With his "in the Attic tongue," in place of his usual "in Greek," he may intend to play on Attis and Attic or Attica (*Ἀττικός*). The Homer quotations, in order, are *Iliad* 1.222 (more fully "Athene departed to Olympus, to the other gods"); *Iliad* 17.566 (of Hector) and *Odyssey* 19.161 (of Odysseus's son), both "to whom Jove vouchsafed renown"; and *Iliad* 3.182 ("Happy son . . .," only the Greek being quoted). Euripides' "tragedy of *Electra*" is in fact his *Orestes* 4-6. For Epicharmus, see 1.15 and 3.1, above, but the quotation is untraced; Sosicles and his *Teologumenon* (compare *θεός*, *λόγος*, that is, a compendium or genealogy of the gods) are likewise unknown. Demons are explained as for *demos*, *δήμος*, "people," and either Latin *is*, "one," or Greek *eis* with the same meaning; *verniquintus* is Latin *vernus*, "springlike," and an assumed word *κινθος*, "flower," derived from *ὑάκινθος*, "hyacinth," as Fulgentius dissects that term into *tos* (*eis*), "one," and a simplex *κινθος* which he takes to mean "flower." Attis is taken firstly for *antis*, compare *ἄνθος*, "blossom, flower," and secondly for *eton*, for *etos*, "custom"; *cidus bebeon* is *κύδος*, "glory," and *βέβαιος*, "strong, firm." Fulgentius's play on words early on in the chapter refers to the *di indigetes* or original ("native") gods of the Roman state, the thirty or so deities of war

and agriculture celebrated in regular festivals, as opposed to the incorporated Greek pantheon; three such native gods are specified in the *Explanation* 11, and here their association with demons may be a reminiscence of Cicero's *Timaeus* 38: "The other gods, those whom the Greeks call *daimones*, our people call Lares."

## 6. The Fable of the Goddess Psyche and Cupid

Apuleius in his books of *Metamorphoses* has clearly told this story, saying that in a certain state there lived a king and a queen who had three daughters, the elder two of moderate good looks, but the youngest of such surpassing beauty that one might have imagined an earthly Venus. Marriage came to the two elder ones who were moderately good-looking, but no one ventured to declare his love to the one like a goddess, being rather prone to worship her and so to displease her enemies. And so Venus, infected with her sense of the dignity of her supremacy and burning with envy, sought out her son Cupid so that he might harshly punish Psyche's state of obstinacy. Rushing to avenge his mother he fell in love with the maiden as soon as he laid eyes on her; the punishment was in fact reversed, and it was as if the proud archer had pierced himself with his own arrow. By the stern sentence of Apollo, the maiden was ordered to be sent to the summit of a mountain; and borne along as if in a funeral procession, she would have a winged serpent as her destined husband. Full of courage, the maiden was borne across the mountain slopes in a carriage and, when left alone, floated downwards, gently wafted by the breath of Zephyr, and was taken into a golden mansion, which could only be thought rich by considering it beyond price and praise. There, by means of voices like those of servants, she was given the use of this mysterious mansion of her husband. By night her husband came to her, and Venus's warfare took place in the darkness, but as he came unseen at evening, so he departed still unknown with the dawn. Thus she had servants who were only voices, power which consisted only in breezes, love by night, and an unknown husband. But her sisters came to weep for her death, and with sad voices were entreating in sisterly words on the summit of the mountain they had climbed; and although her husband who shunned the light forbade her with threats to set eyes on her sisters, yet the invincible ardor of her love for her blood kin overbore her husband's command.

So, borne along on the panting breath of the Zephyr breeze, her worried sisters were brought to her; and falling in with their poisonous advice that she should seek to know her husband's appearance, she yielded to curiosity,

their stepmotherly concern for her safety, and laying aside the judgment of caution, she adopted that ready credulity which is always the mother of deceptions. Believing her sisters that she was mated to a serpent for a husband, and prepared to slay him as a wild beast, she hid a sharp knife under the pillow and concealed a lamp near the bed. When her husband was stretched out in a deep slumber, she armed herself with the weapon and lit the lamp concealed by the bed; as she recognized Cupid, he was burned by the dire results of her love, and she scorched her husband by spilling the glittering oil; Cupid, as he fled from the house and strongly reproached the girl for her curiosity, left her to be a wanderer and a fugitive. At length, having been assailed by many persecutions on the part of Venus, her marriage was accepted at Jove's behest.

I could indeed recount the order of events of the whole story in this little book of mine, how she went down to the lower world and filled a small flask from the waters of the Styx, robbed the sun's flock of their golden fleece, separated the mixture of small seeds, and—though open to death for it—secured a small portion of Proserpine's beauty. But since Apuleius has described such a conglomeration of falsehoods very fully in almost two books, and Aristophontes of Athens has published the story, for those who wish to study it, at enormous length in the books which are called *Disarestia*, for this reason I have reckoned on inserting only a summary from these other books of mine, lest I should divert my works from what properly belongs to them and add to my obligations to others. But he who reads the story in my work may pass over these matters in the knowledge that their falsity has been shown him. They have chosen the state, in which they placed the queen, to represent God and matter, as representing the world. They add three daughters—that is, the flesh; the special quality (*ultronietatem*) that we call free will; and the spirit. For Psyche in Greek is called the spirit, which they wished to be so much the more youthful because they said that the spirit was added after the body was formed; and to be so much the more beautiful because it was higher than free will and nobler than the flesh. Venus envies her as lust; to her she sends greed (*cupiditatem*) to do away with her; but because greed is for good and evil alike, greed is taken with the spirit and links itself to her, as it were, in marriage. It persuades her not to look upon its countenance, that is, not to learn the pleasure of greed (thus Adam, although possessing sight, does not see himself as naked until he eats of the tree of covetousness), nor does she agree with her sisters—that is, flesh and free will—that she should satisfy her curiosity concerning its

appearance, until frightened by their insistence she produces a lamp from beneath the bed, that is reveals the flame of desire concealed in her breast and loves and adores it now it is seen to be so delightful. She is said to have burned it by the bubbling over of the lamp because all greed grows hot to the extent that it is desired and marks the flesh with the stain of sin. Thus her fortune is stripped of naked and potent greed, and is flung into dangers and driven from the royal home. But, since as I said it takes a long time to cover all the details, I have given only the gist of the interpretation. If anyone reads this story in Apuleius he will find other details of my explanation which I have not gone into.

This chapter is a close summary of the only detailed account of the Cupid and Psyche legend, by Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* ('The Golden Ass'), 4.28 ff., known in English from the retelling in Thomas Taylor's *The Fable of Cupid and Psyche* (1795), Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), and many other places, and called by Coleridge "the most beautiful allegory ever composed"; see A. Hoffman, *Das Psyche-Märchen des Apuleius in der englischen Literatur* (Strassburg, 1908). In the opening Fulgentius mentions the "stern sentence of Apollo" without explaining that Psyche's father had consulted an oracle of Apollo to find a suitable husband for her. Psyche is for  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , "spirit." Aristophontes and his *Disarestia* (compare  $\Delta\iota\delta\varsigma \alpha\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , "heroic deeds of Jove") are unknown. For detailed treatments of the story and its folklore ramifications, see E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 3d ed. (Tübingen, 1903; English version, 1925); W. Anderson, *Roman Apuleya i Narodnaya Shaka*, 1 (Kazan, 1914); E. Tegethoff, *Studien zum Märchentypus von Amor und Psyche* (Bonn, 1922); J.-Ö. Swahn, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche* (Lund, 1955); E. Neumann, transl. R. Manheim, *Amor and Psyche*, Bollingen Foundation, 54 (New York, 1956).

## 7. The Fable of Peleus and Thetis

They say that Thetis signifies water, whence the nymph took her name. Jove as God married her to Peleus, and *pelos* in Greek is *lutum*, mud, in Latin. Thus they wish to produce a man comingled with water, whereby they say that Jove also wished to lie with Thetis but was prevented by the thought that she would produce one greater than himself who would drive him from his rule; for if fire, that is, Jove, mingles with water, it is put out by the power of the water. So in the union of water and earth, that is, of Thetis and Peleus, discord alone is not invited, for the reason that there must be concord between the two elements for a man to be produced: their coming together shows that Peleus stands for earth, that is, the flesh, and Thetis for

water, that is, fluid, and Jove who married the two for fire, that is, the spirit. In the conceiving of man from the blending of the elements three goddesses, as I described above, that is, three lives, are involved in conflict. So too discord is said to have rolled the golden apple, that is, greed, for the reason that there is in a golden apple what you look upon, not what you eat, just as greed can possess but cannot enjoy. Jove is said to have summoned all the gods to the wedding because the heathen believed that in a human being separate gods gained possession of separate parts—for instance, Jove, the head; Minerva, the eyes; Juno, the arms; Neptune, the breast; Mars, the waist; Venus, the kidneys and sex organs; Mercury, the feet; as Dromoclites describes in his physiology; so too Homer says: "His head and eyes like unto Zeus (Jove) whose joy is in the thunder, and his waist like unto Ares (Mars), and his breast unto Poseidon (Neptune)." So, too, Tiberianus in his *Prometheus* says that the gods gave to man his individual traits. Then after Achilles was born his mother dipped him in the waters of the Styx to make him a perfect man, that is, she protected him securely against all trials, but his heel alone she did not dip, as much as to show the physical fact that the veins which are in the heel connect with the faculties of the kidneys, thighs, and sex organs, and that from them other veins run to the great toe; for doctors treating women for inducing childbirth open the veins in the legs at this same place; the covering plaster, which Africanus the teacher of medicine called *stisidem*, he taught should be applied to the big toe and heel. Orpheus himself demonstrates that this is the chief seat of lust, and in these same intestinal localities they teach that cauterizing must be effected. Thus he shows that human power, though protected, is subject and open to all the blows of lust. After this Achilles is assigned to the court of Lycomedes as if to the kingdom of lust, for Lycomedes is for the Greek *gliconmeden*, that is, sweet nothing, since all lust is both sweet and nothing. Then he dies of love for Polynexa and is killed as it were because of his heel. Polynexa in Greek is said to be a foreigner to many, either because love causes men's passions to travel far from their minds, or because lust in its wandering state travels about among many peoples.

Jove chose Peleus to be the husband of the Nereid Thetis, having himself wished to marry her, though discouraged by the prophecy that any son of Thetis would be greater than his father. The Olympians attended the celebration of the marriage, all save Eris (discord), who rolled the golden apple inscribed "To the Fairest," in among the goddesses Hera (Juno), Athene (Minerva), and Aphrodite (Venus), whence the judgment of Paris and the Trojan War, "as described above," that is, in 2.1. The son of Thetis and Peleus was Achilles, invulnerable

except for his heel; at the bidding of Thetis he spent some time disguised as a girl at the court of King Lycomedes and was later the lover of Polynexa. Dromocrites, elsewhere unknown, was named as an author in 2.14 above; the Homer quotation, referring to Agamemnon, is in *Iliad* 2.478-79; the *Prometheus* of Tiberianus is unknown, this particular reference being called fragment 3 by his editors. Orpheus may refer to the Orphic writings traditionally ascribed to the mythical Orpheus (see 3.10 below), but the particular reference, like that to Africanus on medicine, is untraced; for Orphic texts and beliefs, see I. M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley, California, 1941); W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 2d ed. (London, 1952). The notion of a physical link between heel and genitals reappears, no doubt from Fulgentius, in Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* 12.52, thence in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, March eclogue, 95 ff., and E. K.'s gloss (where the credit is given to Eustathius): "For from the heele (as say the best Phisitions) to the preuie partes there passe certaine veines and slender synnewes, as also the like come from the head." Thetis is associated with water as a Nereid or sea nymph, though Fulgentius may be making a false association with the wife of Oceanus, Tethys, whose name later became a general term for the sea; *pelos* is πηλός, "clay, mud"; *sisidem* (a play on Στύξ, the river Styx) seems to be connected with στυσίς, "plaster"; *gli-conmeden* is for γλυκύς, "sweet," and μηδέν, "nothing"; Polynexa, for πολύς, "many," and perhaps ἔξω, "outside, abroad," or by metathesis ξένη, "foreign (woman or country)."

## 8. The Fable of Myrrha and Adonis

Myrrha is said to have fallen in love with her father, whose bed she shared when he was drunk. When her father discovered that she was pregnant and her monstrous crime was known, he began to pursue her with a sword. She was turned into a myrrh tree, and as the father struck at the tree with his sword, Adonis was born from it. Let me explain what this story signifies. The myrrh is a kind of tree from which the sap oozes out; she is said to have fallen in love with her father. These same trees are found in India, glowing with the heat of the sun; and since they always said that a father is the sun of all things, by whose aid the growth of plant life develops, so she in this fashion is said to have fallen in love with her father. When she had developed a strong wood which crackled with the sun's heat, she produced fissures from which there oozes out a resin called myrrh; and as if in tears she exudes a weeping pleasantly scented from the gaping cuts. It is told of her that she gave birth to Adonis because *adon* is the Greek for a sweet savor. So they say that Venus fell in love with him because this kind of liquid is so very fiery; so, too, Petronius Arbiter says that he drank a draught of myrrh

to arouse his sexual desires; so too Sutruius the writer of comedies introduces the licentious Glico, who says: "Bring me myrrh so that I can attack the strongholds with virile weapons."

Cinyras, the son of Apollo, by his daughter Myrrha became the father of Adonis, beloved of Aphrodite (Venus). The Petronius reference, known to editors as his fragment 8 (7), has to do with his *Satyricon* 20, where someone asks: "Has Encolpius drunk all the *satyrion* (an aphrodisiac)?" In his *Explanation* 47, Fulgentius mentions Sutruius and his comedy *Piscatoria*, but neither is known, and for our context the substitution of Furius (as one manuscript reads) has been proposed—that is, the Furius Bibaculus of the Augustan age, a minor writer of lampoons who has four poems of Catullus addressed to him; even so, the precise quotation used here would remain untraced. *Adon* is for ἡδονή, "sweetness," and Glico may be named for the play on γλυκύς, "sweet." A note on the text of this chapter is provided by G. Brugnoli, "Coniectanea," *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale* 5 (Rome, 1963): 255–65.

## 9. The Fable of Apollo and Marsyas

Minerva invented the double flute from a bone, but when she played on it at a banquet of the gods and all the gods laughed at her puffed out cheeks, she went to the salt lake Tritonia, in North Africa; and observing her image in the water and having adjudged shameful the blowing out of her cheeks, she threw the flute away. Marsyas, finding it, made himself skillful at it and, eager for a hard contest, challenged Apollo to perform. They chose King Midas as umpire. Because he did not judge correctly, Apollo disfigured him with asses' ears. He revealed something of this state of shame to the servant who cut his hair, promising him that, if he could hide the shame, he would give him a share in his kingdom. The servant dug a hole in the earth and spoke his lord's secret into the ditch and then filled it in. On the same spot a reed sprang up, whereby a shepherd made himself a flute; and when he cut it the reed said: "King Midas has asses' ears," singing out exactly what it had absorbed from the earth. Thus Petronius Arbiter declared:

So the greedy servant, fearful of disclosing the secret committed to him,  
Dug a hole in the ground and spoke into it about the king's hidden ears,  
For the earth absorbed the sound, and the murmuring reeds  
Found Midas to be as the informer had devised.

Now, therefore, we may seek the hidden sense of this mysterious story. The story is shown to be associated with musicians, as Orpheus wrote in his *Theo-*

*gonia*, for musicians have established two stages for their art, adding a third as it were of necessity, as Hermes Trismegistus declares, saying *adomenon*, *psallomenon*, *aulumenon*—that is, singing, plucking the lyre, or playing the flute. The first is the living voice, which rapidly covers all musical requirements, for it can both develop intervals (*limmata*), harmonize changes (*parallelos*), blend different pitches (*distonas*), link together the sounds of music (*ptongos*), and ornament with trills (*quilismata*). The accompanying lyre ranks next. Although in these matters which musicians call blending (*disafexis*), as Mariandes writes, it can do much, yet it does not achieve other things that the human voice can, for it does not develop the intervals (*limmata*) and does not achieve the linked trill (*quilismata*). But the flute could strictly fulfill only the lowliest role in the art of music. For the lyre has five sets of scales (*simfonia*), according to what Pythagoras stated when he adduced arithmetic sets of numbers to fit with the scales: the first scale is the *diapason* or octave, which is the *diplasion* of arithmetic, what in Latin we call 2 to 1; the second scale is the *diapente* or fifth, the *emiolius* of arithmetic, what in Latin we call 3 to 2; the third scale is the *diatessaron* or perfect fourth, the *epitritus* of arithmetic, that is, 4 to 3; the fourth scale is called the *tonus* or major third, known to arithmeticians as the *epotdous*, for us 5 to 4; and since the order in arithmetic is not allowed to go beyond the limit of nine, because a new set in a second series begins with ten, the limit is reached in having a fifth scale, which is called the *armonia* or major tone, that is, 9 to 8. You find no digit joined to another beyond that point. Thus music has seven parts, that is, the elements (*genera*), the notation (*diastemata*), the composition (*systemata*), the instrumental sounds (*ptongos*), the modes or keys (*tonos*), the transposing (*metabolas*), and the theory (*melopias*); whence Virgil says in his sixth book: "Then too did Orpheus the Thracian seer, in a trailing gown, answer their rhythm on seven intervals of notes." For in arithmetic of this kind the full series is like that in geometry, or the modes (*tonus*) in music. The voice has innumerable sets of scales, as much as nature has endowed the voice with *arsis* or rising and *thesis* or sinking, which in Latin we call going up and down. The flute, however, produces scarcely one and a half scales, although each scale has five notes (*symphonias*). So it was according to the art of music that Minerva discovered the double flute, which anyone skilled in music despises for the poverty of its sounds. They are said to have laughed at her puffed out cheeks because the flute sounds windily with its music and, with loss of individuality in its special tones (*idiomatum*), hisses rather than clearly enunciates its matter. Thus



anyone at all skilled laughs at her harshly blowing; and so Minerva, that is, wisdom, reproaching herself, throws it away, and Marsyas picks it up. For Marsyas in Greek is *morosis*, that is, a solitary fool, for wanting to place the flute in musical effect above the lyre; whence he is depicted with a hog's tail. King Midas judged between these two contestants, for Midas in Greek is said to be for *medenidon*, what we call in Latin an *ignoramus*. So also he is said to have asses' ears, because being totally lacking in discernment he is in no way different from an ass. Also they relate that his servant betrayed his secrets, for the reason that we must keep our mind a servant obedient to all we wish and guardian of our secrets. But what he betrayed to the reed, "through the reed pipe of the throat," means "through speech." And in that a shepherd heard it, shepherds are those who foster strange things by gently stamping down the earth.

Athene (Minerva) invented the flute but threw it away because it disfigured her cheeks; the satyr Marsyas found it and having mastered it challenged Apollo to a contest. Having won, Apollo punished the satyr by flaying him alive. In a second contest between Apollo and Pan with his reed pipes, which Fulgentius (as Hyginus had done, *Fabulae* 191) seems to have run together with the first, Apollo gave King Midas asses' ears for having given a faulty judgment against him. Authors brought in include Petronius with four verse-lines known as fragment 28.6-9; Orpheus's *Theogonia*, that is, *θεογονία*, "genealogy of the gods," if genuine, presumably some lost Orphic writing of the kind traditionally ascribed to the legendary bard, as in 3.7 above; an untraced reference to the Hermetic books, usually assigned to the 3d century A.D., fathered on Hermes Trismegistus, the "thrice great," see W. Scott, ed. and transl., *Hermetica*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1925-26); and L. Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 2 (London, 1923); an unknown Mariandes on music; and Virgil, *Aen.* 6.645-46. Etymologies involved: Marsyas as *morosis*, for *μωρός*, "dull, stupid," and either Latin *is*, "the one," or Greek *εἷς*, "one"; and Midas as *medenidon*, for *μὴδὲν*, "nothing," and *εἶδον*, "perceive," as in 2.10 above. The central part of the chapter is a summary of ancient Greek musical theory in the mathematical associations established for it by the Pythagoreans, in particular their discovery that the musical intervals depend on numerical proportions. The account is designed to support Fulgentius's restatement of the traditional theory of the descending order of musical value and range in, first, the human voice; second, the *kithara* or large concert lyre (of Apollo); and third, the despised *aulos*, flute or reed pipe. It is accompanied by a parade of technical terms from music and arithmetic which make translation difficult, not only because Fulgentius in the full flight of learning is more extravagant than accurate, but because our knowledge of ancient Greek music is largely theoretical and not free from ambiguity. Helpful modern accounts include: J. F. Mountford and R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Music," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949; 2d ed., 1970), pp.584-91; R. P. Winnington-Ingram,

"Greek Music (Ancient)," in E. Blom, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed. (New York, 1954), 3:770-82; Isabel Henderson, "Ancient Greek Music," in E. Wellesz, ed., *Ancient and Oriental Music*, New Oxford History of Music (London, 1957), 1:336-403; F. Lasserre, *The Birth of Mathematics in the Age of Plato* (London, 1964), pp.169-87. Fulgentius's *adomenon*, *psallomenon*, *aulumenon*, are for ἁδομένον ἢ ψαλλομένον ἢ αὐλομένον, "singing, or plucking the lyre, or playing the flute or reed-pipe"; *limmata*, "intervals," compare *λεῖμμα*, "remnant"; *parallelor*, "changes," for παράλληλοι, "side by side"; *distonas*, "different pitches," for δῖς and τόνοι, "various modes or keys"; *ptongos*, for φθόγγος, "musical sound" as opposed to the human voice, *quilismata*, "trills," compare κύλισμα, "rolling"; *disafexis*, "blending, double-effect," possibly to do with *dis-āfexis*, "arrival, return"; *simfonia* or *symphonia*, "note" and "scale of notes," for συμφωνία, "harmony." Then follow the various intervals and the corresponding proportions: *diapason*, "octave," perhaps for διὰ-πασῶν, "through all (strings)," corresponding to *diplasion*, διπλασίον, "doubling"; *diapente*, "fifth," for δια-πέντε, alongside *emoliolus*, for ημιόλιος, "one and a half"; *diatesaron*, "fourth," for δια-τέσσαρες, alongside *epitritius*, for ἐπίτριτος, "one and a third"; *tonus*, "major third," for τόνοι as above, with *epocdous* for "one and a quarter," which is more usually called ἐπι-τέταριος (*epocdous* for ἐπι-οκτώ, "one and one-eighth," in error?); and *armonia* for *harmonia*, ἀρμονία, "octave scale or whole tone." Then follow the seven divisions of musical theory and teaching, including, after the elementary stages, *diastemata*, "notation," compare διάστημα, "interval"; *systemata*, "composition," for σύστημα; *ptongos*, "instrumental music," and *tonos*, "modes, keys," as above; *metabolat*, "transposing," for μεταβολή, "transition"; and *melopias*, "musical theory" or "composition of lyrics," for μελοποιός. The remaining terms are *arsis*, for ἄρσις, and *thesis*, for θέσις, taken here not as the upbeat and downbeat of rhythmic dancing, but for the upper and lower range of the human voice; and *idiomata*, for the "special tones" of the flute, compare ἴδιος, "private."

## 10. The Fable of Orpheus and Eurydice

Now this legend is an allegory (*designatio*) of the art of music. For Orpheus stands for *oreafone*, that is, matchless sound, and Eurydice is deep judgment. In all the arts there is a first and a second stage: for boys learning their letters there is first the alphabet, second learning to write; at the grammar level, first reading, second clear speech; at the rhetorical level, first rhetoric, second dialectic; in geometry, first pure geometry, second arithmetic; in astronomy, first learning the science, second applied astrology; in medicine, first the diagnosis, second the therapy; in divination, first the inspection of omens, second their application; and in music, first the melody, second the effect. It is one thing for teachers to recognize different aspects of their subject, another to put them into effect; it is one thing for instructors in rhetoric to have profuse, unbridled, and unrestrained fluency, another to im-

pose a rigorous and scrupulous control over the investigation of truth; it is one thing for astrologers to know the courses and movements of the stars and the constellations, another to trace their significance; it is one thing in medicine to recognize the cause of diseases, another to cure the onslaught of the sickness; it is one thing in geometry to construct lines and formulas, another to adapt numbers to the formulas; it is one thing in divination to inspect entrails and ors, another according to Battiades to read the changes in events; and in music it is one thing to deal with scales of notes (*ptongorum*), compositions (*sistematum*), and notation (*diastematum*), another to explain the effect of the scales and the power of the words, for the beauty of the voice as it appeals to the inner secrets of the art also has to do with the mysterious power of words.

Again, Eurydice was desired by the best, that is, by Aristaeus—for *ariston* is the Greek for best—as art itself avoids the common level of men. She died by the blow of a snake, as it were, by the interception of skill; and she was removed to the secret places of the lower world. For after art has been sought out and raised toward the light, the voice of melody sinks down, because it both assists in the ultimate appeal of the sound and by a secret power gives these hidden forces the effect of delight: for we can say that the Dorian mode or the Phrygian is like Saturn in soothing wild beasts, or like Jove in charming the birds; but if the explanation why this happens is sought for, the theory of the subject inquired into dies away. Therefore, Orpheus is forbidden to look upon Eurydice, and loses her when he does look upon her; therefore the highly skilled Pythagoras when he adapted tunes to numbers and pursued the depths of musical composition in arithmetical terms through their melodies and rhythms and tunes, yet could not explain the reason for their effect.

Orpheus loved the nymph Eurydice; and having charmed her with the sound of his lyre, he took her for wife. When the shepherd Aristaeus, smitten with love, pursued her, she in her flight stumbled on a snake and died. Her husband went down to the lower world in search of her and accepted the ruling that he should not turn back and look on her, but because he did turn back and look at her he lost her a second time. Fulgentius has for once almost entirely dispensed with an outline of the story and goes straight to its interpretation, more or less a continuation of the previous chapter, with some of the same musical terms, *ptongos*, *sistemata*, *diastemata*, as above. Battiades on divination is also mentioned in the *Content of Virgil* 3, there in connection with spirits and magic, but is otherwise unknown (the name Battus for the founder of the African city of Cyrene gave rise to the term Battiades for a Cyrenian, applied to the rulers of the city from the 6th through the 4th century B.C., and to any prominent

citizen, such as the poet Callimachus). The closing reference to the limitations of Pythagorean number in explaining musical appreciation reads somewhat like an echo of Plato's *Republic* 7.2.5, transl. H. D. P. Lee, *Plato: The Republic* (Baltimore, 1955), pp.299-300: "For they [the Pythagoreans] do just what the astronomers do; they look for numerical relationships in audible concords, and never get as far as formulating problems and asking which numerical relations are concordant and why"; the passage is echoed in E. K.'s gloss to Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*, October eclogue, 25 ff. The term used for musical effect and appeal, *apotelesmata* (compare ἀπο-τελέω, "finish, result"); is something of a favorite with the 4th-century writer Firmicus Maternus in his astrological treatise *Mathesis*—e.g., 1.4; 2. praef., 10, 11, 16, 18, 27; 3. praef., 2, 13; 4.13, 16-18; 6.24—ed. C. Sittl, 1 (Leipzig, 1894); possibly this was Fulgentius's source. Orpheus as *oreafone* is meant for φωνή, "voice," and possibly *ōpselas*, "mountainous," that is highest and purest; Eurydice is *eūpēs*, "broad, deep," and *dikē*, "judgment"; and *ariston* is ἀριστος, "best." For the Orpheus legend, see G. R. S. Mead, *Orpheus* (New York, 1896; repr., 1965); J. Wirl, *Orpheus in der englischen Literatur* (Vienna, 1913); K. Heilmann, "Orpheus im Mittelalter," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 45 (1963): 253-94.

## 11. The Fable of Phineus

Phineus is taken as a symbol of greed; the name is said to be from *fenendo*. He is blind because all greed is blind in not recognizing itself. The Harpies snatched away his food because pillaging refuses to share anything of itself. The fact that they befouled his meals with the discharge of their filth shows that the life of usurers is befouled with a flood of pillaging. But Zetes and Calais drove them out of his sight, as we say in Greek *zeton calon*, seeking good. They have wings because no search for good is ever involved with earthly matters. They are the sons of the north wind because the search for good is of the spirit, not the flesh, and as goodness comes all pillaging is put to flight.

King Phineus of Thrace, having revealed a secret of the gods, was punished by losing his sight and being tormented by the foul birds known as Harpies. From these he was delivered by Zetes and Calais, sons of Boreas, the north wind. For the Harpies, see 1.9 above. *Fenendo* is from Latin *faenerari*, "practise usury," possibly with a play intended on φήνη, "bird of prey, vulture"; *zeton* is ζητέω, "seek," and *calon* is from καλός, "noble, good."

## 12. The Fable of Alpheus and Arethusa

The river Alpheus loved the nymph Arethusa. When it pursued her, she was turned into a fountain. When passing through the midst of the sea, it retains its freshness as it plunges into her hollow. Hence it is said that in the

lower world it bears oblivion to the souls. For Alpheus is for the Greek *ale-tiasfor*, that is, the light of truth; while Arethusa is for *areteisa*, that is, equality of excellence. For what can the truth love but equity, or the light, but excellence? And it retains its freshness when passing through the sea because clear truth cannot by any mingling be polluted by the surrounding saltiness of evil ways. Yet all the light of truth sinks into the hollow of equitable power, for as it goes down to the lower world, that is into the hidden knowledge of good and evil, the light of truth always entails the forgetting of evil things.

The river Alpheus, flowing through Arcadia, falls into the Ionian Sea, in places flowing underground, whence the legend that it passed through the sea and rose again, still fresh water, as the fountain at Syracuse named for the Nereid Arethusa. *Aletiasfor* is for ἀλήθεια, "truth," and φῶς (φῶς), "light"; *areteisa* for ἀρετή, "excellence," and ἴσος, "equal." The notion of truth gaining hidden knowledge in the lower world is further developed in Fulgentius's next work, the *Content of Virgil*, where this interpretation is applied to the descent of Aeneas in *Aen.* 6.

1. These chapters or sections are still frequently cited by the numbering of Muncker's edition (1681) as reprinted by Van Staveren (1742)—MS; in books one and two, but not three, this involves some disparity from the edition by Helm (1898)—H, whose scheme is based on the manuscript tradition and is followed here (except that Arabic replaces his Roman numerals).

Book 1		Book 2	
H (22)	MS (27)	H (16)	MS (19)
1	1	1	1-4
2,3	2	2	5
4	3	3	6
5	4	4	7
6	5	5	8
7	6	6	9
8	7	7	10
9	8	8	11
10	9	9	12
11	10	10	13
12	11	11	14
13	12	12	15
14	13	13	16
15	14	14	17
16	15	15	18
17	16,17	16	19
18	18-24		
19	included in 24		
20	25		
21	26		
22	27		

2. For Fulgentius's use of "satire" in the sense of mocking verses, see C. A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden, 1963), pp. 163-64, 183.

3. "Dreamlike nonsense," *onirocretam* . . . *ariolantem*, for *ἀνευποκρίτης*, "judging dreams," and *bariolari*, "talk nonsense." Compare Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.27: "But I will straightway divert you with pleasant old wives' tales."

4. *Sulpicilla*, that is some writer like Sulpicia, the first-century poetess celebrated for her amatory verses, mentioned later in this prologue for Ausonius's remark on her "wordiness."

5. The Psyche and Cupid story is however to be related, though characteristically from the moral viewpoint and not as entertainment, in 3.6 below, also that of Hero and Leander (prominent in Ovid's *Heroides*, 18, 19) in 3.4, though not that of Theseus and the minotaur.

6. Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, is appended to his *Republic*.

7. *Galatēici*, possibly a compound of Galatians (Celts) and Getae (Goths) from Asia Minor, but Fulgentius's allusions are too vague to permit identifying the particular barbarian invasion of North Africa which caused the distress and devastation he mentions; for conjectures, and for the king whose return he welcomes a few lines later, see general introduction, note 3.

8. Echoing Ecclesiasticus 6:36, "If you see an intelligent man, visit him early; let your foot wear out his doorstep."

9. For Midas and the Pactolus, see 2.10 below. After the bath of Midas the river brought down golden sands.

10. Alluding to Aeneas and his crews as they fetched up exhausted on the shore of Africa, *Aen.* 1.157 ff.

11. *Aen.* 11.493.

12. *Mauricatos*, no doubt meant for *muricatos*, "walled," but with a possible play on *Mauri*, the Moors, if they were the cause of Fulgentius's distress; see general introduction, note 3.

13. The legendary inventor of agriculture, his teeth being the plough and the sickle.

14. Fourteen long verse lines, an early instance of the trochaic tetrameter catlectic made famous by the anonymous *Pervigilium Veneris* (variously assigned to Florus of the 2d century A.D. or Tiberianus of the 4th), from which Fulgentius in fact takes lines 16-17: "Sparkling purple, that dew breathed out on clear nights by the stars." After mentioning Tempe, the river valley in Thessaly famed for its beauty, he goes on to refer to the winged horse Pegasus, who produced the Muses' fountain Hippocrene by a blow from his hoof, in words no doubt borrowed from the fragment of Tiberianus cited in 1.21 below. *Thespiæ* in the first line refers to the town at the foot of Mount Helicon, the Muses' haunt. The Ascrean shepherd is Hesiod, whose home was at Ascra near Helicon; Maro of Mantua is Virgil with his pastoral verse; and the Maeonian (or Lydian) is Ovid's name for Homer (used again later in this prologue) the allusion here being to the satirical *Batrachomyomachia* ('Battle of the Frogs and Mice'), widely attributed to Homer but later than his time.

15. See preceding note.

16. Probably meant as a reminiscence of the claim to immortality made in Ovid's epilogue to the *Metamorphoses* 15.875-76: "I shall soar, undying, far above the stars," also echoed near the end of this prologue.

17. Those of Alexandria, known to the poets as Pellaea, Pella in Macedonia being the birthplace of its founder, Alexander the Great.

18. The celebrated Greek physician Claudius Galenus, died ca. 201 A.D. Fulgentius as a North African was no doubt familiar with Alexandria and its cultural life, but here he appears to be echoing a traditional rather than topical charge against the anatomical schools of the city: Alexandria is condemned already by Tertullian and Augustine for both human vivisection and the dissection of dead bodies, but the practice seems to have ceased by the later 2d century; see C. Singer, *From Magic to Science* (New York, 1928; repr., 1958), pp. 20-21.

19. Virgil, *Ecl.* 9.11-12.

20. Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.47.

21. Terence, *Eunuchus*, 246.

22. A lacuna assumed in a difficult sentence; "urns," *catus*, perhaps for *κάδος*, "jar," and "contents," *entecatsum*, perhaps associated with *θήκη*, "case, covering."

23. *Meonem*, the Maeonian; see note 14 above.

24. "Recruit," *mistes*, for *μύσθης*, "initiate;" Anacreon, the lyric poet of the 5th century B.C., is taken as the founder of erotic verse of the kind from which Fulgentius twice somewhat indignantly dissociates himself.

25. "As you sleep," *siptotico*, presumably for *ipnotice*, compare *ὑπνος*, "sleep."

26. Possibly borrowed from the opening of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* 1.1, a work with which Fulgentius elsewhere shows himself familiar: "Deigning to look upon this Egyptian papyrus written with a ready pen of Nile reeds."

27. Jove, perhaps when disguised as a bull in the Europa incident, alluded to in 1.20 below.

28. Danaë and Jove as the golden shower, briefly mentioned in 1.18.

29. The reference appears to be to the death of Adonis, gored by a wild boar, alluded to in 3.2.

30. Jove as the swan seducing Leda, told in 2.13.

31. "Lamp-carrying," *lignides*, from *lychnus*, *λύχνος*, "lamp." Hero and Leander are dealt with in 3.4, Psyche and Cupid in 3.6.

32. *Aricinam lusam uiraginem*, Helm (p. 11) suggesting that *Aricinam* is an intrusive gloss and the reference returns to the Danaë story (see note 28). If so, *Acrisianam* might be read, Acrisius being Danaë's father. Aricina was the nymph married to Hippolytus, the ill-starred son of Theseus, but this is not one of Fulgentius's stories. Jove's record of seductions was lengthy, and Fulgentius need not be blamed for confusing it. In his *Explanation of Obsolete Words*, 51, a term *aricinae* is "like pottery or clay," but there is no obvious connection with our context.

33. Either Jove once more, with his frequent animal guises, or Apollo as the charioteer of the sun.

34. For Apollo, see 1.12-16.

35. Presumably Christianity, and the interest of early Christian writers in the allegorizing of pagan myths.

36. Urania the Muse of astronomy, here implying heavenly inspiration.

37. Presumably not Calliope herself, though she has her skittish moments with Fulgentius, but either her handmaiden Satire or her sister Thalia, the comic Muse, mentioned in connection with satire at the start of the prologue.

38. Hippocrene, see note 14 above and 1.21 below.

39. Petronius's fragment 6 (7), otherwise unknown.

40. Plautus's *Asinaria* ('Comedy of the Asses'), but the matron Artemona rather than the male slave Saurea is meant.

41. The *Nuptial Cento* 8 of Ausonius (4th century A.D.) reads: "Sulpicia's little work is wanton, her outlook prim;" see note 4 above.

42. Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline* 25, mentions Sempronia as a promiscuous charmer and conspirator who "could write verses, bawdy jests, and use language which was modest, or tender, or wanton." But Sallust does not credit Catiline with any poetic skill, and the verses that follow are scarcely intended to be a specimen of his work. These represent eleven hexameters, presumably meant to be Fulgentius's inspiration rather than Calliope's; they read in fact rather like an imitation of Statius, *Thebaid* 1.336-41. For Cynthia or Diana, the goddess of the moon, the text reads Quintia. The final reference to phantoms arising in dreams recalls Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 11.633 ff., associating Morpheus, god of sleep, with such forms (*μορφαί*); similarly his *Amores*, 1.6.9: "Night with its empty phantoms," also Petronius, Fragment 30 sometimes found added to the *Satyricon* 104: "Dreams, the fleeting shadow-play that mocks the mind." A similarly elaborate account of nightfall, with Phaethon and "pale Cynthia" as in Fulgentius, occurs in Thomas Sackville's 'Induction' to *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1563), lines 36 ff. Spenser has similar cases of "decorative circumlocution," see D. Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, 2d ed. (New York, 1963), pp. 95-97.

43. *Nox erat*, the opening words of Horace's *Odes*, 2.15, *Epode* 15.1, and of Ovid's *Amores* 3.5. For the comic anticlimax, compare Chaucer, *Franklin's Tale*, 1016-18: "Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe; For th'orisonte hath reft the sonne his lyght—This is as much to seye as it was nyght," and Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742), 1.8: "Now the rake Hesperus had called for his breeches, and, having well rubbed his drowsy eyes, prepared to dress himself for all night; by whose example his brother rakes on earth likewise leave those beds in which they had slept away the day. Now Thetis, the good housewife, began to put on the pot, in order to regale the good man Phoebus after his daily labours were over. In vulgar language, it was in the evening. . . ."

44. For Nero's poetic aspirations, see the satirical address to him by Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.45-47: "When your watch on earth is over and you seek the stars at last, the celestial palace you prefer will welcome you, and the sky will rejoice;" compare also Ovid's lines, note 16 above.

45. Carneades, died 129 B.C., the sceptical philosopher of Cyrene in Africa, a pupil of Diogenes; his "bitter brew," *elleborum*, is the black hellebore described by Pliny, *Natural History* 25.5, as a bitter purge. Compare Fulgentius's *Content of Virgil* 3: "Plato with his essences (*ideas*) . . . or Aristotle with his perfect forms (*endeleacias*)," and 20: "Golden . . . recalling the utterance of Plato."

46. Chrysippus the Stoic, died 207 B.C., is also mentioned alongside Plato and Aristotle by Fulgentius on Virgil, 3, and by Tertullian, *De anima* 5.4. All the fables that follow this prologue are presumably meant to be taken as the explanations of Calliope, assisted by Philosophy if not Urania, even 1.15 which includes an analysis of the Muses.



*THE EXPOSITION  
OF THE CONTENT OF VIRGIL  
ACCORDING TO MORAL PHILOSOPHY*



## Introduction

The full traditional title for the second, and in some respects most notorious, work of Fulgentius the mythographer is perhaps unlikely to be the author's title, but nonetheless serves as a reasonable index of its character. It is an *expositio* because it gives a connected rather than a scholiastic treatment of its subject, *exponere* becoming in it a favorite verb on the lips of Virgil, who is summoned from the shades to expose or lay bare the hidden truths of his *Aeneid* in similar fashion to the *expositiones* of Ambrose and others on the books of Scripture. The *continentia*, or inner substance of Virgil, is concentrated on to the exclusion of any concern for grammar, rhetoric, narrative skill, topical allusions, use of language, or prosody. And the work is based on moral philosophy in the rather inclusive sense that term acquired in the Middle Ages: this is Virgil *moralisé*, that is, dressed up in a motley of ethical and didactic precepts. It is also something of a medley of notions and commonplaces, particularly on the teaching and interpretation of literature, a medley which nonetheless includes a number of attitudes and motifs typical of its time and later to become formalized and schematized and perhaps more respectable. Modern comment on Fulgentius's *Content* has often stressed its eccentricity, its wild and freakish aspects. The work is certainly an unweeded garden, but it is also, to use a Fulgentian term, a *seminarium*, a seedbed of devices and techniques which later grew and flourished in transplanted form. There, especially, lies its importance as a literary document.

The *Content* is preserved in a number of manuscripts which range from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries and are particularly plentiful from the tenth to the earlier twelfth. Of the eleven superior copies (the majority of which are now housed in the Vatican Library) drawn upon by Helm for his edition of 1898, two early ones, P = Vat. Palatinus 1578 (9th century) and R = Vat. Reginensis 1462 (11th), appear to descend from a lost archetype which may well have belonged to the eighth century, the Carolingian age.<sup>1</sup> P, R, and seven others also contain Fulgentius's *Mythologies*; P, R, and one other have his *Explanation of Obsolete Words*. P, R, and four others assign to the *Content*, with minor variants, the title adopted by Helm and for the

present translation, namely *Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos morales*; manuscript E = Vat. Reginensis 1567 (11th century) has *Libellus de allegoria librorum Virgilii*; such titles are, of course, unlikely to have originated with the author. Nearly all copies name the author as Fabius Planciades Fulgentius. Several manuscripts of the *Mythologies* are addressed to a Catus, priest (*presbiter*) of Carthage, E alone varying this with Cantia, priest of Carthage. In this same manuscript the *Content* is addressed to a Calcidius *grammaticus*, and to the same person is addressed in P, R, and other copies, the *Explanation of Obsolete Words*; if this is a piece of literary fiction, one thinks immediately of the fourth-century Calcidius or Chalcidius who translated and commented on Plato's *Timaeus*, but there is nothing to substantiate the link.

As we have it, the *Content* begins formally and elaborately but ends lamely and abruptly, covering the last six books of the *Aeneid* in a sketchy fashion and doing nothing to resolve the situation created by the appearance of Virgil's shade. Nothing in the manuscripts, however, warrants assuming that any loss of text is involved or that the weak finish has to do with anything but the fading of the author's inspiration. So with the Latinity: aside from the Greek quotations and etymologies, for which there are many signs of scribal struggles, we have a text not much younger than two centuries after the author's probable lifetime, and one which can scarcely be more distorted than the state in which the author left it.

One of the most evident features of the *Content* is its pedagogic character, its resemblance to the attitudes and tones of the schoolmaster teaching literature and life through literature; this aspect of the work has already been considered, in the general introduction above, against the background of St. Augustine. We begin with a run-through of the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* from which Virgil emerges as the master of a wide range of arts and sciences, exemplifying the tradition of omniscience and infallibility which Macrobius in particular had cultivated for the poet in his *Saturnalia*, where Virgil's *profunda scientia* is repeatedly stressed.<sup>2</sup> Then the bard himself appears, in a sort of dream convention or fictional vision of the kind justified by Macrobius in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* as a means of promoting virtuous behavior.<sup>3</sup> Virgil has come to Fulgentius in response to his verse invocation of the Muses, another traditional touch. Virgil conducts his interview very much in the manner of a dialogue between master and pupil, essentially in the style established by Plato, Cicero, Tacitus's *Dialogue on Orators*, and once again Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, but perhaps more closely

akin to the *De magistro* of St. Augustine, the dialogue on the use of words between himself and a boy of fifteen.

The quotation from a play of Plautus in para. 24, and the extensive use made of the same author in the *Explanation of Obsolete Words*, may help explain why Fulgentius allows his dialogue some novelty, drama, and occasional touches, unconscious or not, of comedy. Having begun by apologizing, it would seem, for his great age and poor memory, he rather incongruously assumes the role of a boy to whom Virgil can be both condescending and downright insulting. Virgil twice calls him *homunculus*, little man, which appears to mean, not a kind of Lilliputian or microcosm, but plain "boy."<sup>4</sup> Virgil castigates his obtuseness, calling him "more dense than a clod of earth" (para. 4), remarks on his "fatheadedness" (6), says he has little hope of opening up his weightier matters (4), tells the *homunculus* to keep his ears open (6) and pay close attention (10), talks of "infants to whom my material is being handed on" (10), and quickly snubs the persona of Fulgentius when he ventures to add to what Virgil is explaining a word in season from the Bible (19, 20, 24). The fact that Fulgentius's persona is not merely smug and obsequious but rather bumptious also adds a nice touch of conflict.<sup>5</sup> On four occasions he gets his own back on the stern master: in para. 9 he cites "the wisdom of God, far higher than your senses"; in 13 he cuts short Virgil's offer of a further explanation; in 21 he comes up with a sly equation of Virgil's "Gentile speech" with Old Testament "abomination"; and in 23 the pupil turns the tables on the master for what he calls a piece of Epicurean folly.<sup>6</sup>

These fairly lively exchanges may even suggest that Fulgentius's central notion, of the *Aeneid* as an allegory of life, is after all not meant to be taken with complete seriousness. But the moralizing is serious enough. As Virgil runs through his poem, it is the *sententiae*, the moral precepts and didactic lessons, that he stresses—the ignorance, wildness, and conceit of youth, the dangers of pride, lust, flattery, greed, gluttony, envy, sloth, impiety, and anger, almost a catalogue or procession of the deadly sins. Although Fulgentius sets out proclaiming that the adventures of Aeneas stand for "the full range of human life" (para. 6), he works out the allegory only from birth to full manhood. Aeneas is first the baby, then the child who begins by being headstrong but settles to serious study, overcomes temptation and irresponsibility, learns humility, and eventually gets on in the world. The emphasis is on material prosperity, on making good, not on reaching a wise old age or a final sanctity. When Aeneas wishes to marry Lavinia, not very

flatteringly traced to *laborum uia*, the road of hard work, Virgil is made to explain (para. 24) that "at this stage of life Everyman learns the value of toil in furthering his worldly possessions"; in the following paragraph he says sententiously, "To do well is to sow the seeds of future goodness, and he who does well may be confident of laying up good things for himself." In Fulgentius's view of things, the Red Cross Knight does not become St. George: he merely joins the executive ranks.

The didactic lessons are driven home, as in the *Mythologies*, with remorseless ingenuity by the wildest of etymologies of personal and place names which caused Comparetti, for instance,<sup>7</sup> to doubt the author's sanity, but which are only of the kind taken quite seriously, and sometimes schematized, in such popular works as the *Etymologies* of Isidore, the *Moralia on Job* by Gregory the Great, and the many discussions of the *nomina Christi*.<sup>8</sup> The didactic potential of Virgil is exploited to the extent that Fulgentius is prepared to manipulate the complete epic into, not so much a religious pilgrim's progress from this world to the next, as the development of what Spenser was to call "a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" and "a good governor and a virtuous man," but something to be disentangled from "continued allegory or dark conceit"—a fiction "cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devices," and turned into a "good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts."<sup>9</sup> In many ways Spenser's ideas about the *Faerie Queene*, like Torquato Tasso's on his *Gerusalemme Liberata*,<sup>10</sup> are thoroughly Fulgentian, though of course they reverse the formula and fit epic to theory. Spenser in his explanation passes from Homer and Virgil to Xenophon's prose epic, the *Cyropaedia*, in which history and biography are deliberately manipulated and romanticized to suit a moral and educational purpose, a ready-made example of Fulgentius's approach to epic, though he does not refer to it. Fulgentius may have found some precedent for what he does to Virgil in the allegorical defenses of Homer, such works as the *Quaestiones* of the later Heraclitus,<sup>11</sup> or in the latent Christianity attributed to Virgil himself, of which he was well aware (see par. 23), or in such passages as the personification of evils in *Aeneid* 6, eagerly seized upon and elaborated in paragraph 22.

Fulgentius's Latin is what one would expect of a decadent period, close to the Asianic extravagances of Martianus Capella, strained, pompous, full of tortuous elaborations, infected with Gorgian antithesis, occasionally descending to colloquialism, at times reading like a parody of Ciceronian periods—in sum, what George Saintsbury called "a most detestable style, a tis-

sue of appallingly barbarous Latin."<sup>12</sup> Quite a parade of learning and authorities is presented, and Comparetti roundly accuses Fulgentius of inventing. If not invented, the learning is certainly suspect of being secondhand. Many of the traceable quotations used are either slightly inaccurate, as if from memory or a compendium, or are taken from the opening sentences of a work. Otherwise unknown titles by Carneades, Petronius, and Tiberianus are cited; in paragraph 1, Virgil's *Eclogue* 9 is quoted but called *Eclogue* 1, and Virgil is allowed to mention Petronius, Porfyrius, and Tiberianus, who, in fact, postdated him by many years. Fulgentius claims not to be interested in the deeper things of Virgil, whereupon he gives a lengthy list of writers whom he does not intend to emulate, including some who look suspiciously like fictitious or secondhand authorities (par. 3; see supplementary note 1). In paragraphs 22–24, the Epicurean school seems to be equated with the Academic; and toward the end, where invention begins to flag, Latona is mistaken for her daughter Diana as the moon goddess and the father of Latinus, whom Virgil called Faunus, is named Caunus by Fulgentius. To any dispassionate view, the total performance is frequently near travesty.

What Fulgentius does know at first hand includes the techniques of traditional rhetoric and dialectic; witness the lengthy argument of paragraphs 6–10 (see supplementary note 2), even incorporating a detail of *ars dictaminis*, or formal letter-writing. Some acquaintance with the Greek language must be added to the list of his abilities; but to judge by the etymologies, his knowledge of Greek need not have gone far beyond the use of a glossary or word list.<sup>13</sup>

As to the central allegory, the short imitative text *On the Thebaid*, ascribed to a Fulgentius but one almost certainly later than ours, begins with a significant statement (see the version below) of the author's uncompromising attitude to pagan poetry: the hidden moral is everything; the fiction, a mere husk or shell of a nut. For our Fulgentius, the *Aeneid* was a popular and not difficult nut to crack. He does not have to defend its interest for a Christian audience: Virgil alone, of the pagan authors, could assume without discomfort the pose of both sage and bishop that he is given in paragraph 6. And its popularity as a curriculum text, as Augustine's *Confessions* showed, was second to none. Virgil's work had attracted, by the age of Fulgentius, a considerable body of interpretative commentary, in which allegory of one kind or another had some place; certain passages of the poem indeed—in particular, the descent of Aeneas in book six—could be said to invite and encourage an allegorical or symbolic approach.<sup>14</sup> What original-

ity may be attributed to Fulgentius lies in the persistence with which he applies philosophical allegory to the whole *Aeneid*. He was not the first to hold the general notion or to apply it to particular passages. He is merely attempting to do for a popular text, at least partly acceptable to Christian readers, what had long before, with perhaps greater justification, been done for Homer. The allegorical approach to literature had been already adumbrated to some extent by Homer himself as well as by Hesiod, and allegorical interpretation of heroic narrative in terms of moral philosophy—heroic deeds as exemplary of the virtuous life—had its roots in the same remote antiquity. Fulgentius had more than one model for his approach to Virgil.<sup>15</sup> The life of the poet by Aelius Donatus, the teacher of Jerome, and Donatus's imperfectly preserved commentary give some place to hidden philosophical meanings; witness the famous explanation of the order of the Virgilian works. The popular commentary of Servius, both the shorter scholia and the augmented exposition, mingles with literal explanations some allegorical material of this kind, emphasizing Virgil's mastery of *doctrina* or erudition and making much of the profundities in book six. Only Tiberius Donatus, writing later in the fourth century than his namesake, produced a less colorful commentary, rhetorically orientated and showing little interest in explication along philosophical lines. To Macrobius, at the end of the century, Fulgentius probably owed most. The Neoplatonic symposium called the *Saturnalia* gave him a model for dialogue and perhaps a taste for greater profundities in Virgil than the schoolroom treatments might offer. Virgil in Macrobius emerges as an infallible sage of enormous and deep learning, exactly the character he is given at the start of Fulgentius's *Content*, and Fulgentius goes on to cite authorities with a generosity very reminiscent of Macrobius; regrettably the philosophical parts of the *Saturnalia* are lost, or the parallel might well be made closer. From Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* Fulgentius may well have taken the hint for his visionlike manifestation of Calliope in the *Mythologies* and of Virgil himself in the *Content*.

More in general, the allegorical approach of Fulgentius, in both the *Mythologies*—which universalizes the mythical figures of antiquity in the same allegorical fashion and explains them with copious etymology as symbols of virtues and vices—and the *Content*—which applies the technique to one major work of antiquity—may be characterized as Stoic. Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of the Gods*, the doorway to much lost Greek speculative and philosophical literature, favored the Stoic association of mythology and



ethics, and, with its freedom from the more dogmatic and theoretical aspects of Stoicism, may have served Fulgentius with some inspiration. This was the type of allegorical approach which came to a new and abundant flowering among Renaissance humanists. What Sir Philip Sidney said in his *Apology for Poetry*—"No philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil," and "But even in the most excellent determination of goodness, what philosopher's counsel can so readily direct . . . a virtuous man in all fortunes, as Aeneas in Virgil"—describes concisely the broad end of the current in which Fulgentius long before had dabbled. With other branches of medieval allegory, some of them evident from classical times (such as interpretation of details in terms of the topical or historical, physical or cosmological) and some more specifically Christian (in their allegories, symbolism, and typology),<sup>16</sup> Fulgentius has little or nothing to do.

Aside from the central fantasy, Fulgentius's *Content* touches on many commonplace notions and techniques current in the late classical period and recurrent throughout the Middle Ages. A representative list would include praise of one's patron; the author's affected modesty; the *occupatio* or *occultatio*, pretended avoidance of difficult themes; the gold and the river of eloquence; the poet's divine frenzy or furor; respect for authors of the past; anger as an epic motif; etymology as a category of thought; number symbolism; the deadly sins; the tower of pride; and the wheel of fortune. Some of these are discussed and illustrated briefly in the notes to the translation, below. Something has already been said on the traditionalism of the dialogue form, the invocation of the Muses, the deliberate flamboyance of the Latin, the allegorical and philosophical approaches, and the arbitrary etymologizing. One or two other incidental features both traditional and capable of later proliferation may be mentioned. Virgil is represented as a kind of supernatural sage, already halfway to Master Virgil, the sorcerer of medieval folklore. *Eclogues* 1-3 are taken, in paragraph 1, as showing "the three natural lives," possibly an adaptation of Aelius Donatus's schema for Virgil's major works. Suetonius's little story is repeated, probably by way of the same Donatus: how Virgil's mother dreamed of giving birth to a laurel bough (par. 20). The debts to earlier Virgil commentators and to Macrobius are sometimes apparent, but often it is a question of those elusive topics or *topoi* of antiquity of which it would be idle to look for precise origins. In general, these conventional attitudes and methods attest to the professionalism of Fulgentius's work as well as to his share in the common stuff of literary explication. Though they recur endlessly in medieval and Renais-

sance writing, they do not, of course, rank as specific instances of Fulgentius's personal influence: he is only one catchment in a large network of waterways.

Something of the general influence of Fulgentian notions on medieval and Renaissance allegory, literary criticism, and treatment of mythology has already been indicated; and the persistent influence of the *Mythologies* has been outlined in the introduction to that work, above. What follows is confined to the specific later influence of the *Content of Virgil*. The orthodox, if not the representative, attitude of mistrust towards pagan literature is explicitly stated by the rigorist Paschasius Radbertus in the preface to his commentary on St. Matthew; but the passage is explicit also in its testimony to the Carolingian popularity of Fulgentius's *Content* and to the writer's own acquaintance with it:<sup>17</sup>

We do not treat of Virgil's "arms and a man," finding our condiment in the Greek salt of fables, but from the fountain of the Holy Spirit . . . we desire to expound for the ears of our people what we understand in the Scriptures. It is not with tragic dutifulness [the *pietas* of Aeneas] that we soothe the reader. . . . Hence, even if some of our friends take pleasure in Virgil's lines, because, as they say, he would wish to signify by "arms" virtue and by "man" wisdom, and so on for all that follows, they should find even greater delight in the matter which we are setting ourselves to handle.

A more liberal general comment, which also precisely echoes the Fulgentian rationalization of pagan legends, is that in a poem by Paschasius's contemporary, Theodulf of Orleans: "Poets provide false stories; philosophers often turn these falsehoods into truth."<sup>18</sup>

From the eleventh century comes the admiring tribute to both the *Mythologies* and the *Content*, in the *Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, by the Belgian chronicler Sigebert of Gembloux (died 1112), who was cited in connection with the influence of the *Mythologies*. From the earlier twelfth century, another allusion seems to reveal itself in the remark, by Conrad of Hirsau, that if all three major works of Virgil are considered, "a shrewd reader might perceive that this preeminent poet had covered the full range of liberal studies"—the very point Fulgentius illustrates in detail in the opening of the *Content*.<sup>19</sup> In the middle of the same century was produced a thoroughgoing imitation of the *Content*, the *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Vergilii*, by Bernard Sylvestris of Tours, a work of some popularity, still known to Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *Vita Nuova*.<sup>20</sup> Bernard's interest with the *Aeneid* lay in its moral and philosophical implications—"Virgil insofar as he is a philosopher writes on the nature of hu-

man life"—the poetry and story providing an *integumentum* or wrapper for Aeneas as *enos* (compare ἐνναίω, "inhabit") and *demas* (δέμας, "body"), that is, inhabitant of the body, the human spirit in its temporal corporeal captivity. Much is drawn from Macrobius and Servius, and the detailed interpretations are bolstered by fanciful etymologies modeled on, and often duplicating, those of Fulgentius, for "etymology reveals divine truths and rules human ones." The linking of Virgil's Grove of Hecate or Trivia with the *trivium* of the schools<sup>21</sup> is a typical piece of ingenuity that Fulgentius might well have envied. The framework, too, is Fulgentian, the stages of man's growth, somewhat more thoroughgoing and systematized: from infancy in book one of the *Aeneid* through boyhood (2), adolescence (3), youth (4), to manhood (*virilis aetas*, 5), the contents of each book are summarized in prose. The treatment of book six, as with Servius and Fulgentius, is more profound than that of the earlier books, with supplementary details drawn from William of Conches on Boethius; with six, Bernard lays aside his announced plan to cover all twelve books of the epic. The descent of Aeneas to the lower world becomes a fourfold descent to this world, the descent to birth which is common to all men, that to reflection by the wise, that to vice in which the common herd partake, and that by way of necromancy. While details and plan differ in their degree of elaboration, the allegorizing methods of Fulgentius with Virgil are everywhere apparent.

Later in the same twelfth century we find similar notions on Virgil entertained in the work of John of Salisbury (died 1180), a writer more evidently associated with the new scholasticism and its fascination with detail. John was acquainted at first hand with Bernard Sylvestris and the school of Chartres, with which Bernard was distantly connected. In the *Polycraticus* 8. 24–25, John reproduces the etymology for Aeneas as *ennaïos*, "the indweller," the soul in the human body; earlier (2.15), "Virgil in his book probes into the secrets (*rimatur arcana*) of all philosophy"; and in 6.22 a quotation from *Aeneid* 6 is introduced by "Recall the lines of the Mantuan poet, who under the guise of fables (*sub imagine fabularum*) expresses the truth of all philosophy."

Perhaps to the same century, or a little earlier, may be assigned another imitation of Fulgentius's *Content*, the short work *On the Thebaid* which applies his methods to the epic of Statius. A version of this text is given below, with some introductory comment.

There follows the age of Dante, himself guided by Virgil in the *Divina Commedia*, and owing, he says elsewhere, all his knowledge of rhetoric to

Virgil's example. In the fourth treatise of the *Convivio*, the incomplete work written as he approached the age of 25, Dante divides human life into four ages: youth and adolescence to 25, manhood the age of achievement from 25 to 45, old age from 45 to the Biblical term of 70, and decrepitude from 70 to 81. For manhood his model is Virgil's Aeneas, and he speaks of "the account which Virgil gives in the *Aeneid* of the changing progress of the ages." Aeneas descended to the lower world, "whereby it appears how in manhood it behoves us for our perfection (*perfezione*) to be temperate and brave (*temperati e forti*). And this is what goodness of nature accomplishes and shines forth." Whether or not his direct influence is to be accepted here, the general notion and the terms used resemble Fulgentius, with his *perfectio* for mature manhood and his *virtus et sapientia* formula for manly qualities.<sup>22</sup> In his *Comment on the Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio associates Fulgentius's invocation of the Muses (par. 2) with Dante's in *Inferno* 2.7. In his compendium of mythology, the *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* 14.13, Boccaccio gives the thoroughly Fulgentian view that "Virgil's second purpose, concealed within the poetic veil, was to show with what passions human frailty is infested, and the strength with which a steady man subdues them."<sup>23</sup> Petrarch's allegorical view of Virgil—as it emerges from his *Coronation Oration* 2, his Latin verses on the *Aeneid*, and his letter *De quibusdam fictionibus Virgilii*—has a strong Fulgentian ring. Around 1475–80 Cristoforo Landini in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, books 3 and 4, put out an allegorical exegesis of the *Aeneid* still reminiscent of Fulgentius's *Content*.

At least one manuscript of the work was made in the sixteenth century, and the *Content* reached print in or before the 1520s. In the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collections of mythology and editions of Virgil, Fulgentius's text still holds its place. By the nineteenth century the more typical comment on the work ran as follows:<sup>24</sup>

The absurdity of this piece is so glaring, that, had it been composed in a different age, we should have at once pronounced it to be a tedious and exaggerated burlesque.

The tide is not likely to ebb again in Fulgentius's favor, but the current of his influence was long lasting and widely signaled.

The translation which follows is divided, unlike Helm's edition of the original, into numbered sections or paragraphs for convenience of reference. The text and its allusions call for fairly extended annotation; this is

given in explanatory notes after each paragraph and, for three topics requiring fuller treatment, in supplementary notes at the conclusion.

### Bibliographical Note

The Latin text of the *Content of Virgil* is available in the following editions already cited for the *Mythologies*: "Philomusus" (1521), Commelinus (1589-99), Muncker (1681), Van Staveren (1742-47), and Helm (1898), pp. 83-107. The text is also included in early editions of the works of Virgil, issued in 1589 (Heidelberg), 1600 (Paris), 1610, 1620 (Cologne), 1636 (Amsterdam), of Hyginus's *Fabulae* (Heidelberg, 1589), and of Servius by Pierre Daniel (Paris, 1600; Geneva, 1636). Special studies include: A. Gasquy, *De Fabio Planciade Fulgentio Virgilii interprete*, *Berliner Studien für klassische Philologie*, Vol. 6 (Berlin, 1887); H. C. Coffin, "Allegorical Interpretation of Vergil with special reference to Fulgentius," *Classical Weekly* 15 (1921): 33-35; J. W. Jones, "Vergil as Magister in Fulgentius," in *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of B. L. Ullman*, ed. C. Henderson (Rome, 1964), 1:273-75.

For interpretations of Virgil in the Middle Ages and beyond, see the basic works, already cited in the general introduction, by Comparetti (3d ed. in 2 vols., 1937-46), and Schanz-Hosius-Krüger (1920-59), 198-99; also G. Zappert, *Virgils Fortleben im Mittelalter*, *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna, 1851); E. Thomas, *Scholiaster de Virgile: Essai sur Servius et son Commentaire sur Virgile* (Paris, 1880); J. S. Tunison, *Master Virgil: The Author of the Aeneid as He Seemed in the Middle Ages*, 2d ed. (Cincinnati, 1890); H. de la Ville de Mirmont, *Apollonius de Rhodes et Virgile: La Mythologie et les Dieux dans les Argonautiques et dans l'Énéide* (Paris, 1894); S. T. Collins, *The Interpretation of Vergil, with Special Reference to Macrobius* (Oxford, 1909); E. Nitchie, *Vergil and the English Poets* (New York, 1919; repr., 1966); V. Zabughin, *Virgilio nel Rinascimento Italiano da Dante a Torquato Tasso* (Bologna, 1921); D. L. M. Drew, *The Allegory of the Aeneid* (Oxford, 1927); M. Y. Hughes, "Virgil and Spenser," *University of California Publications in English*, 2.3 (1929), 263-406; various authors, "Virgilio nel Medio Evo," *Studi Medievali*, n.s., 5 (Turin, 1932); J. W. Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer*, *Studies in Virgilian Legends*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, vol. 10 (Cambridge, Mass., 1934); R. W. Crutwell, *Virgil's Mind at Work, an Analysis of the Symbolism of the Aeneid* (Oxford, 1946); N. Marinone, *Elio Donato, Macrobio e Servio Commentatori di Virgilio* (Vercelli, 1946); A. Santoro, *Essegeti Virgiliani Antichi* (Bari, 1946); P. Courcelle, "Les Pères de l'Eglise devant les Enfers Virgiliens," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 22 (1955): 5-74; E. Coleiro, "Allegory in the Aeneid," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts of Malta*, 1.3 (1959), 159-74; B. G. Koonce, *Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in The House of Fame* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 106-36.

On literary criticism: J. E. Spingarn, *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (New York, 1899); G. Saintsbury, *A History of Criticism*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1900); H. O. Taylor, *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1901), new edition by K. M. Setton (1958); T. C. Burgess, *Epidictic Literature*, University

of Chicago Studies in Classical Philology, 3.3 (Chicago, 1902); J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase* (Cambridge, 1943); E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berne, 1948), English transl. by W. R. Trask, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Bollingen Foundation, Vol. 36 (New York, 1953); G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition, Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (Oxford, 1949); M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (Ithaca, 1951), and *Thought and Letters in Western Europe A.D. 500-900*, 2d ed. (New York, 1957); R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, 1954; repr., 1964); W. K. Wimsatt, C. Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York, 1957); O. B. Hardison, *The Enduring Monument, a Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Chapel Hill, 1962); S. Battaglia, *La Coscienza Letteraria del Medioevo* (Naples, 1965).

On allegory: A. B. Hersman, *Studies in Greek Allegorical Interpretation* (Chicago, 1906); J. Tate, "The Beginnings of Greek Allegory," *Classical Review* 31 (1927): 214-15, "Plato and Allegorical Interpretation," *Classical Quarterly* 23 (1929): 142-54, and "On the History of Allegorism," *Classical Quarterly* 28 (1934): 105-14; E. C. Knowlton, "Notes on Early Allegory," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 29 (1930): 159-81; C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1936); J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* transl. C. Misrahi (New York, 1962); A. Fletcher, *Allegory, the Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, 1964); R. Kellogg, O. Steele, "Renaissance Humanism and the Epic Tradition," and "Allegory," *Books I and II of the Faerie Queene* (New York, 1965), pp. 1-10; R. Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery, some Mediaeval Books and their Posterity* (Princeton, 1966); P. E. Beichner, "The Allegorical Interpretation of Medieval Literature," *PMLA* 82 (1967): 33-38, repr. in H. Newstead, ed., *Chaucer and his Contemporaries* (New York, 1968), pp. 112-23; R. P. Miller, "Allegory in the Canterbury Tales," in B. Rowland, ed., *Companion to Chaucer Studies* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 268-90, a summary of medieval attitudes and techniques with a useful bibliography; M. J. Murrin, *The Veil of Allegory* (Chicago, 1969); D. C. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant, the Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1970); J. I. Wimsatt, *Allegory and Mirror* (New York, 1970).

1. Abbreviated reference is made, here and in subsequent notes, to authors and titles listed more fully in the bibliographical note appended to this introduction. According to W. M. Lindsay, *Palaeographia Latina* (St. Andrews, 1924), 3:23-24, the provenance of P is Lorsch in Germany, and of R, northern Italy. Another manuscript, D = Gudianus 333 of the earlier 12th century, is from Wolfenbüttel. M. L. W. Laistner (*The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. G. Starr, [Ithaca, 1957], p. 210) prefers to place R at the end of the 8th century. He notes that the abbey of Saint-Amand, Département du Nord, France, once owned a 9th-century manuscript (of which only two leaves survive), containing the *Mythologies*, the *Content*, and the *Explanation*.

2. The phrase occurs in *Sat.* 3.2.7; see Curtius (1953), pp. 443-45.

3. For similar manifestations in Martianus Capella and Boethius, see par. 2 and note 5, below.

4. Jerome (*Epist.* 27) has a similar derogatory implication for *bomunculus*, equated with the "two-legged ass" bold enough to protest his improvements on the Latin of the Scriptures. One recalls Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, 2.2, where Gulliver, now a midget among the Brobdingnagians, is renamed Grildrig: "The word imports what the Latins call *nanunculus*, the Italians *bomunculetino*, and the English *manikin*."

5. The full history of an author's persona or character assumed when he obtrudes in his own compositions, a subject so intriguing with Dante and Chaucer, has still to be written. Some points towards it are made by S. Battaglia, *Minografia del Personaggio e Esemplarità e Antagonismo nel Pensiero di Dante*, both published in Naples, 1966.

6. Reading para. 22, one wonders whether Fulgentius himself appreciated the irony of naming an institute of higher learning for Hades!

7. D. Comparetti, transl. E. F. M. Benecke, *Virgil in the Middle Ages* (London, 1895), p. 112. For a comment on Fulgentius's extensive use of etymology as a tool of allegory, see the introduction to the *Mythologies*, above.

8. See Curtius (1953), pp.495-500, and, for the names etymologized by Servius from the *Aeneid*, Thomas (1880), pp.224-27.

9. From the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh which appeared with books 1-3 of the *Faerie Queene* in 1590. In par. 10, Fulgentius uses *princeps*, prince or ruler capable of exercising judgment, in the same sense as Spenser's "governor." The Fulgentian *virtus*, not a theological term but the path to material prosperity, recalls not only ancient sophistic and Roman concepts of manly qualities, but the Renaissance *virtù*, as much virtuosity as virtue.

10. See Hardison (1962), pp. 71 ff., 218 ff.

11. The 1st-century exposition sometimes called *Quaestiones Homericae*, ed. F. Oelmann, *Herakleiti quaestiones Homericae* (Leipzig, 1910), ed. and transl. F. Buffière, *Héraclite, Allégories d'Homère*, Collection des Universités de France (Paris, 1962); see further Buffière, *Les Mythes d'Homère et la Pensée Grecque* (Paris, 1956), and W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*, 2d ed. (Ann Arbor, 1963), pp.126-27.

12. Saintsbury (1900), 1:393-94. For the contemporary cult of ornate mannerism, see Curtius (1953), pp. 273-301.

13. For knowledge of Greek in the early Middle Ages, see P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres Grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1948; English version, 1969); B. Bischoff, "Die griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 44 (1951): 27-55, reprinted in his *Mittelalterliche Studien* (Stuttgart, 1967), 2:247-75; Laistner, *Thought and Letters* (1957), pp. 238-50.

14. See further the Virgil studies by Collins (1909), Drew (1927), Crutwell (1946), Santoro (1946), Courcelle (1955), Coleiro (1959); and for examples of allegorical interpretation in classical and early Christian writers—including Homer, Philo of Alexandria, and Origen, see H. O. Taylor, *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, ed. K. M. Setton (New York, 1958), pp. 97-106.

15. See the studies of Comparetti, et al., in the bibliographical note above, including Hughes (1929), pp. 399-406, on attitudes to Virgil taken by Renaissance authors such as Petrarch, J. C. Scaliger (*Poetices* 3), Tasso, and Cristoforo Landini.

16. For the ramifications of classical and medieval allegory, see the studies of Lewis, et al., listed above, and the useful bibliography given by Miller (1968).

17. Translated by Laistner, *Thought and Letters* (1957), pp. 211-12, from *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae* 6.143.
18. Seznec (1953), p. 90, from *Patrologia Latina* 105.331-32.
19. *Dialogus super auctores*, 1506-7, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Collection Latomus (Brussels, 1955), 17:56.
20. See Manitius (1931), 3:208-9; Curtius (1953), pp. 354-55; J. R. O'Donnell, "The Sources and Meaning of Bernard Silvester's Commentary on the *Aeneid*," *Medieval Studies* 24 (1962): 233-49. The only edition of Bernard's *Commentum*, by G. Reidel (Griefswald, 1924), is unsatisfactory, based on a single inferior manuscript.
21. Curtius (1953), p. 481.
22. See H.-T. Silverstein, "Two Notes on Dante's *Convivio*," *Speculum* 7 (1932): 547-57; P. Renucci, *Dante Disciple et Juge du Monde Gréco-Latin* (Paris, 1954), pp. 287, 387.
23. Translated by C. G. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry* (Princeton, 1930; repr., New York, 1956), pp. 68-69.
24. W. Ramsay, in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ed. W. Smith (London, 1846), 2:187.



## Translation: The Exposition of the Content of Virgil according to Moral Philosophy

### 1

The state of my age, Most Saintly of Deacons,<sup>1</sup> was hoping for a complete retirement, when the mind would not only cease to respond to learning, but would cause forgetfulness of the very fact that it is alive.<sup>2</sup> Yet because it is sustained by the new law of charity<sup>3</sup> and a refusal<sup>4</sup> is never permitted in the teachings of charity, I have touched on the natural secrets of Virgil's writings, avoiding those things which might invite risk of blame rather than praise. It will go badly with me, I feel sure, if I know and possess anything blameworthy. For this reason I have passed over the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, so bestrewn with mystical matters that in them Virgil has concealed the innermost profundities of almost every art. In *Eclogues* 1, 2, and 3, he has dealt with the three natural lives;<sup>5</sup> in 4 he has taken up the art of prophecy; in 5 he has described priestly matters; in 6, in most polished lines, he has brought in the art of music, and in part of the same *Eclogue* he has set forth a physiology based on the teachings of the Stoics; in 7 he has touched on the forces (*dinamin*) of botany; in 8 he has dealt with the interpretative aspect of music<sup>6</sup> and with magic, and in the last part he has touched on divination, which he also follows up in *Eclogue* 9. Witness when he says in 8:<sup>7</sup>

Behold, the ashes themselves have seized the altars with tremulous flames,  
Spontaneously, while I delay to bear them off. May it be for good.  
Truly there is here I know nor what, and the dog Hylax barks in the entrance;

and when he says in 9, "I remember the oaks, struck from heaven, foretold misfortune";<sup>8</sup> and again, "The wolves first beheld Moeris."<sup>9</sup> In the *Georgics*, book 1, he is throughout an astrologer and in the last part a divinator; in book 2, a physiognomist and medical man; book 3, is entirely on soothsaying, something which he also touches on in book 6<sup>10</sup> when he says:

And plucking the longest hairs between the horns of the  
sacrificial bullocks, the prophetess  
Places them, as first offerings, in the sacred fires.

In book 4 of the *Georgics* he is to the fullest a musician, with the interpretative associations of the subject stated in the final words of the poem.

## 2

I have therefore left out instruction which goes beyond the limitations of my age,<sup>1</sup> lest someone like me seeking the reputation of a great name should merely end up with a broken head.<sup>2</sup> Be satisfied then, my Master, with the very slight posy which I have gathered for you from the flowery gardens of the Hesperides; if you are looking for golden apples, be a Eurystheus to some stronger man who will risk his life like Alcides.<sup>3</sup> At least from this you can peacefully gather many things to serve for your pleasure. For avoiding the rank sourness of the ellebore of Chrysippus,<sup>4</sup> I plan with the help of the Muses to write something sweeter.<sup>5</sup>

Draw near, ye maids of Helicon, I call  
Not Calliope alone; reward my mind;  
My task is harder, one will not suffice.  
Haste, Muses, for you are my greatest care,  
With snowy plectrum strike the Arcadian strings.

This slight invocation will, I trust, satisfy Virgil's muse. Grant me now the very appearance of the Mantuan bard, whereby I may restore to light his clandestine meanings. Behold, he comes to me more resplendent than a draught of the fountain of Ascra,<sup>6</sup> just as bards are wont to appear, with a preoccupied frown and notebooks held ready to start some new composition, as, the inspiration wailing forth from within, they mutter to themselves some secret thought.

## 3

I addressed him thus: "Most famed of Italian bards, I beg you cast off your wrinkled frowns and soften the sharp acidity of your lofty mind with

a flavor of sweet honey. For I do not seek in your writings what Pythagoras busies himself with in his harmonic numbers, or Heraclitus with his fires, or Plato with his essences, or Hermes with his stars, or Chrysippus with his numbers, or Aristotle with his perfect forms; nor am I concerned with what Dardanus sang of powers, or Battiades of demons, or Campester of ghosts and spirits of the lower world.<sup>1</sup> I want only the slight things that schoolmasters (*grammatici*) expound, for monthly fees, to boyish ears."

4

His brows knit with many wrinkles, he replied: "I thought, little man, that you would make nonsense of anything abstruse had I opened up my weightier bundles to convey its essentials;<sup>1</sup> but, more dense than a clod of earth as you are, you may snore over anything heavy."

5

I answered: "Keep such things, I beg you, for your Romans, for whom it is praiseworthy to know them and safe to pursue them; but for me it will be the highest achievement to touch the very hem of your garment."<sup>1</sup>

6

He replied: "Insofar as your own fatheadedness (*adipata grassedo ingenii*) and the distrust of your age<sup>1</sup> in dangerous doctrine do not act as a barrier to what you can be taught, I shall pour out from the rushing torrent of my intellect<sup>2</sup> a short measure which cannot make you sick with a mammoth hangover.<sup>3</sup> So empty your ears,<sup>4</sup> that my eloquent words may penetrate." And so, settling into the manner of an orator, with two fingers held up straight like a capital letter *I* and pressing the third finger with the thumb,<sup>5</sup>

he began to speak: "In all my writings I have introduced themes of natural order, whereby in the twelve books of the *Aeneid* I have shown the full range of human life. Thus, I begin by saying, 'This is a tale of arms and man,' indicating manliness<sup>6</sup> by 'arms' and wisdom by 'man,' for all perfection depends on manliness of body and wisdom of mind."

## 7

I answered: "If, most illustrious bard, I am not mistaken in the implications of your words, God's law has also spoken of Christ, our world's redeemer, as 'manliness and wisdom';<sup>1</sup> in that the Godhead was seen to take on the perfect state of man."

## 8

He replied: "You may see what the true Majesty has taught you, while I can only set forth what I see. Although in pursuance of the rules for logical discourse (*secundum dialecticam disciplinam*), one should first describe the person and then the attributes of the person, whereby the essential quality should first be outlined, then the outward shows of that quality, mentioning first 'man' and then 'arms' because manliness is inherent in the physical form, yet because the rules for praise (*laudis materia*) have been followed I have mentioned the good quality of man before man himself, so that by the time the person is reached the quality of his worth has already been recognized.<sup>1</sup> This same device of oratory is commonly observed in writing letters, where 'your excellency' is put first and then the actual name. And so that you may see that I have consistently followed the rules for praise, notice what is said next, 'man driven by fate' and 'by the power of the gods above,'<sup>2</sup> by which I meant that fate, not any weakening of manliness, was to blame that he took flight and censured the gods rather than wisdom for his perils, thus fully confirming the old notion of Plato that 'the spirit of man is his god.'<sup>3</sup> If man is worthy, God favors him, as Carneades says in his book

*Telesias*: 'All fortune lies in the mind of the wise man.'<sup>4</sup> I chose to name manliness first and then wisdom because, although wisdom controls manliness, yet the soul's wisdom stems from manliness. For a defect of manliness is an illness for wisdom in this sense, that whatever wisdom's reflection has found must be done, if manliness cannot get the job done, the fullness of wisdom, being curtailed of its proper effects, grows feeble. So I began with 'arms,' knowing that the noun 'man' is a designation of sex, not of praiseworthiness: for if I put the noun 'man' first, there are many men, but not all of them praiseworthy. Therefore, I placed manliness first, as the quality for which I assumed man should be praised, following Homer who says 'The wrath do thou sing, O goddess, of Peleus's son, Achilles,'<sup>5</sup> indicating the man's anger before the particular man. Then, too, when he shows manliness in the symbol of Minerva,<sup>6</sup> he describes how she gripped fast Achilles' hair."

9

I answered: "In this too your well-founded words have not deceived you, for the wisdom of God, far higher than your senses, has made just such an opening point, declaring, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly';<sup>1</sup> thus he who most perfectly set forth the good life, the prophet David who proclaimed the battle for righteous living, put the reward of blessedness before the sweat of conflict."

10

He replied: "I am delighted, little man, with the meanings you have proposed, for even though truth did not provide me with a full account of the good life, yet even over my unilluminated mind it scattered its sparks with a sort of groping accuracy.<sup>1</sup> As I started to say, manliness is the essential quality, but wisdom is what controls this essence, just as Sallust declared: 'For all our strength lies in the mind and the body.'<sup>2</sup> To satisfy your mind more fully

on this point, there is a threefold progression in human life: first, to possess; then to control what you possess; and, third, to ornament what you control. Think of these three stages as arranged in my one verse line, as 'arms,' 'man,' and 'the first.' 'Arms,' that is, manliness, belongs to the corporeal substance; 'man,' that is, wisdom, belongs to the intellectual substance; and 'the first,' that is, a ruler (*princeps*), belongs to the power of judgment; whence this order, to possess, to control, to ornament. Thus in the guise of a story (*historia*) I have shown the complete state of man: first, his nature; second, what he learns; third, his attaining to prosperity. Pay close attention to these stages. As I said before, first, there is given by nature that courage of soul which may serve for advancement, for no creature is taught that is not born capable of being taught; second, there is the learning which adorns nature as it advances, just like gold, for it is the nature of gold to be improved and become ornamental, and it advances to its perfect state through the workman's beating it out with his hammer.<sup>3</sup> So the mind is born to be developed; it develops because it was born; excellence works towards its own advancement. And so, for the infants to whom my material is being handed on, these same steps are to be followed, since everything of worth is born capable of being taught, so that natural capacity will not be wasted, and it acquires ornament, so that the gift of learning will not become useless. Thus Plato, teaching the threefold order of human life, declared: 'All good is either inborn or taught or disciplined.'<sup>4</sup> It is indeed inborn by nature, taught by learning, disciplined by experience. And so, having traced the devious course of my preamble (*antilogium*), I get to the opening (*exordium*) of the work I have undertaken. But to make sure I am not explaining my fable (*fabula*) to ignorant ears,<sup>5</sup> describe the contents of my first book; and then if it is accurate, I will explain it to you."

## 11

I answered: "If my memory of past studies does not deceive me, Juno first requests Aeolus to have the Trojans shipwrecked. From this he<sup>1</sup> escapes with seven ships. He fetches up on the shore of Libya. He sees his mother but does not recognize her. Along with Achates he is concealed in a protective cloud. Then his mind is taken up with pictures.<sup>2</sup> Welcomed to a ban-

quet, he is soothed by the sound of a lyre. There you have the contents of your first book summarized; I am anxious to hear how you explain them."

12

He replied: "I introduced the shipwreck as an allegory of the dangers of birth, which include both the pangs of the mother in giving birth and the hazards of the child in its need to be born. In such a need the human race the world over is involved. To let you understand this more clearly, the shipwreck is engineered by Juno, who is the goddess of birth.<sup>1</sup> She then confronts Aeolus. Aeolus is Greek for *eonolus*, that is, world-destruction;<sup>2</sup> as Homer says, 'That baneful wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans.'<sup>3</sup> Notice what is promised to this same Aeolus, Deiopea, nymph of Juno, for wife. Now *demos* is the Greek for public and *iopa* for eyes or a vision.<sup>4</sup> So for those born into the world there are the hazards of the world,<sup>5</sup> while to Aeolus the goddess of birth promises a public vision<sup>6</sup> of the fullness of time. Next Aeneas escapes with seven ships. By this it is shown that seven is the arithmetical number propitious to birth. I shall briefly explain the formula for this, if it can be understood."

13

I answered: "In the book on physiology I recently brought out, dealing with medical matters, I discussed fully the whole art of arithmetic concerning the numbers seven and nine, and it will be a sign of discursiveness (*perisologiae nota*) if I insert in one book what I have already discussed in others. Therefore, whoever wishes to learn these matters may read about them fully in my book on physiology. Now I await from you what remains to be told."<sup>1</sup>

14

He replied: "As I began to explain, as soon as Aeneas touches land, he sees his mother, Venus, but does not recognize her, indicating complete in-

fancy in that it is given to newborn babes to see their mother from birth, but the ability to recognize her is not immediately added. Then, wrapped in cloud, he recognizes his companions but cannot speak. Notice how obvious it is that this is the state of infants, wherein the ability to perceive is present but the ability to speak is wanting. Also I link Achates to him from the very start, both as his armor bearer after the shipwreck and as equally enveloped in cloud. Achates is for the Greek *aconetos*, that is, the habit of grief,<sup>1</sup> for human nature is linked to hardship from infancy, as Euripides says in the tragedy of *Iphigenia*:<sup>2</sup>

Nothing then is so terrible to tell,  
Nor fleshly pang, nor visitation of God,  
But poor humanity may have to bear it.

That is, there is nothing so bad nor any happening so extreme that human nature does not suffer it. There are no weapons against grief other than the tears with which an infant asserts and consoles itself, for scarcely is it granted us to laugh by the fifth month, whereas tears may flow at the very threshold of life. And when Aeneas vainly feeds his mind with a picture, this certainly refers to the state of childhood, for the infant can see but cannot understand what it sees, just as in pictures there is visible form but not comprehension. Next he is received at the feast and soothed by the sound of the lyre, for indeed it is the way of small infants to want nothing more than to be soothed with sound and filled with food. Consider next the name of the person who plays the lyre, for Iopas is pronounced in Greek *siopas*, that is, the silence of infancy.<sup>3</sup> An infant is always diverted by the soothing chatter and lullabies of nurses; hence I described Iopas as having long hair like a woman's. Next Aeneas sees Cupid, for the way of an infant is always to covet (*cupere*) and desire something."

"I then wrote one similar line in the second book, after the sound of the lyre: 'What soldier of stern Ulysses can refrain from tears?'"<sup>1</sup> In books 2 and 3, Aeneas is diverted by such tales as those by which a garrulous child is usually diverted. At the end of book 3, he sees the Cyclopes as Achaemenides



describes them. Now *acos* in Greek is grief. *Ciclos* is circle; and since *pes* is the Greek for boy,<sup>2</sup> childhood, now released from respect for those who nurture it, does not know the grief of reflection and roams freely in its youthful wildness. The Cyclops is said to have one eye in its forehead because this wildness of youth takes neither a full nor a rational view of things, and the whole period of youth is roused to a pride like that of the Cyclops. So with the one eye in the head that sees and comprehends nothing but vanity. This is what the most wise Ulysses extinguishes: vainglory is blinded by the fire of the intellect. So I named him Polyphemus, as it were, *apolunta femen*, which in Latin we call loss of reputation.<sup>3</sup> The blindness of adolescence follows youth's pride and indifference to reputation. So that this progression may be made plain by a clear demonstration, Aeneas next buries his father, for youth as it grows up casts off the burden of parental control. He buries him at the harbor of Drepanum: Drepanos is for *drimipedos*, for *drimos* is zestful and *pes* is boy,<sup>4</sup> and boyish zest rejects paternal discipline."

16

"In book 4 the spirit of adolescence, on holiday from paternal control, goes off hunting, is inflamed by passion<sup>1</sup> and, driven on by storm and cloud, that is, by confusion of mind, commits adultery. Having lingered long at this, at the urging of Mercury he gives up a passion aroused to evil ends by his lust. Mercury is introduced as the god of the intellect;<sup>2</sup> it is by the urging of the intellect that youth quits the straits of passion. So passion perishes and dies of neglect; burnt to ashes, it disintegrates. When it<sup>3</sup> is driven from the heart of youth by the power of the mind, it burns out, buried in the ashes of oblivion."

17

"In book 5, led by the thought of his father's memory, he is busied with youthful games. This is nothing but a more prudent maturity following the examples of his father's memory, exercising the body in deeds of valor. Con-

sider why Entellus and Dares engage in boxing, that is, pursue manly arts: *entellin* is Greek for what we call disciplining and *derin* for beating, as teachers do in academic disputations.<sup>1</sup> Next the ships go up in flames, that is, those dangerous means whereby youth is driven along the stormy paths of conceit and each day is shaken as with a stormburst of reckless impulses. All these are destroyed by the all-conquering fire of the intellect, and, with knowledge of wisdom fusing and hardening in the embers, the slumbers of irresponsibility die away. And Beroe,<sup>2</sup> that is, true order (*ueritatis ordo*), makes this fire."

## 18

"In book 6, Aeneas, reaching the temple of Apollo, goes down to the lower world. Apollo we call the god of learning, and he is also linked to the Muses.<sup>1</sup> The shipwreck of unstable youth is now over and done with, and Palinurus lost overboard; Palinurus is for *planonorus*, that is, wandering sight,<sup>2</sup> as I said in book 4 about the appearance of lust, 'The eyes of Dido lighting upon Aeneas roved about his whole person in a voiceless stare';<sup>3</sup> and in the *Eclogues* I speak of 'wandering footsteps of the bullock.'<sup>4</sup> Having done with these matters, he reaches the temple of Apollo, that is, studious learning; and there he takes counsel on the course of his future life and seeks the way down to the lower world. That is to say, when anyone<sup>5</sup> considers the future he must penetrate obscure and secret mysteries of knowledge. First, he must needs dispose of Miscnus: *misio*, for *orreo* in Greek, is setting aside, and *enos* is praise.<sup>6</sup> Unless you have destroyed the illusion of vain praise you will never penetrate the secrets of wisdom, for the man hungry for vainglory never seeks truth but takes as his truth the falsities poured on him by flattery. Then there is Miscnus's battle with horn and shell against Triton. Notice how clear the application is: the bubble of vainglory is noisily inflated, only to be pricked by Triton, taken as *tetrimmenon*, in Latin *contritio*, for contrition destroys all vain praise.<sup>7</sup> Also the goddess of wisdom is called Tritonia,<sup>8</sup> for all humbling makes a man wise."

## 19

I answered: "I fully approve, Doctor, of your explanation, for the wholesome and God-given precept of us Christians charges that 'a broken and a

contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.<sup>1</sup> This is wisdom sure and manifest."

20

He replied: "So that what has been said may flow to you even more surely and manifestly, I wrote that Corynaeus burned the body of Misenus with fire. *Carin* is Greek for favor and *eon* for time;<sup>1</sup> worldly favor must needs bury the ashes of vainglory. But the knowledge of secrets is not to be learnt until one has plucked the golden bough, that is, taken up the study of philosophy and letters. I brought in the golden bough as a symbol of knowledge because I recalled that my mother dreamt of giving birth to a bough<sup>2</sup> and that Apollo is depicted with a bough.<sup>3</sup> Then, too, Dionysius recalls in his Greek phrases, the bough is said to be *apo tes rapsodias*, that is, from writings.<sup>4</sup> I said golden because I wished to emphasize the purity of eloquence, recalling the utterance of Plato, on whose inheritance Diogenes the Cynic encroached but found nothing there but a golden tongue, as Tiberianus notes in his book on the god of Socrates.<sup>5</sup> I also introduced ten golden apples in my *Eclogues*, meaning of course the polished eloquence of the ten *Eclogues*. Hercules took golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides: there are said to be four Hesperides, namely, Aegle, Hespera, Medusa, and Arethusa, whom in Latin we call study, intellect, memory, and eloquence, for the first task is to study; the second, to understand; the third, to remember what you have understood; and the final one, to adorn with eloquence what you have remembered. It is, therefore, in this fashion that manliness<sup>6</sup> seizes the golden jewel of learning."

21

I answered: "You say truth, most learned Maro, for a recollection of divine lore has just come to me which says that 'a golden tongue and pure skill may be snatched from abomination,'<sup>1</sup> just as lost eloquence may be from Gentile speech. But go on and explain the rest."

He replied: "As I said before, having obtained the golden bough—that is, learning—he enters the lower world and investigates the secrets of knowledge. But on the threshold of the lower world he sees 'grief, diseases, wars, strife, old age, and want.'<sup>1</sup> For only when all things are considered in the heart and mind of man, when the study of learning is carried through and the darkness penetrated by higher knowledge, only then can the close kinship of old age to death be recognized as the inflated and illusory deception of a dream,<sup>2</sup> war seen as the propagation of greed, disease as the offspring of surfeit and excess, quarrels as the offshoot of drunkenness, and hunger as the servant of idleness and sloth. So Aeneas goes down to the lower world and there, looking on as an eyewitness, he sees both the punishments for the evil, the rewards for the good, and the sad wanderings of those given over to passion. Then piloted by Charon he crosses the Acheron. This river is, as it were, the seething emotions of youthful acts; it is muddy because youths do not have clear-sighted or mature judgment. Acheron in Greek is without experience, and Charon is for *ceron*, that is, time, whence too he is called the son of Polydegmon, for Polydegmon in Greek is much knowledge.<sup>3</sup> For when a man comes to the age of much knowledge he moves over the temporary muddiness of troubled waters and the impurities of bad habits. Next he drugs<sup>4</sup> three-headed Cerberus with honeyed cakes. I explained the fable (*fabulam*) of three-headed Cerberus in my previous work<sup>5</sup> as an allegory of brawling and legal contention; as Petronius says of Euscios, 'Cerberus was once a lawyer.'<sup>6</sup> Thus the chicanery of altercation is picked up and the tongue hired out to busy itself with another's affairs when learning should be carried forward, as is seen in lawyers to this day.<sup>7</sup> But when sweetened by the honey of wisdom the rank taste of arguing acquires a better flavor. Next, admitted to secret knowledge, Aeneas looks upon the shades of mighty warriors, that is, he considers those things which distinguish and testify to manliness. There too he sees the punishment of Deiphobus. Deiphobus is for the Greek *dimofobus* or *demofobus*, that is, fear of panic or fear of the people.<sup>8</sup> Whichever fear is meant, it is accurately depicted by mutilated hands, eyes, and ears, shown in this fashion because no fear is aware of what it sees, or knows what it hears, or realizes what it can carry without hands. Then Deiphobus was killed in his sleep by Menelaus. Menelaus is the Greek *menelau*, that is, valor of the people:<sup>9</sup> such valor destroys all fear which has

yielded to sleep. Then, too, Dido is seen, a shade now void of passion and its former lust. This lust, long dead of indifference, is tearfully recalled to mind as, now penitent, Aeneas reflects on wisdom. Then, as the place is reached where I say:<sup>10</sup>

A great gate is opposite and columns of solid adamant,  
So that no strength of men nor the gods themselves are able to destroy them  
with the sword—an iron tower stands raised high in the air,

see how obvious I have made this as a symbol of pride and conceit. I added adamantine columns to the tower because that kind of stone is indestructible, as you discover in Greek as well,<sup>11</sup> for neither fear of the gods nor human valor nor fear of reputation holds back pride. 'An iron tower raised high in the air' means rigid and unbendable self-pride.<sup>12</sup> And who but the Fury Tisiphone, that is, raging voice, guards this loftiness?<sup>13</sup> When I said, 'A more dreaded Hydra, loathsome with fifty black mouths,'<sup>14</sup> I meant no less than that the swelling of conceit in the heart of the proud is worse than the noisy boasting from their lips. And when I said, 'Then Tartarus itself lies open twice as much in its descent,'<sup>15</sup> notice the full effects of pride, how the punishment for pride is casting down. The more arrogance the conceited man has, the more is he tormented by the casting down of his arrogance, for the man puffed up with pride is struck down by a double penalty, as Porfyrius says in his *Epigrams*:<sup>16</sup>

Quintus, that fickle creature fortune has prospered you  
And given you a big haughty brow.  
I cannot think otherwise, I really think you stink, Quintus:  
The higher you rise, the more you look down in scorn.

Next, in the same place, Aeneas sees the giants and Ixion and Salmoneus, all condemned to punishment for pride, and Tantalus as well. Tantalus in Greek is *teantelon*, that is, covetous of sight, for all covetousness for the use and enjoyment of others' goods<sup>17</sup> satisfies its hunger by just looking. Now in these regions Rhadamanthus of Cnossos is appointed judge: Rhadamanthus is for the Greek *tarematadamonta*, that is, ruling the word, and *gnoso* means to understand.<sup>18</sup> Thus he who knows how to control the flow of words is also the one who condemns and denounces pride. Next Aeneas is terrified by the violent clamor, for the man of piety shuns the call of pride and fears the punishment for evil men. Next he fastens the golden bough

on the dedicated gateposts<sup>19</sup> and so enters Elysium, where, the labor of learning now over, he celebrates the perfecting of memory, which is to be fastened in the brain as enduringly as the golden bough on the gateposts. He enters the Elysian fields—*elisis* in Greek means release<sup>20</sup>—that is, the liberated way of life after finishing with fear of teachers. As Proserpine is queen of the lower world, so the queen of knowledge is memory, which as it advances<sup>21</sup> reigns forever supreme in liberated minds.<sup>22</sup> In this way is the golden bough dedicated to learning. Cicero used to say that memory was the treasure house of wisdom.<sup>23</sup> Now in the Elysian fields Aeneas first sees the poet Musaeus, as it were, gift of the Muses, taller than all the others, who points out to him his father Anchises and the river Lethe—his father to remind him of the need to pursue habits of gravity, and Lethe to remind him of the need to forget the levity of boyhood. Notice the name Anchises, for Anchises in Greek is *ano scenon*, that is, living in one's own land.<sup>24</sup> There is one God, the Father, King of all, dwelling alone on high, who yet is revealed whenever the gift of knowledge points the way.<sup>25</sup> Notice how Anchises instructs his son:

In the beginning a spirit within strengthens heaven and earth, the watery plains,  
The gleaming orb of the moon, and the Titanian stars.<sup>26</sup>

Here you see that, as befits God the creator, he teaches the secret mysteries of nature and shows how men's spirits are brought back again and again from life<sup>27</sup> and makes clear the future."

## 23

I answered: "O Roman spokesman for bards, should you really obscure your illustrious intellect in the fog of so foolish a line of defense? Are you not the one who once pleaded on mystic lines in the *Eclogues*?<sup>1</sup>

And now the virgin returns, Saturn's kingdoms return;  
Now a new race is sent forth from high heaven;

and yet now is not your mind dozing off when you snore out something smacking of the Academy<sup>2</sup> and say 'O Father, am I now to believe that ex-

alted souls go hence to heaven and once more return to their sluggish bodies' ?<sup>3</sup> Why, among such sweet apples, must you include sour blackberries<sup>4</sup> and put out the torch of your luminous wisdom?"

24

He smiled as he replied: "I would not be a pagan<sup>1</sup> if I did not leaven so many Stoic truths with a pinch of Epicurean foolishness. No one is permitted to know all the truth except you Christians, on whom shines the sun of truth. But I have not come as an expositor well versed in your books of Scripture, in the sense that I should argue about matters I ought to receive with understanding, and not rather throw light on matters I well understood. Now listen to the rest. In book 7 the nurse Caieta is buried, that is, the burden imposed by fear of teachers, for Caieta stands for *coactrix aetatis*, compeller of youth. Among the ancients *cautio* meant youthful yielding, whence Plautus in his comedy *Cistolaria* says 'Why are you afraid your girl friend will not yield herself (*caiet*) to your arms?'<sup>2</sup> Now the application of this to discipline is clearly shown when I said: 'Caieta, by your death you have given eternal fame.'<sup>3</sup> Although the discipline of learning dies in the student, yet it passes on the eternal seed of memory. Thus, having buried the strict supervision of teachers, he one day reaches the longed-for Ausonia or Italy, that is, increase of good, to which every desire of wise men hastens with eager pace, for Ausonia is *apo tu ausenin*, that is, of increase.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively it means that even at this stage of life there is bodily increase. Then he seeks to marry Lavinia, that is, the road of toil (*laborum uiam*), for at this stage of life Everyman (*unusquis*) learns the value of toil in furthering his worldly possessions. She is also called the daughter of Latinus and the descendant of Caunus.<sup>5</sup> Now Latinus is from *latitando*, being concealed, because toil is always concealed in various places; wherefore Latona is also called *luna*, moon,<sup>6</sup> because now she hides her upper parts, now her lower, and now is entirely concealed. And Caunus is for *cammonus*, that is, toiling mind.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Caunus marries the nymph Marica, for *merica*, that is, thought.<sup>8</sup> As Homer says, 'Within his shaggy breast Achilles' heart was divided in counsel.'<sup>9</sup>

"Then, in book 8, Aeneas seeks the help of Evander, *euandros* in Greek meaning good man.<sup>1</sup> So manly perfection seeks the comradeship of human goodness, whence it learns the manly qualities of goodness, that is, the feat of Hercules when he slew Cacus, whom in Latin we call evil.<sup>2</sup> Next Aeneas is clad in the arms of Vulcan, that is the protection of an ardent mind against every attack of evil, for Vulcan is meant for *bulencauton*, that is burning counsel.<sup>3</sup> Thereon are displayed all the manly deeds of the Romans, for all states of happiness are either met with or foreseen under the studied protection of wisdom. To do well is to sow the seeds of future goodness, and he who does well may be confident of laying up good things for himself. Thus wisdom both sows and looks confidently forward to good things."

"In book 9, having donned these arms, he fights against Turnus. Turnus is pronounced like the Greek *tuornos*, that is furious rage,<sup>1</sup> for the arms of knowledge and of the mind resist all fury, as Homer says: 'So spake Athene and led furious Ares forth from the battle.'"<sup>2</sup>

"Next, in book 10, he slays Mezentius, the despiser of the gods; for God both creates and commands all things to be good; but when it despises the good, the spirit in the midst of the body neglects its proper task and, to its own harm, resists the good. The wise man, venturing as it were against the doers of harm (*ausus ledenter*), slays Lausus, Mezentius's son, then conquers the spirit itself.<sup>1</sup> Now who is said to be the friend of Turnus? None other than Messapus, for *misonepos*, which in Latin we call defying speech;<sup>2</sup> hence Euripides in his tragedy of Iphigenia says: 'Nothing there is so terrible to tell.'"<sup>3</sup>



28

"Thus having overcome Messapus, the conqueror next, in book 11, in all reverence balances out Messapus's armor equally on the scales, and displays him in effigy."<sup>1</sup>

29

"Then, in book 12, Juturna, who was driving her brother Turnus's chariot, is forced to quit the war, for Juturna is brought in to stand for destruction,<sup>1</sup> because that lasts forever (*diuturne*). Now destruction is very sister to the raging mind. That she guides his chariot and drives him away from death is, of course, destruction knowing how to prolong rage so that it is unending. At first Turnus had Metiscus as driver of his chariot, for *metiscos* in Greek is drunk:<sup>2</sup> drunkenness first induces fury in the mind, then destruction arrives to spur it on. Therefore, she is called immortal, while Turnus is called mortal, for rage in the mind quickly ends but destruction lasts forever. Therefore she wheels his chariot in a great sweep, that is, for a lengthy spell creates delay, for the wheel symbolizes time, whereby Fortune is said to have a wheel,<sup>3</sup> that is, mutability."—The end.

30

Farewell, Master, and be cautious in picking the thistles of my mind.<sup>1</sup>



### 1. Dangerous Doctrine

In several places Fulgentius stresses his unwillingness to deal in dangerous or blameworthy doctrine: in his first sentence he may mean that his own age is censorious of the past; in Virgil he will avoid "those things which might invite risk of blame rather than praise"; he will not risk "instruction which goes beyond the limitation of the age" (par. 2); he prefers sweet to sour (2, 3, 23), and the "slighter things" of the classroom to "weightier bundles" more suitable for Romans who can handle them with safety but for which his own age feels distrust (3-6). In a conventional pretense of not mentioning themes beyond his powers (compare Virgil himself in *Georg.* 3.3 ff., 4.148), he details the mystical matters to be found in Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*: prophecy, priestly matters, Stoic physiology, what seem to be the forces of botany and interpretative aspects of music, magic, divination, astrology, and soothsaying. He ends by warning his master to be cautious: there may be thistles in what he has written (30).

In part this can be explained as typical early Christian distrust of pagan learning and mysticism, of which the gold must be extracted from the "Gentile" dross (21). A more precise echo of current controversies seems to be heard, however, when Fulgentius goes on to give a substantial list of classical authorities who have dealt with the matters he prefers to avoid (2, 3). The list seems to be concocted from current Christian apologetics, particularly the writings of Tertullian (died 230), and contains opposition to pagan writers on the occult; it need not be taken as proving Fulgentius's direct acquaintance with the works of the authors he mentions. Its details have not been fully elucidated, hence the following attempt. Some comment is provided by V. Ciaffi, *Università di Torino, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia* 14.2 (1963): 81.

Pythagoras on "harmonies" or "scales" (*modulos*) in relation to musical appreciation had been discussed by Fulgentius himself in the *Mythologies*

3.9 and 10, ending with a distant echo of Plato's *Republic* 3 and 7. Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 2, is another place where Pythagorean numerology in its combined astrological and musical aspects is discussed at length. The "fires" (*ignes*) of Heraclitus "the Obscure" are also in the *Mythologies* 1.3: Jove there represents the element of fire "because by vital fire all things may be said to be animated, as Heraclitus asserts," the traditional notion of Heraclitus repeated, for instance, by Servius on *Aen.* 2.186; Macrobius, *Commentary* 1.20.3; Lactantius *Divine Institutes* 2.9 (*Heraclitus ex igne nata omnia dixit*); Vitruvius *On Architecture* 2.2. The *ideas* or ideal forms of Plato are most explicitly found in the *Republic*, again 7, and are mentioned in Tertullian's *De anima* 18.3, 32.4. One "star" of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the occult writings associated with Hermes Trismegistus, is mentioned in the *Mythologies* 1.18, with reference to the wanderings of Hermes-Mercury, and similarly Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.20. The "numbers" (*numeros*) of Chrysippus the Stoic are mentioned, along with Euclid, Pythagoras, and Plato, by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Epist.* 4.3, 5); Tertullian (*De anima* 5.4) names Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus together, and, dealing with reincarnation in section 30, disapproves of Pythagoras's notion that the number of human souls remains constant. The *entelechias* of Aristotle, in the sense "fulfillment, completion" (see *Metaphysics*, Theta 8), are not the *Analytics* misspelled but are glossed in two Fulgentius manuscripts as *intima aetas, anima scilicet*, "the inner state, i.e. the soul." They are mentioned by Macrobius (*Commentary* 1.14, 19) and by Martianus Capella (*De nuptiis* 2: *Aristoteles per caeli culmina entelechiam scrupulosius requirebat*)—works Fulgentius almost certainly knew, the particular passage from Capella also being cited by Bernard Sylvestris, Fulgentius's 12th-century imitator, in his *De universitate mundi*, ed. C. S. Barach and J. Wrobel (Innsbruck, 1876), p.13.168; and they occur in Tertullian's *De anima* 32.4, in a context especially close to ours: *numeros Pythagorae et ideas Platonis et entelechias Aristotelis*. For another probable recollection of the *De anima*, see *Mythologies* 1.14, 15.

The remaining allusions seem to be to writers on spirits and magic. Dardanus "on powers" (*in dinameris*) is the legendary ancestor of the Dardani or Trojans, to whom the invention of magic was commonly ascribed, also named by Apuleius, *Apologia* (or *De magia*) 90; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangeliarum* 2; Pliny, *Natural History* 30.2; and once again Tertullian, *De anima* 57.1—see the edition of the latter, with commentary in English, by J. H. Wazink (Amster-

dam, 1947), p. 576 (English version by E. A. Quain, *Tertullian: Apologetical Works*, Fathers of the Church, 10 [Washington, D.C., 1950], pp. 163 ff.). Battiades (not here, it would seem, the poet Callimachus, who is sometimes referred to by this name) is connected with divination by Fulgentius in the *Mythologies* 3.10. A Campester who wrote *de cometis*, i.e., on astrology, is praised by Servius on *Aen.* 10.272. As to Battiades "on demons" (*in paredris*) and Campester "on ghosts and spirits of the lower world" (*in catabolicis infernalibusque*), Tertullian once again has a close parallel, *De anima* 28.5: *Scimus etiam magos elicere explorandis occultis per catabolicos et paredros et pythonicos spiritus*, i.e., three kinds of demons; according to Wazink, pp.361-63, *paredrus*, δαίμων πάρεδρος, is equivalent to the familiar spirit, *spiritus familiaris*, of the Bible (Lev. 19:31, 20:6, I Sam. 28:3, 7, II Kings 21:6, II Chron. 33:6, Is. 8:19) and the Middle Ages. From all this Tertullian emerges as a likely major source for what Fulgentius has assembled.

## 2. The Rules for Praise

In paragraphs 6, 8, and 10, Fulgentius, through the mouth of Virgil, sets out an elaborate and curious justification, logically evolved, for the order in the opening line of the *Aeneid* being "arms," then "man," then "the first," and for the relevance of this to his theory that the *Aeneid* is a chronological allegory of human life. The dialectics, tortuous and glaringly post hoc but not inconsistent, might serve as a prime example of sophistic persuasion. One can, however, scarcely doubt that, for Fulgentius and his age, they made a perfectly legitimate contribution to the allegorical method.

The sequence of the argument is as follows. The order (1) "arms" and (2) "man" is explained first, (3) "the first" being reserved for a later consideration. The logical order (*secundum dialecticam disciplinam*) normal to an expository work would be to have (1) "man," the person and his essential quality or substance, then (2) "arms" as his attribute, outward show or accident. It is premised, however, that "arms" stands for manliness (*virtus*) and "man" for wisdom (*sapientia*), and that, though logical argument is being offered, the "rules for praise" (*laudis materia*) are to be followed, in which (1) the good and praiseworthy quality, i.e., manliness, precedes (2)

the person who possesses it, i.e., man, the embodiment of wisdom. Two analogies are offered: in letter-writing it is conventional to give (1) the person's title, then (2) his actual name; and according to *Aen.* 1.2, 4, the hero is compelled on his course by fate and the power of the gods, i.e., the blame lies with external circumstances and does not reflect on his own praiseworthiness, which, since fortune favors the brave and man's spirit is his god, emerges all the better from these circumstances. Then a second point is made: manliness precedes wisdom because it is assisted by wisdom, as paralleled from Homer's *Iliad*, the opening line of which puts anger before Achilles, and 1.197 which shows Achilles aided by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. The third point brings in "the first," the third of Virgil's key words. The natural course of human life is tripartite, (1) possession of life and innate ability, including the quality of manliness, (2) control and discipline of life through the power of the mind and its wisdom, and (3) "ornament" or perfecting of life through experience and judgment until the man develops into a leader or "first"; each stage leads naturally to the next. This is the order of the *Aeneid*, and we are then ready to be shown each stage in detail by a book-by-book exposition.

The argument is self-consistent, but not complete unless we take into consideration, what Fulgentius takes for granted, that the *Aeneid* is an epic, and so falls into the traditional category of epideictic writing to which "rules for praise" may logically apply. Given this, the argument is easily completed: Virgil's epic relates the deeds of the hero Aeneas; these are praiseworthy deeds and must contain truths and precepts valid for all men of worth, i.e., a moral philosophy; therefore, these truths are to be sought for. The means used, the gross manipulation of Virgil's method of beginning *in medias res* into a strict chronology of growing up and the grotesque etymologizing, may subsequently have lost their reliability, but the end purpose is not unreasonable. If each deed of Aeneas is virtuous, it illustrates a virtue, and the door to allegory is wide open. Fulgentius's distinction is that he happened to be the first to allegorize a pagan work in this thoroughgoing way. The achievement is not unimpressive: he justifies the suitability of the *Aeneid* for Christian readers; he turns the narrative into the outline of both a *Bildungsroman*, a panegyric biography of Aeneas, and a *psychomachia* or battle for the soul of Everyman; from the details of his allegory he manages to produce a full parade of virtues and vices; and all these represent themes and attitudes of abiding popularity in succeeding ages.

Yet with both theory and practice Fulgentius is essentially traditional.

His implied subordination of literature to moral philosophy is something already adumbrated in Aristotle's division of the human sciences and still regularly taken for granted in Aristotelian thought through the Renaissance, while the notion of poetry as having as its primary function instruction in virtue is in direct line from Plato. From antiquity also comes the view of literature in terms of praise and blame. Plato (*Laws* 2, 7, *Protagoras*) favored primitive choric songs of praise to gods, demigods, and heroes, because they edified by stirring youth to emulation and conferred fame on the deserving. Aristotle and his commentators added heroic poetry and epic to the category of praise; after Aristotle, rhetoricians tended to set aside an epideictic or demonstrative category for encomia of personal renown, and to consider praise as having a didactic effect. In the late classical period Menander, in his *Peri epideiktikon*, provided an elaborate codification by types. On Fulgentius a likely direct influence is the *Interpretationes Virgilianae* of Tiberius Donatus (4th century), a trained rhetorician who begins by establishing that the *Aeneid* follows epideictic form (*artis genus laudationis*), and uses Fulgentius's term, *materia*, for the epideictic category of rhetoric.

For early stages in the theory of praise in literature and literary criticism, see the study by T. C. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature* (1902); a full account of medieval and Renaissance developments is provided by O. B. Hardison, *The Enduring Monument* (1962); both works are listed in full in the bibliographical note, above.

### 3. Stoic and Epicurean

Fulgentius seems to have nothing against the Stoics: Virgil's *Eclogue* 6 is described, without comment, as in part "a physiology based on the teachings of the Stoics" (para. 1); and in para. 24 he has Virgil say lightheartedly, "I would not be a pagan if I did not leaven so many Stoic truths with a pinch of Epicurean foolishness." This remark is occasioned by Virgil's treatment of the meeting between Anchises and his son Aeneas in the Elysian fields, par. 22: Anchises becomes a God-like figure as he describes the ordering of creation (*Aen.* 6.720 ff.), makes clear the future, and "teaches the secret mysteries of nature and shows how men's spirits are brought back again from life" (perhaps better "to life," see the note). The persona of

the Christian Fulgentius objects to this hint of the metempsychosis of souls as a piece of folly ill becoming a poet who had, in *Eclogue* 4, foretold the coming of the Messiah in Christian-like terms: "Is not your mind dozing off when you snore out something smacking of the Academy and say . . . that exalted souls once more return to their sluggish bodies?" (par. 23). Epicurean and Academic seem to be loosely equated here. In the *Mythologies* 2.1 identifying Venus with the voluptuary life Fulgentius adds: "They wish her to be called Venus, a good thing according to the Epicureans, a vain one according to the Stoics, for the Epicureans praise pleasure but the Stoics condemn it, the former cultivate license but the latter shun it." There is some contrast here with the views of Fulgentius's contemporary, Boethius, made apparent in the first pages of the *Consolation* (1, prose 3), that both Stoics, with their serious principle of accepting fate, and Epicureans, with their frivolous principle of pleasure, are, by comparison with Plato and the Academy, no more, as Boethius says, than "inept" tearers of the Lady Philosophy's gown.

The main problem in paragraphs 23, 24, is how accurate and precise Fulgentius is with his allusions. The ideas, merits, and limitations of the three schools or systems—in the order, Epicurean, Stoic, Academic—were available at length in Cicero's five books of dialogues (with himself one of the speakers) known as the *De finibus bonorum et malorum* ("On the extremes of good and evil"), and his three books *De natura deorum* ("On the nature of the gods"). With his references, especially if one compares his treatment of authors in par. 3 considered in note 1 above, Fulgentius may well be making a mere parade of learning based on only a superficial acquaintance. They do reflect to some degree, however, what was popularly known of Virgil's interests and what we may surmise of those of Fulgentius. In real life Virgil had studied under an Epicurean, Siron, and much admired the Epicurean poet Lucretius; in later life, to judge by the eschatology of *Aeneid* 6, Virgil seems to have abandoned the school. Among Christians, Epicureanism, with its stress on the materialistic, had a worse name than Stoicism, with its lofty ideas of the divine power; and one imagines Fulgentius quite partial to the traditional interest of the Stoics in grammar and writing, as well as to their fondness for startling statements and ingenious dialectic. In speaking of Virgil's pinch of Epicurean foolishness, Fulgentius may have had in mind particularly the arguments of Lucretius (*De rerum natura* 3) on the mortality of the soul. But when he calls Virgil's ideas Epicurean as well as Academic, that is, basically Platonic but perhaps



more nearly Ciceronian, he may after all be doing no more than reflecting the confusion natural for his age and the secondhand sources available to him.

Among these may well have been Cicero's *De natura deorum*, which would have introduced Fulgentius to the views of Carneades, Pythagoras, and Chrysippus, provided him with numerous specimens of Stoic etymology for mythological names (2.23-28), and at one place (1.26, transl. H. M. Poteat [Chicago, 1950], p. 204) perhaps even given the hint, with "Why, you Epicureans merely repeat like schoolboys the preposterous nonsense your master babbled between his yawns," for Fulgentius's phrase about "dozing" and "snoring" in par. 23.

1

1. Latin *leuita*, regularly "deacon." One manuscript (Helm's E) reads, "Here begins the booklet (*libellus*) of Fabius Fulgentius on the allegory of Virgil's writings addressed to Calcidius the grammarian"; several copies of the *Mythologies* are dedicated to a Catus (var. Cantia), priest of Carthage.

2. The author is unworthy of the task assigned because of old age and bad memory, a personal reference in the style of conventional humility. It seems possible, alternatively, to read into this involved opening a more general regret for the contemporary distrust of pagan learning, and to translate: "The spirit of our age . . . has imposed a broad censorship of silence, that the mind should both cease to reveal its learning and must pursue this forgetfulness of itself because its concern is only with what is contemporary," compare the opening of the *Mythologies* and *Ages of the World*.

3. Christianity, the spirit of the New Testament.

4. Latin *contemptus*, better translated "despising" (of the pagan past) if the opening reference is general; see note 2. An echo of I Cor. 13:4 "Charity suffereth long, and is kind" seems likely.

5. Explained in *Mythologies* 2.1, "contemplative, active, voluptuary," where Fulgentius goes on to equate Minerva, Juno, and Venus, respectively, with the three lives. There may be a distant echo of Aristotle's basic divisions of the sciences into *theoria*, *praxis*, *poiesis*, "contemplation, action, making," and a closer one of the schema imposed by the commentator Aelius Donatus (4th century) on the major works of Virgil: "It is to be recognized that Virgil wrote his three works in consideration of the three-part life, showing in the *Eclogues* the contemplative life, in the *Georgics* the life of enjoyment, and in the *Aeneid* the active life."

6. Latin *apotelesmaticen musicorum*, and of *Georg.* 4 at the end of the para., *musicus cum sua apotelesmatica*, explained in *Mythologies* 3.10.

7. *Ecl.* 8.105-7.

8. *Ecl.* 1.17, not 9 as the text states.

9. *Ecl.* 9.54.
10. Of the *Aeneid* 245-6.

## 2

1. Latin *mediocritatem temporis*, taken in the same sense of a human being's individual age as seems likely with the first sentence of par. 1, but "our age" is preferable if that sentence is taken to bear general reference; "your age" is a further possibility, that is, the youth of the deacon first addressed in contrast with the advanced age of the author.

2. Latin *fragumen repperiat capitis*, that is, run into trouble. Since schoolmasterly attitudes figure largely in this work, one may recall the saintly schoolmaster-martyr Cassian, whose pupils broke their writing tablets over his head (Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 9).

3. Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, imposed on Hercules (Alcides, son of Alcmena and grandson of Alceus) his twelve labors. This sentence is closely echoed in the opening prologue of the *Ages of the World*.

4. For Chrysippus, see supplementary note 1, above.

5. The invocation consists of five alliterative hexameters. In the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*, the shade of Calliope appears before the author in response to his verses and takes on the same role as Virgil is to have here; her being specifically named here, as well as her appropriateness for an epic such as the *Aeneid*, may be an oblique way of referring to the *Mythologies*, which according to par. 22 below was written before this work. The mingling of verse and prose, the so-called Menippean tradition, is exemplified in the near-contemporary *Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, by Martianus Capella, known to Fulgentius (see the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* 45), and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*; the appearance of the lady Rhetoric in the *Marriage* and of the lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* is another similarity. Famous resemblances in the method of invocation would include Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 1.2, perhaps also addressed to Calliope ("Help thou, O holy virgin, chief of nine Thy meeker novice to perform thy will"), and Dante, *Inferno*, 2.7, where also the call is to the Muses then immediately to his own mind and memory. Hexameter 3, *Maius opus moueo*, Fulgentius takes from Virgil, *Aen.* 7.45.

6. Latin *bractamento satior*, compare *bractea*, "gold leaf," though from the allusion to the fountain some term meaning "draught" is expected, and in his *Ages of the World* 9 (Helm, p. 162), Fulgentius uses a verb, *bractatur mero*, of Holofernes, where the context strongly suggests the sense "to drink." Ascrea stood near Mount Helicon, the home of the Muses, hence "snowy plectrum," and it was the birthplace of the poet Hesiod, *Ascreus pastor* in *Mythologies* 1, prologue.

## 3

1. On the allusions and significance of this passage, see supplementary note 1, above.

## 4

1. Latin *Putabam . . . uel te homuncule creperum aliquid desipere, in cuius cordis uecturam meas onerosiores exposuisssem sarcinulas*, only tentatively translated

above. At this point the work has become a dialogue of the *magister-discipulus* type, Virgil the master and Fulgentius the pupil; hence *homuncule*, "little man," that is, boy, the same term as is used by Calliope in the opening of the *Mythologies*. It is possible, if less likely, that *cordis* is not "(of the) heart, essentials," but for *chordis*, "(with) cords, strings," compare *cordas* for "lyre strings" in the last line of the verse invocation, par. 2 above. The sentence might then mean: "In the conveying of which I might have broken down my weightier bundles by means of strings"—that is, simplified the abstruse by breaking it into manageable packages.

5

1. Alluding to the incident in the Gospels (Math. 9:20-21, Mark 5:28, Luke 8:44) of the woman with an issue of blood who said of Christ, "If I may touch but the hem of his garment I shall be whole." The replies or interjections of Fulgentius's persona are mostly concerned with Biblical correspondences to Virgil's views and explanations.

6

1. Latin *temporis formido periculosa*, with the same doubt as before (see note 2 to par. 2 above) whether *tempus* means "your (individual) age" or "your times, the age in which you live."

2. The traditional characterization of eloquence as a river or spring; see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, W. R. Trask, transl. (New York, 1953), p. 356; and note Dante's first words to Virgil, *Inferno* 1.79-80: "Art thou then that Virgil and that fountain which pours forth so rich a stream of speech?"

3. Latin *quae tibi crapulae plenitudine nausiam mouere non possit*, the author deliberately descending to colloquialism. Aside from the anticlimax, compare what Augustine says in the *Confessions* 1.16 (transl. R. S. Pine-Coffin [Baltimore, 1961], p. 37): "[In an immoral scene from Terence] the words themselves are not to blame. They are like choice and costly glasses, but they contain the wine of error, which had already gone to the heads of the teachers, who poured it out for us to drink."

4. Latin *uacias fac sedes tuarum aurium*, "empty the spaces of your ears." The phrase has a classroom air, and is also used by Calliope to Fulgentius in the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*.

5. Latin *tertium* (sc. *digitum*) *pollicem comprimens*, taken here to be for *pollice*, for to press the third finger with the thumb is easier than the other way round. Since pagan and Christian ideas are to be involved in the exposition, it is an ingenious touch to have Virgil, the expounder, first take up the traditional pose of both a pagan sage and a Christian bishop or teacher.

6. Latin *uirtutem*, and so throughout the exposition. This is "virtue" in the traditional Roman sense, the qualities that become the *vir*, the mature, responsible, and well-rounded man; but "manliness" has been preferred because it preserves the association with "man." The quotation is, of course, *Aeneid* 1.1.

7

1. "God's law," *diuina lex*, is similarly used for the Bible in *Mythologies* 1.15. The reference here is to I Cor. 1:24, "Christ the power (Lat. *virtus*) of God, and the

wisdom (*sapientia*) of God," one of several Biblical passages from which the ancient association of *virtus* or *fortitudo*, *sapientia*, and sometimes *pietas*, might be illustrated; compare also Ps. 146 (147):5, Prov. 8:14, Job 12:13, Dan. 2:20. The formula was a commonplace through classical times (compare Horace, *Epist.* 2.1.50, of Ennius, *sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus*) and the Middle Ages; see further Curtius, as above, pp. 174-79; R. E. Kaske, "Sapientia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf," *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 423-57, repr. in L. E. Nicholson, ed., *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism* (Notre Dame, 1963), pp.269-310; S. Battaglia, "Fortitudo et Sapientia," *La Coscienza Letteraria del Medioevo* (Naples, 1965), pp. 102-7.

## 8

1. For the implications of the argument here, see supplementary note 2, above.
2. *Aen.* 1.2, 4.
3. The sentiment is Platonic, but the most specific statement of it seems to be, not Plato, but the later Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* named for Hermes Trismegistus (see supplementary note 1), section 12, ed. and transl. A. D. Nock, A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1945), 1:175-76, especially 12.1: "The intellect (*νοῦς*) is taken from the very substance of God. . . . In men this intellect is God"; and 12.2, where the link between intellect, soul, and life is emphasized.
4. The quotation, like the one before it given first in Greek, then in Latin, seems to be from a lost (or invented) work. Carneades was the head of the New Academy after Plato, but his writings have not survived. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, used a treatise by Clitomachus, *περί τελών*, something like the title Fulgentius gives. The same kind of channel may have led from Carneades to the reference here. Compare *Mythologies*, opening prologue: "The ellebore of Carneades, the golden eloquence of Plato, and the syllogistic brevity of Aristotle," in part an echo of Tertullian, *De anima* 6.
5. *Iliad* 1.1.
6. *Iliad* 1.197, of Athene.

## 9

1. Ps. 1:1, also cited in *Mythologies* 2.1.

## 10

1. Compare Job 12:25, "They grope in the dark without light," although Virgil is not given to Biblical echoes.
2. Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline* 1.2.
3. For gold or silver improved by beating, compare Tertullian, *De anima* 37.6-7.
4. Once again the precise statement has not been traced in Plato. Helm (p. 90) cites Tertullian, *De pudicitate* 1; "For every good quality of the mind is either in-born or taught or disciplined"; the influence of such apologist writers as Tertullian is evident elsewhere in this work (see supplementary note 1).
5. Latin *arcaicis auribus*, glossed in three manuscripts *asininis*, emended by

earlier editors to *arcadicis*, that is "those of a country simpleton." "Aged" would serve for *arcaicis* were not a boy *discipulus* being addressed; "empty," compare *arca*, "chest," is another possibility, but "ignorant, foolish" seems the likeliest meaning in view of *Mythologies*, opening prologue, *aricinis atque arcaicis sensibus*, and 3.9, *asininis auribus*.

11

1. That is, Aeneas, but he is never named, except once in par. 22, presumably because he stands allegorically for Everyman.
2. The scenes of the Trojan war depicted in the temple of Juno.

12

1. Latin *dea partus*, as in *Mythologies* 2.1.
2. Fulgentius's transliteration is presumably for *eonolus* (αἰών, "world, age," and δλοός, "destructive"), since he goes on *id est saeculi interitus*, i.e., perdition. If, alternatively, *eon(h)olus* were meant (αἰών and δλος, "whole"), one might emend *interitus* to something like *integritas*, "fulness, completion," such as is associated with Aeolus's vision later in the paragraph, *perfectionis puplica . . . visio*. However, the 12th-century Virgil commentary of Bernard Sylvestris, which leans heavily on Fulgentius, also has *Eolus quasi eonolus, id est seculi interitus*, ed. G. Riedel (Griefswald, 1924), p. 5.
3. *Iliad* 1.2.
4. *Demos*, for δῆμος, "public," and perhaps *ioipa* for ἰοπή, "opening."
5. Of the world, that is, public hazards.
6. Public vision, that is, open.

13

1. This comment of the Fulgentian persona seems to be meant as thinly veiled sarcasm, a riposte to Virgil's previous condescension: Fulgentius is also an author, but will not indulge in the same "devious course" to which Virgil has admitted. The book on physiology and numerology has not survived. For classical and medieval number theory, see V. F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism* (New York, 1958); C. Butler, *Number Symbolism* (New York, 1970); A. Fowler, ed., *Silent Poetry, Essays in Numerological Analysis* (New York, 1970).

14

1. *Aconetor*, for ἄχος, "grief," and ἔθος, "custom." For the arbitrary nature of these etymologies, compare Bernard Sylvestris's commentary, as above, ed. Riedel, p.32, were Achates is *a-chere-ethis* (χήρος, "destitute"), *tristis consuetudo*, "joyless habit."
2. Euripides' *Orestes* 1-3, Electra speaking.
3. *Siopas*, for σιωπή, "silence."

## 15

1. *Aen.* 2.8.
2. *Acos*, for *ἄχος*, "grief"; *ciclos*, for *κύκλος*, "circle, wheel"; and *pes*, for *παῖς*, "boy."
3. *Apolluntia femem*, compare *ἀπολείπω*, "lose," and *φῆμή*, "fame."
4. *Drimos*, for *δριμύς*, "eager," and *pes, païs*, "boy."

## 16

1. Latin *et uenatu progreditur et amore torretur*, compare Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 1.6.22: "And follows other game and venery," with a likely play of words on hunting (*venatus*) and sexual activity (*Venus*).
2. Compare *Mythologies* 1.18, where Mercury is associated with business affairs.
3. Helm (p. 94) assumes a lacuna and supplies *libido*, "lust," as a subject for the verb *expellitur*, "is driven." More likely the subject of the previous sentence, *amor contemptus*, is to be understood, though the general sense is not much affected.

## 17

1. Compare Greek *ἐντέλλω*, "command," and *δέρω*, "cudgel." For the Latin equivalents used, *imperare* . . . *cedere*, "winning" and "losing" would suit Virgil's context, where Entellus badly defeats Dares, in which case the rest of the sentence would refer to the cut and thrust of academic argument. But "disciplining" for *imperare* and "beating" for *cedere* as a form of *caedere*, "strike," may give a more realistic glimpse of late classical schoolmastering, and relate to what was said of gold in paragraph 10, that it is improved by being hammered.
2. Iris in disguise.

## 18

1. Explained by *Mythologies* 1.15, where Apollo becomes the tenth Muse.
2. *Planonorus*, compare *πλάνη*, "wandering, error," and *ὄραω*, "see." The sense "delusion, hallucination," advocated by Comparetti, fits with the "illusion of vain praise" mentioned a little later, but "wandering sight," Latin *errabunda uisio*, for the roving eye of lust, better suits the immediate context.
3. *Aen.* 4.363.
4. *Ecl.* 6.58.
5. That is, Aeneas taken as Everyman.
6. Helm (p. 96) emends to *orreo* where most manuscripts read *obruo* from Latin *obruere*, "swamp, destroy," echoed in *obrueris (laudis pompam)*, "you have destroyed the illusion of vain praise," in the next sentence, and equating sufficiently well with *misio* in its Latin value. The basis for his emendation is the etymology given for Messapus in paragraph 27 below, *quasi misonepos quod nos Latine orrens sermonem dicimus*, that is, defying speech, the first element presumably *μῖσος*,

"hatred." In our context, *enos* is clearly Greek (*αἶνος*, "praise"), and one would expect the rest of the etymology to be; if *orreo* is to be read, it is less likely to be connected with Latin *orrens* than with a Greek word (*χωρέω*, "give way, separate"?).

7. *Tetrimmenon*, for *τηράω*, "deprive," and *μέρος*, "power," equal to Latin *contritio*, "contrition" in the sense of "wearing down."

8. A name for Athene-Minerva: see further *Mythologies* 3.9.

## 19

1. Ps. 50:19 (51:17).

## 20

1. Corynaeus is Carineus in the manuscripts, better suiting the etymology: *carin*, for *χάρις*, "favor," and *eon*, for *αἶων*, "time."

2. An allusion to the story first found in Suetonius's *Vita Vergili*, ed. and transl. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classics (1914), 2:464-65, thence almost verbatim in Donatus, *Vergilii vita*, ed. J. Brummer (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 1-2: "When she was pregnant with him his mother dreamed she had given birth to a laurel branch, which set in the ground had taken root and sprung up on the spot into the shape of a full-grown tree crammed full of various fruits and flowers." Donatus is nearer Fulgentius's age and no doubt his immediate source.

3. The laurel bough, the attribute of Apollo in *Mythologies* 1.14.

4. The Greek *πάβδος*, "wand, bough," is not mentioned, but an etymology of it is being attempted; compare *παῦσις*, "recital, discourse." The choice appears to lie between Dionysius of Halicarnassus (died 7 B.C.), who wrote *On Literary Composition* ("On the Arrangement of Words") (ed. and transl. W. Rhys Roberts [London, 1910]), and Dionysius "Thrax," who flourished in the 1st century B.C. and was the compiler of a short *Art of Grammar*, which had great vogue through the Middle Ages. In neither work has the precise phrase used by Fulgentius been found.

5. Latin in *libro de Socratis*, Helm inserting *deo* after *de*. If Tiberianus wrote such a work, it is lost; see E. Baehrens, *Poetae Latini minores* (Leipzig, 1881), 3: 269; J. W. and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, Loeb Classics (1936), p. 566, where Fulgentius's one-sentence anecdote is edited and translated as Tiberianus's fragment 4. The writer, also mentioned in *Mythologies* 1.21 and 3.7, and in the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* 56, flourished in the 4th century A.D., long after Virgil's age; compare the anachronistic quotations from Porphyrius and Petronius in paragraph 22 below. A discourse entitled *De deo Socratis*, on the daemon or god of Socrates, was written in the 2d century A.D. by Apuleius, of *Metamorphoses* ('Golden Ass') fame; Socrates himself had merely said that a *δαίμων* or supernatural warning at times restrained him from taking action; see Cicero, *De divinatione* 54, also Tertullian, *De anima* 1.4, 25.8.

6. That is, Aeneas as Everyman.

## 21

1. Helm (p. 97) refers to "Ios. 7, 21," an error for Ezek. 7:20, with reference to the desecration of the Temple, "As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in

majesty: but they made the images of their abomination and of their detestable things therein." Virgil wisely ignores the equation that follows between this abomination and his own pagan ("Gentile") words!

## 22

1. The list is based on *Aen.* 6.273–81 (compare the later treatment by Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 2.21–23), though the order is different. Virgil in personifying the evils may well have led Fulgentius and Spenser to the next step, their allegorization.

2. Latin *inertis somnii uentosa delusio et senectutis propinquior ad mortem uicinia*, an inflation of Virgil's 6.278, *consanguineus Leti Sopor*.

3. Possibly Fulgentius's association of Acheron with the transition to greater knowledge owes something to a famous passage in Virgil's *Georgics* 2.490–92: *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas Atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum Subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari*. Ceron is for *καῖρός*, "time." Charon's father Polydegmon, that is, Pluto, for *πολυ-δείγμα*, "much proof," is not in fact brought into the *Aeneid*.

4. Strictly speaking, Cerberus is drugged by the Sybil, or *vates* (*Aen.* 6.419), accompanying Aeneas.

5. Though Virgil is nominally the speaker, Fulgentius's own *Mythologies* is meant, I.6.

6. Latin *in Euscion*, with variant readings *euscio* and *eustion*. As a quotation from a lost work by the Petronius Arbiter who flourished in the first century A.D. and wrote the *Saturae* ("Satyricon"), the sentence Fulgentius gives has been variously known as fragment 8, as in F. Buecheler's ed. (Berlin, 1862), and 9, as in A. Ernout's (Paris, 1950) and by J. Sullivan, transl., *Petronius: The Satyricon and the Fragmentis* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 168. In preferring a personal name, "about Euscios," to a book title, "On Euscion," Sullivan comments, p. 180: "A vague character . . . literally in Greek, 'pleasantly shadowy.'" Petronius is a favorite of Fulgentius, several times quoted in the *Mythologies* and the *Explanation* (instances collected by Sullivan, pp. 167 ff.).

7. Compare the lament of Tacitus, *Dialogus de oratoribus* 1, that the golden age of oratory and long pleadings is past and has been replaced by *altercatio*, judicial sparring and short sharp exchanges; similar complaints begin Quintilian's *Institutes* and Petronius's *Satyricon*.

8. *Dimofobus*, for *δῆμα*, "panic," and *φόβος*, "fear"; *demofohus*, for *δῆμος*, "people," and *φόβος* again.

9. *Menelau*, for *μενε-λαός*, "valor of people."

10. *Aen.* 6.552–54.

11. Greek *αδამάντινος*, both "steely" and "invincible."

12. A stock symbol of pride, compare the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3–4) and Spenser's House of Pride, "mounted full high" (*Faerie Queene* 1.4), based on the city of Alcina in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* 6.59.

13. *Tisiphone*, for *τίσις*, "vengeance," and *φωνή*, "sound." A different etymology is used in *Mythologies* 1.7.

14. *Aen.* 6.576–77.

15. *Aen.* 6.577–78.



16. Optatianus Porfyrius, *Epigram* 30, ed. E. Kluge (Leipzig, 1926), p. 37, Fulgentius being the only source. Porfyrius flourished in the 4th century, and joins Tiberianus and Petronius as examples of Fulgentius's anachronism or, more charitably, of his indulgence of Virgil's shade in the ability to transcend the centuries. In the third line, "I really think you stink," the play on words imitates the original, *puteum puto te quoque*.

17. Latin *fructus usu*, apparently echoing Cicero's use of the legal term *usus-fructus*, "use and enjoyment of property not one's own." Tantalus is given a section in *Mythologies* 2.15, but not etymologized. Here, *teantelon* is presumably for *te ant (th)elon*, *ré, ávra* "against," and (*é*)*thélw*, "desire." Fulgentius's reading of the name is taken up by Boccaccio, *Comment on Dante's Commedia*, ed. G. Milanese (Florence, 1863), 1:94: "Explained according to Fulgentius, that is, covetous vision, because misers want nothing for their treasure which cannot be seen."

18. Latin *Rademantus Gnosius*, with *tarematadamonta* for *ta rema ta damonta*, *phma*, "word," and *δαμάω*, "subdue," and *gnosio* for *γνώσις*, "knowledge."

19. Dedicated to learning, as explained a few lines below.

20. Is there confusion between *ἐλευσις*, "arrival," and some word like *ἐλευθερία*, "release, freedom"?

21. Latin *proserpens*, "creeping forward," in allusion to Proserpine, whether as an etymology or as wordplay; similarly in *Mythologies* 1.10.

22. Latin *elisis . . . mentibus*, echoing the Greek form already used to explain Elysian fields.

23. Helm (p. 102) refers to Cicero, *De oratore* 1.5; but all Cicero in that work appears to say on the subject of memory is to call it "the treasure-house of all learning" (1.18, cited by Tertullian, *De anima* 24.3) and to give a passing reference (17.54, ed. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classics [1939], p. 346) that, though memory is one of the five faculties required of the orator, he will not discuss it at length because it is something common to many arts, *quae communis est multarum artium*. These, of course, may be all the hints Fulgentius needed.

24. *Ano scenon*, for *ἄνω σκηνών*, "living on one's own land" or more closely "dwelling on high," equivalent to the Latin *in excelsis* which comes in the following sentence.

25. Virgil appears to be lacing the Nicene Creed with Gnosticism, and the persona of Fulgentius is soon roused by the satiric blending of Christian truths and what seems to be Pythagorean metempsychosis. The affinities between these notions and those of the Stoics may help explain what follows; see further supplementary note 3. For the interest of Plato (see par. 23) in the transmigration of souls, see, for instance, *Phaedo* 70-72; for Christian opposition to the doctrine, see Tertullian, *De anima* 34, 35.

26. *Aen.* 6.724-25.

27. Latin *de uita*, for which Helm (p. 102) suggests the emendation *de(uocari ad) uita(m)*, "to be recalled to life," thus reversing the meaning, though to something nearer what Virgil says in the *Aeneid*.

Fulgentius's retort uses terms which seem to be deliberately drawn from legal usage, for instance *aut(h)enta*, "mouthpiece, spokesman"; *defensio*, "defense"; and *persecutus*, "pleaded, prosecuted." The reference to the (Athenian) Academy implies something Platonic, or perhaps more likely Ciceronian, for Cicero is "our Academic orator" in the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*. Compare the outburst against the Academy by Tertullian, *De praescriptionibus adversus hereticos* 7.10: "What in common have Athens and Jerusalem? The Academy and the Church? Heretics and Christians? Let them see to it who teach a Stoic and Platonic and dialectic Christianity!" The significance of the allusions here to Academic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Christian ideas is further considered in supplementary note 3, above.

3. *Aen.* 6.720–21.

4. Latin *mora*, "blackberries" or "mulberries," but possibly for *morra*, "pickle," with more obvious reference to sourness. In his fragment 33 (transl. Sullivan, as above, p. 175), Petronius, a favorite of Fulgentius, contrasts golden apples with "shaggy chestnuts" and "crab-apples." In addition, to judge by Virgil's reply in our context, Fulgentius may be intending a pun on *μωπία*, "folly."

24

1. Latin *paganus*, but the older senses of the word, "countryman, layman," may also be implied.

2. Latin *Quid tu amicam times ne te manuleo cauiet*, with *manuleus* literally "(the long) sleeve (of a tunic)." Plautus's *Cistellaria* ("The Casket Comedy") is imperfectly preserved, and Fulgentius alone preserves a full line here, in what is called fragment 3, lines 252–53, ed. G. Goetz, F. Schoell, *Plauti comoediae* (Leipzig, 1895) 3:16: *Quid tu ergo timebas nam . . . te manuleo . . . ne amica ne te cauiet*; P. Nixon, ed. and transl., *Plautus*, Loeb Classics (1917), 3:138, has only *Quid tu ergo . . . te manuleo*, "Well, what are you . . . you with her sleeve." Fulgentius's close acquaintance with the plays of Plautus, which comes out strongly in his discussion of difficult words, the *Explanation* below, may help explain some of the dramatic conflict and comic element in his dialogue with Virgil.

3. *Aen.* 7.2.

4. *Apo tu ausenin*, for ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐξάνειν, "of increase."

5. In Virgil, *Aen.* 7.42 ff., Latinus is the son of Faunus, and several manuscripts of Fulgentius read the name thus, but the etymology which follows belongs to the ghost-name Caurus.

6. Another error: strictly speaking, Diana is the moon-goddess and Latona her mother.

7. *Cammonus*, for κάμνω, "labor," and νοῦς, "mind."

8. *Merica*, compare μέριμνα, "care"?

9. *Iliad* 1.189.

25

1. *Euandros*, for εὖ-άνδρως, "good man."

2. Latin *caecus*, "blind," can mean "morally blinded," but the Greek κακός, "bad, evil," is more obviously intended; compare *Mythologies* 2.3: *Cacon enim Graece malum dicimus*.

3. *Bulencauton*, compare βουλή, "counsel," and καύτης, "burner." A different, Latin etymology for Vulcan is given in *Mythologies* 2.11: *uoluntatis calor*, "heat of desire."

26

1. *Turosus*, for θούρος, "furious," and νοῦς, "mind."
2. *Iliad* 5.35.

27

1. That is, Mezentius, standing for blasphemy, the spirit or embodiment of scorn for what is good.
2. *Misonēpos*, for μῖσος, "hatred," and ἔπος, "speech."
3. Euripides, *Orestes* 1 (also quoted in para. 14 above).

28

1. In Virgil, Aeneas as a trophy to Mars distributes the armor of the slain Messapus on an oak beam set in the earth, so that it hangs equally balanced on each side; then he proclaims, "Here is Messapus in my hands," and points to the effigy he has made.

29

1. Latin *perniciēs*, "destruction," although the role assigned to Juturna in some ways better suits the meaning "obstinacy" (so Comparetti), which might suggest confusion between *perniciēs* and *pertinacia*.
2. *Metiscos*, for μεθύσκω, "get drunk."
3. The *locus classicus* for the turning wheel of Fortune is Boethius, *Consolation* 2, prose 1 and poem 1, though the idea is ancient and Boethius's work is perhaps too exactly contemporaneous with Fulgentius for there to be any likelihood he knew it; see further H. R. Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Mediaeval Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927; repr., New York, 1970).

30

1. Latin *mei tribulus pectoris cautius lege*, exploiting the double meaning of *legere*, "collect, pick," and "read." There may be an intentional reminiscence of Virgil *Ecl.* 3.92-93: "Lads, who gather (*legitis*) flowers, and strawberries growing in the earth. Fly hence, a cold snake lurks in the grass." With *tribulus* (τριβάλος), "thorny plant, thistle," that is, something of little worth and suspect, to be handled with care, Fulgentius returns to the pose of humility with which he began. We can scarcely assume that by "master" (*domine*) he still means Virgil: the invention has faded, the mechanics of disposing of Virgil's shade are dispensed with, and we are returned abruptly to the reality of the "most saintly of deacons" addressed in par. 1.



*THE EXPLANATION  
OF OBSOLETE WORDS*



## Introduction

This is the text regularly named in the manuscripts *Fulgentii expositio sermonum antiquorum*. Some add that it was written *ad Calcidium* (*Chalcidium*) *grammaticum*, though who Calcidius, or Chalcidius, the schoolmaster was or where he lived is not known. The work displays in miniature the same antiquarian bent, feeling for elaborate and mystic language, and prolixity of style that characterize the *Mythologies* and the *Content of Virgil*; it also shares some of their earliest surviving manuscripts, and there seems no reason to dispute the regular attribution to Fulgentius. Copies survive from the ninth century and are particularly numerous for the tenth; and many Carolingian and later writers used the work as a mine of verbal rarities.<sup>1</sup>

The work consists of sixty-two brief explanations of hard words (assembled alphabetically in the index below) such as might be found in Latin authors of antiquity, from Ennius on, or in more recent ones like Petronius, Propertius, Apuleius, and Martianus Capella, who on occasion affected an antique vocabulary. In a short prologue Fulgentius states that he produced the work to help fulfil the commissions assigned him by his *dominus* or master, and that his aim is to elucidate, not to revive old words for mere decoration—*absit omen*. Each term is defined and, with one or two exceptions, illustrated by a short quotation, for which the author and sometimes the particular work are named. Miscellaneous scraps of antiquarian lore are occasionally thrown in, ranging from early funerary customs to Etruscan folklore, Greek oratory, and Roman poems, plays, and stories. Tertullian, named in item 16, is the only author of Christian writings; he is not cited in a religious context, and in fact there is no attempt to give Christian color to the work. The order of items is fairly eclectic, though some sign of a grouping by theme may be seen: entries 1–11 deal with terms involved with burial customs, divination, sacrifice, and minor deities, while 12–62 (except for 14 and 48, which may be misplaced and belong in the first category) cover odd words—colloquial and technical terms—for foods, boats, utensils, women of the streets, and so forth, particularly as found in plays, poems, and romances. The explanations occasionally have recourse to transliterated Greek, of the reasonable accuracy found elsewhere in Fulgentius.

The *Explanation* has thus some slight antiquarian interest, but it is chiefly remarkable for the strong suspicion under which Fulgentius falls of having faked his evidence. In the translation below, an asterisk marks unidentified authors or titles; and it has to be frequently used, even when allowance is made for the undoubted fact that much classical literature, particularly of a minor or more ephemeral kind, is lost to us. What Fulgentius quotes is verifiable for Virgil, Lucan, and some of Plautus and Apuleius, especially their respective *Casina* and *Metamorphoses*. Plautus is alluded to more than any other writer, and it may be representative of Fulgentius's general attitude to authorities that reasonably accurate Plautus references are mixed up with citations much manipulated from the received text, one unidentified quotation, and a number found in Plautus but assigned to the wrong plays. Two dubious titles are given to Apuleius, while Petronius is credited with a number of fragmentary passages for which, though they are not un-Petronian in style, Fulgentius becomes the sole authority.<sup>2</sup> In addition, both Greek and Roman writers and writings otherwise unknown are liberally cited, Fulgentius's motive being presumably that by this means his scholarship and authority may be bolstered, at least in the eyes of an uncritical reader. The net result, of course, has been to obscure the fact that he and his contemporaries faced limited literary resources, to discredit him as "that curious and muddle-headed pretender to scholarship,"<sup>3</sup> and to brand his work as a near travesty.

Neither Fulgentius nor his contemporaries are in the habit of specifying their immediate sources, but the type of compendium he has assembled bears resemblance to various compilations and epitomes of late Roman antiquity. One may instance the *De lingua Latina* of the encyclopedic writer Varro, another likely source for Fulgentius's *Mythologies*, as well as Varro's lost work known as *Quaestiones Plautinae*, discussions of hard words from the plays of Plautus; the *Natural History* of the elder Pliny (died 79 A.D.), a storehouse of antiquarian material; the unknown writer Pompeius Festus, who concocted an epitome of the Augustan scholar Verrius Flaccus's *De verborum significatu*, which was worked over by Paulus Diaconus in Carolingian times; and the *De compendiosa doctrina* (or *De proprietate sermonum*), twenty books or sections dealing with the grammatical functions and classes of words, terms for ships, clothing, and so on, by Nonius Marcellus, an otherwise unknown industrious compiler, usually assigned to the earlier fourth century.

From the reference to a "list of commissions" in the opening sentence of



Fulgentius's work it would seem natural to assume that the learned "master" or patron is the same person that is addressed in the *Mythologies*, the *Content of Virgil*, and the *Ages of the World*. In item 16 below, however, a so-called allusion to Demosthenes is prefaced, "Let me give you the quotation in Latin lest one in Greek confuse you," whereas in the *Mythologies*, 3.1, for instance, a quotation from Homer is given without benefit of a Latin version, as if the patron of that work had some knowledge of Homer's language. But in item 16 Fulgentius may be thinking more of the general reader.

The *Explanation* appeared in print along with Nonius Marcellus's *De proprietate* (see above) in a series of editions, some anonymous (Antwerp, 1565, by J. Mercier; Paris, 1583, 1586, 1614, repr., Leipzig, 1825; Sedan, 1614; Basel, 1842, by F. D. Gerlach and C. L. Roth); in the edition of Servius by Pierre Daniel (Paris, 1600; Geneva, 1636); separately in the anonymous *Expositio sermonum antiquorum* (Basel, 1577); in D. Godefroy's *Auctores Latinae linguae* (Heidelberg, 1585, 1595, 1602; St. Gervaise, 1622; Geneva, 1622); by L. Lersch, *Fulgentii de abstrusis sermonibus* (Bonn, 1844); R. Helm, *Fulgentii opera* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 111–26, followed below; and P. Wessner, *Fulgentii expositio sermonum antiquorum*, *Commentationes Philologiae Ienensis*, 6.2 (Jena, 1899). A recent work of criticism is: G. Pennisi, *Fulgenzio e la 'Expositio sermonum antiquorum'* (Florence, 1963), see also its review by P. Langlois, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 46 (1968): 188–89. Pennisi, like Wessner, provides full details of the numerous surviving manuscripts; he writes on an additional manuscript of the work, Vatican Reg. Lat. 61, in *Helikon* (1963), 3: 500–504.

The rendering below is interspersed where necessary with a brief commentary dealing with special terms and allusions.

1. See M. L. W. Laistner, *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1957), pp. 202–15, with some details of the popularity of the *Explanation* in Carolingian times, pp. 209–10. From succeeding centuries, M. Manitius lists among its borrowers: the *Polipticum* of Atto of Vercelli (died 961); *Carmen XVI* of Froumund of Tegernsee (early 11th century); the *Glossarium* of Aynard of St. Evre in Toul (10th century); the *Elementarium doctrinae rudimentum* of Papias (early 11th); the *Derivationes*, or *Panormia*, of Osbern of Gloucester (mid 12th); the *Itinerarium Cambriae* 1.3, of Giraldus Cambrensis (died 1223); and the *Corrogaciones Promethei* of Alexander Neckam (died 1217); see the *Geschichte der lateinischen*

*Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1923), 2:31, 520 and 525, 662-63, 721; 3 (1931): 189, 628 and 632, 790, respectively.

2. On the question of authenticity for the Petronius citations, see the study by V. Ciaffi, "Fulgenzio e Petronio," *Università di Torino, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia*, 14.2 (1963).

3. H. J. Rose, *Outlines of Classical Literature* (Cleveland, 1961), p. 216. For the general unreliability of Fulgentius's use of sources, see the detailed studies by S. Timpanaro, *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, n.s., 22 (1947): 199 ff.; Ciaffi, as above, pp. 13-25, 43-97 ('I Modi della Falsificazione in Fulgenzio'); Pennisi (1963), as cited below, pp. 145-200.

## Translation: The Explanation of Obsolete Words

Lest from my list of your commissions, Master, any item might be thought omitted through disobedience, I have now provided the little treatise on abstruse words which you bade me put together, described so far as the store of my memory could be opened, not striving after the heady frothings of words, but performing the office of clarifying the meaning of things.

1. What a *sandapila* is. By *sandapila* the ancients meant a bier for the dead, that is, a coffin, not one on which the corpses of the nobility were carried, but one for the corpses of the lower classes and condemned criminals, as Stesimbrotus Thasius describes when writing of the death of King Polycrates of the Samians: "After he was taken down from the cross, he was carried away on a bier."

The tyrant Polycrates of Samos was captured and crucified in 522 B.C., as Herodotus describes, book 3, also Tertullian, *De anima* 46.7. Stesimbrotus the Thasian is named by Ion, in Plato's dialogue of that title, as a rhapsode or reciter of Homer.

2. What a *uispillo* is. *Uispillones* was the word for porters, as \*Antidamas of Heraclea mentioned naked *uispillones* for corpses, describing them in \*his account of Alexander of Macedon: "Finding more than three hundred porters of corpses, he crucified them." Then too, Mnaseas writes of Apollo in his book on Europa that, after he was conquered and slain by Jove, he was carried away by porters to his grave.

For Mnaseas's *Europa*, see *Mythologies* 2.16.

3. What a *pollinctor* is. *Pollinctores* meant those who see to funerals, as Plautus says in his comedy *Menaechmi*: "As the undertaker said who had laid out his corpse (*pollinxerat*)."  
*Pollinctores* are described as anointers of the defiled, that is, those who see to corpses, as Apuleius says in his *Erma-*

gora: "With the funeral in the undertaker's hands we can get ready to go home."

The Plautus quotation is not from *Menaechmi* ('The Menaechmus Twins'), but from his *Poenulus* ('The Little Carthaginian'), 63. A work *repl' epynnelas*, "on speech," a title borrowed from Aristotle, is doubtfully ascribed to Apuleius (2d century A.D.), but the quotation which follows is close to that in 36 below, taken from his *Metamorphoses*.

4. What *manales lapides* are. Labeo, who in fifteen volumes described the rituals of the Etruscans for Tages and Bacitides, says: "When the liver entrails were a dark red color, then it was the task to drag the spirit stones," that is, those which the ancients used to drag round the boundaries of lands like rollers, for ending a drought.

Possibly a genuine work on Etruscan antiquities by Cornelius Labeo (3d-4th century A.D.), but no trace remains; Fulgentius's immediate source may be book 1 of Martianus Capella (see 45 below), who conceivably took his allusions to Etruscan deities from the lost work of Labeo. Inscriptions on early Etruscan objets d'art and in Etruscan sacred books include references to a soothsayer Tarchies and a goddess or priestess Bacchetis; see Z. Mayani, *The Etruscans begin to Speak*, transl. P. Evans (New York, 1962) pp.24, 96-97, 214; E. Richardson, *The Etruscans: their Art and Civilization* (Chicago, 1964), pp.223-34, with bibliography. To judge by such objects as the bronze model of a sheep's liver, inscribed with the names of some thirty gods, found near Piacenza in 1877, the Etruscans looked upon the liver as a microcosm of the universe. A *lapis manalis*, anciently kept near a temple of Mars, outside the walls of Rome, to be dragged inside the city in time of drought, is described by Servius, on Virgil's *Aeneid* 3.175, by Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatu* 128, and by Nonius Marcellus, *De compendiosa doctrina*, s.v. *trullum*; see J. G. Frazer, *The New Golden Bough*, ed. T. H. Gaster (New York, 1959), pp.81, 152, 179-80. "Dark red," *sandaracei coloris*, is for *σαρδάραιος*, "color of minium or red lead."

5. What *neferendi sues* are. \*Diophontus of Sparta, who wrote \*on the rites of the gods, says that in Athens a sacrifice used to be made to Mars that has the name *ecatonepfoneuma*. For if anyone had slain a hundred enemies, he would sacrifice to Mars in isolation on the island of Biennos (*Blennon*), because, as \*Solicrates describes, this sacrifice was performed by two men from Crete and one from Locri, that is, Timnes of Cortina . . . and Proculus

of Locri. But when this displeased the people of Athens, they began to offer up a castrated pig which they called a *neferendus*, that is, so to speak, one without kidneys. Also Varro writes that among the Romans Silius Dentatus fought one hundred twenty times in single combat, had forty-five frontal scars but not one on his back, had received twenty-six victory garlands and one hundred forty bracelets, and was the first to make this sacrifice to Mars.

For *scatonpephoneuma*, compare *ἐκατόν*, "hundred," and *(π)εφόνεσμα*, "victim of slaughter"; for *neferendus*, "with loins removed," compare *νεφρός*, "kidney." For Diophontus, see *Mythologies* 1.1; for Varro, see also 11, 14, 37, below, though none of the references is traced. The source here is in fact Pliny, *Natural History* 7.28, of the Roman tribune Lucius Sittius Dentatus in the year 454 B.C.

6. What *ambignae oues* are. Baebius Macer, who describes the days set apart for sacrifices, says that women who gave birth to twins sacrificed to Juno sheep with two lambs fastened to them, one on each side, and that these were called two-lambled sheep, having as it were lambs on either side.

Baebius Macer is named as an Augustan writer by Servius on *Aen.* 5.556, and *Eclogues* 9.44, but he remains unknown unless we choose to link him to the Pompeius (?) Macer, Ovid's friend (see *Amores* 2.18), who wrote a poem on the story of Troy, or the Macer known to Tibullus as a writer of erotic verse.

7. What *suggrundaria* are. In former times the ancients called *suggrundaria* the burial places of infants who had not yet lived forty days, because they could not be called graves since there were no bones to be cremated nor a big enough corpse for a cenotaph to be raised; as \*Rutilius Geminus says in his tragedy \**Asryanax*: "You would do better to look for an infant's burial place than a grave."

Rutilius Geminus ("the twin") reappears in 9 below. Possible identifications would be the Publius Rutilius Rufus, an orator known to Cicero, or, from the earlier 5th century A.D., the poet Rutilius Namatianus. A play dealing with *Asryanax*, the son of Hector of Troy, is untraced.

8. What a *silicernius* is. By *silicernii* they meant old men already bent double as if already looking at their own gravestones, as Cincius Alimentus de-

scribes in his account of Gorgias of Leontini, saying: "Already bowed with age, he was looking for an end to his life, and not being able to die he still rejoiced in his infirmities."

Lucius Cincius Alimentus was an early historian of Rome, but no account by him of the sophist Gorgias of Leontini in Sicily (died 375 B.C.), in history a contemporary of Socrates, is known.

9. What the *arvales fratres* are. Acca Larentia, the nurse of Romulus, along with her twelve sons, had been accustomed to make sacrifice once a year on behalf of the cultivated lands and their past produce; then when one of them died, Romulus offered to take the dead man's place. Thus through the years the rite continued with twelve participants, and these are known as the Arval Brothers, as \*Rutilius Geminus records in his \*book on priesthood.

The Arval Brothers formed a college of twelve priests devoted to the worship of the corn deity usually called Dea Dia.

10. What *iniuges boues* are. \*Manilius Crestus, in \*the book he wrote about the hymns of the gods, says that to Minerva were sacrificed unyoked oxen, that is, ones that never bore a yoke, and this because virginity does not know the yoke of marriage and virtue is never subjected to the pressure of a yoke.

There seems nothing to connect this reference to Manilius Crestus with the M. Manilius who wrote verse on astrology during the principate of Augustus. For Minerva, "immortal virgin," see *Mythologies* 2.1.

11. What *semones* are. By *semones* they meant gods whom they did not consider worthy of heaven because of their lack of merit, such as Priapus, Epona, and Vertumnus, but whom they did not wish to consider entirely terrestrial because of the veneration shown them for their favor, as Varro says in \*the book of priests: "By the winged power of speech I can raise up a true god from a minor deity consigned to the lower world."

Priapus was god of vineyards; Epona, goddess of horses and asses, and Vertumnus or Vortumnus god of sales and of the changing year; for these minor or "native"

deities, see *Mythologies* 3.5. The book of priests (*mistagogorum*, compare *μυσταγωγός*, "an attendant of sacred places") is also mentioned in 14 below, but is otherwise unknown among the many works attributed to Varro, unless it is what Augustine, *City of God* 7.34, knew as Varro's "book on the worship of the gods."

12. What *blatterare* is. Pacuvius in his comedy *\*Pseudo* introduces the slave Sceparnus saying to a female slave: "If I hadn't seen you chattering so, I would have judged you less harshly in the matter." For with *blatterare* they had a term more or less meaning to stammer out words shaking with fear.

Pacuvius or Pacuius was Ennius's nephew, died ca.130 B.C., but no play by him called *Pseudo*, 'The Faker,' is known (Plautus's play *Pseudolus*, 'The Liar,' is extant, and a slave called Sceparnio appears in the same author's *Rudens*, 'The Rope'). Pacuvius is brought in again in 32 and 57 below.

13. What *luscicus* is. By *luscicii* they meant those who cannot see well even in daylight, those whom the Greeks call *miopes*, as Plautus says in his comedy *Mercator*: "It's a wonder you live on darnel when wheat is so cheap, because your eyesight is failing." For they hold that the sight grows dim for those who eat darnel.

The lines are not from Plautus's *Mercator* ('The Merchant'), but from his *Miles gloriosus* ('The Braggart Captain'), 321-22. For *miopes*, compare *μυωπός* (*μύωψ*), "short-sighted."

14. What a *tutulus* is. Varro in his books on priesthood says that *tutuli* is the name for priests of the minor gods. But *\*Numa Pompilius*, also writing on priestly duties, says that *tutulus* is a name for the cloak with which priests used to cover their heads when approaching a sacrifice, as Virgil says: "And let us cover our heads with a Phrygian veil before the altars."

Numa Pompilius was the second of the early kings of Rome, and traditionally associated with the origin of folk customs; see G. Buchmann, *De Numae regis Romanorum fabula* (Leipzig, 1912). For Varro, see 11 above. The Virgil line is *Aen.* 3.545.

15. What an *oria* is. They call *oria* a small fishing boat, as Plautus says in his *Cacistus*: "I'd rather have him tied to a fishing smack, so as to be always fishing even when there's a raging storm."

*Cacistus* is the name of a slave in Plautus's *Vidularia* ('The Wallet'), an incompletely preserved play of which this quotation is known as fragment 17B.

16. What a *problema* is. A *problema* was the name for a proposition heading a section of a book, put in the form of a question, as Demosthenes says in his \*defense of Philip—but let me give you the quotation in Latin lest one in Greek confuse you: "Let us grant the first step of the proposition to the bystander who has to cope with my subsequent remarks." Also Tertullian says in the book he wrote on fate: "Make this brother the first concession in the proposition."

As a matter of history Demosthenes strongly opposed Philip of Macedon. *Problema* is πρόβλημα, "proposition." Tertullian, the Christian apologist of the later 2d century, wrote on a variety of subjects, including a "special treatise on fate" (*De anima* 20.5) now lost; see A. Hamman, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus series Latina*, suppl. 1 (Paris, 1958), p.32. What is rendered "first (step)" is *autenticum*, compare ἀθένητος, "author, originator."

17. What *pumilior* and *glabrior* are. Apuleius in his *Golden Ass*, introducing the sisters of Psyche as one slanders her husband, says: "Tinier than any boy and balder than a pumpkin." For *pumilii* is the word for those who are soft and weak, while *glaber* is soft and hairless.

Apuleius *Metamorphoses* ('The Golden Ass') 5.9, from the episode of Cupid and Psyche which is summarized and allegorized by Fulgentius in *Mythologies* 3.6.

18. What *sutelae* are. By *sutela* they mean cunning devices, as it were subtle thrusts (*subtilia tela*), as Plautus says in his *Casina*: "Whether you secretly capture Casina for your wife by playing your sly tricks on me, as you count on doing."

Plautus, *Casina* 95–96.



19. What *friguttire* is. *Friguttire* is the word for stammering in an artful way, as Plautus says in his *Casina*: "What are you spluttering about?" and Ennius, too, in his comedy *Thelestis*, says as follows: "This old woman is just babbling; she's done herself a mischief with the juice of Bacchus."

Plautus, *Casina* 267. Ennius, died 169 B.C., wrote on *Alcestis* and produced a final tragedy called *Thyestes*; either work Fulgentius may have had in mind (see 57 below), but neither has survived.

20. What a *tittiulicium* is. By *tittiulicium* they meant loose threads that drop from looms, as Plautus says in his *Casina*: "I wouldn't give a thread for talk like that," that is, something quite worthless. Also \*Marcus Cornutus in his \*satire says: "Flaccus, I'm giving you just trifles."

Plautus, *Casina* 347. A satirist Marcus Cornutus is unknown, unless either Cornutus, the friend of the poet Tibullus, or the L. Anneus Cornutus who wrote scholia to the satires of Juvenal is meant.

21. What *isculponeae* are. By *sculponeae* they meant gauntlets lined with lead, as Naevius says in his \*comedy *Philemporus*: "His ribs should be well and truly hammered with the gloves"; and Plautus says in the same style in *Casina*: "Knuckle-dusters would be better, to hammer your face in, you wicked old man."

Plautus, *Casina* 495-96, although the reference there is to wooden clogs rather than gauntlets. Naevius, unless the historian of the 2d century B.C. known to Cicero, and as a playwright quoted occasionally in Varro's *De lingua Latina* 7, is untraced. The historian's writings, of which only fragments remain, do not include a play *Philemporus* (compare φίλος, "loving, friendly," and ἐμπόρος, "passenger, merchant").

22. What *catillatus* is. *Catillare* is the term for walking the streets in front of other people's houses, pulled along by young dogs (*catulis*), because they go round all the houses, as Propertius says: "You display your streetwalker's credentials like a public prostitute"; and in the same style Plautus says: "Why shouldn't I send my wife to walk the streets?"

Plautus's *Casina*, 551-52, although the received text runs: "Here am I promising the services of my wife as if she were some sort of general plate-licker," without

reference to prostitution. The line from Propertius is untraced; somewhat similar, though not in choice of words, is the reproach of Cynthia, "Through all Rome your name is a byword, and you live in open wantonness" (*Elegies* 2.5.1-2).

23. What a *capularis* is. By *capularis* they meant an old man already close to death, but they also used to call *capulares* condemned criminals who were fit for a coffin (*capulus*), as Lucilius says: "He's getting the corpse in the coffin"; and \*Flaccus Tibullus says in his \*comedy *Melenis*: "Do you dare fall in love, a toothless (*edentulus*) old man with one foot in the grave?" For by *edentulus* was meant with no more teeth.

Lucilius could be the satirist and writer of comedies Gaius Lucilius (died 102 B.C.), whose poems were known to Cicero, Horace, and Varro, but preserved only in fragments, or the Lucilius whose rhymes are mentioned by Petronius (*Satyricon* 5).

24. What *promus* and *condus* are. By *promi* and *condi* they meant those who look after supplies, whereby they both lay out (*promant*) and lay in (*condant*), as Plautus says in his *Asinaria*: "I'm the lay-out and lay-in man, the superintendent of supplies (*penum*)." For *penum* is the word for what we call a store of food.

Not from Plautus's *Asinaria* ('Comedy of the Asses'), but from his *Pseudolus* ('The Liar'), 608.

25. What *suppetiae* are. *Suppetiae* we call assistances, as \*Memos in his \*tragedy *Hercules* says: "Come to our aid, dearest friends."

26. What an *auctio* is. By *auctio* they meant a sale, because, so to speak, it enriches (*augeat*) both the purchaser and the seller, as Plautus says in his *Curculio*: "I am holding an auction of parasites."

Not from Plautus's *Curculio* ('The Weevil'), but from his *Stichus* 218, though no mention is made of parasites.

27. What a *mnasiterna* is. They call *mnasiterna* a water-pot, that is a jar, as Calpurnius says in his \*comedy of Phronesis: "Where are you looking for

water with that pot?" and Plautus in the *Bacchides*: "Bring out a pail and water."

Not from Plautus's *Bacchides* ('The Bacchis Sisters'), but from his *Stichus* 352. Calpurnius could be the Calpurnius Piso, died 65 A.D., mentioned by Tacitus, or Calpurnius Siculus, of the same century, a writer of pastorals. Neither author is known to have written a comedy called *Phronesis*, but Fulgentius was aware that in Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis* (see 45 below) *Phronesis* or "Understanding" is the mother of the maiden *Philologia*.

28. What *antistare* is. We call *antistare* to excel, as \*Crispinus says in his \*account of Hercules: "Hercules, outstanding in his god-like powers."

29. What an *istega* is. A *stega* is the deck or planking of a ship, on which the sailors tread, as Plautus says in his *Chrysalus*: "As it happened I had sat myself down on the ship's deck."

Plautus has a slave character named Chrysalus in his *Bacchides*, and the quotation is in fact from that play, line 278. For *stega*, compare *στέγη*, "platform."

30. What a *lembus* is. A *lembus* is a kind of very fast small boat, what we call cutters (*dromones*), as Virgil says: "Who with his oars scarcely moved his little craft against the current."

Virgil, *Georg.* 1.201-2. *Lembus* is for *λέμβος*, "cutter," and for *dromones*, "racers," compare *δρόμος*, "race(track)."

31. What *ramenta* are. By *ramenta* they meant something like exposed sweepings, as \*Quintus Fabius Lucullus says in his \*epic poem: "Quite worthless scraps, a surging plague of them."

32. What *diobolares* are. *Diobolares* is a word for the cheapest prostitutes, who sell themselves for a small fee, as \*Pammacius says: "A cheap prostitute, whom I at once reject as shared round as was Dirce"; and in the same style Pacuvius says: "I was not such a one as these cheap whores are, who sell their favors for a few coins."

See 43 below; for Pacuvius, see 12 above, and for Dirce, compare *Mythologies* 2.7.

33. What a *veruina* is. A *veruina* is a long kind of javelin which some others call a *verrutum*, as \*Gavius Bassus says in his \*satires: "With that piercing javelin of yours, I don't consider you contemptible (*nauci*)," for by *nauci* they meant more or less nothing. Also Plautus says in his *Bacchides*: "If your sword is out of the house, I have a javelin here at home, and with it I'll stick you and them more full of holes than a squeaky shrewmouse."

Plautus, *Bacchides* 887-89, the "sword" being a *macera*, for μάχαιρα. Gavius Bassus and his satires are unknown, unless he is the Bassus mentioned by Ovid as a composer of iambs.

34. What *diuidiae* are. *Diuidiae* was their word for griefs, as Propertius says: "All love brings sorrows of mind."

Similar to Propertius's *Elegies* 1.14.18: "She [Venus] can bring sorrow even to hard hearts."

35. What *iustitium* is. *Iustitium* is the word for public mourning, as Fronto says in his \*speech in defense of the Nucerini: "Then the mourning of the people is shown."

Fronto was an essayist and orator of the 2d century A.D., but a defense by him of the Nucerini, people of Nuceria (modern Nocera) in Campania, is untraced.

36. What a *coragium* is. *Coragium* is the word for the funeral of a virgin, as Apuleius says in his *Metamorphoses*: "When the maiden's funeral was over everyone gets ready to go home."

Apuleius, *Met.* 4.35.

37. What *desiduo* is. *Desiduo* is a word for long-lasting, as Varro says in his \**Corallaria*: "I suffered while away from you for so long."

For Varro, see 11 above. *Corallaria* is presumably a play title, and a *Corollaria*, "The Garland Story," is attributed to Naevius by Varro, *De lingua Latina* 7.60.

38. What a *floccus* is. *Flocci* they used as meaning of no account, as Plautus says: "I don't think anything of the things you are engaged in."

The one untraced Plautus quotation, but compare 20 above.

39. What a *lentaculum* is. *Lentaculum* is a word for a libation, as \*Calimachus says in his \*work on Theseus: "To offer a libation to Jove."

Possibly for Callimachus the Greek poet and librarian of Alexandria in the 3d century B.C., but no work by him on Theseus is on record.

40. What an *edulium* is. *Edulium* is derived from eating (*edendo*), that is so to speak a taste of food, as Apuleius says in his *Golden Ass*: "Work your way sumptuously through the courses."

A composite of Apuleius, *Met.* 5.8, 15 and 6.19.

41. What *tucceta* are. *Tucceta* is the name for regal foods, as \*Callimorphus says in his \*work on the Olympic Games: "These rich dishes smell of food fit for the gods."

Callimorphus in *Piseis*, possibly for Pisa in Elis where the Olympic Games were held, but neither author nor work is known.

42. What a *ferculum* is. A mess of various meats is called a *ferculum*, as Petronius Arbiter says: "After the meat course was brought to the table."

An otherwise unknown fragment of Petronius, variously numbered by editors as 9 (F. Buecheler, Berlin, 1862), 10 (A. Ernout, Paris, 1950), 8 (K. Mueller, Munich, 1961).

43. What *miropola*, *adfatim*, *uenustare* are. They use the term *miropola* for those who sell ointments, like our word *pigmentarii*, as Naevius says in

his \**Diobolaria*: "The salesman has copiously lavished his ointment on me, and so I have made myself beautiful." *Adfatim* is copiously, while *uenustare* is to make oneself an object of delight.

For Naevius, see 21 above. The play *Diobolaria* is untraced; the title could refer to Jove's thunderbolts, but to judge by the quotation and item 32 above, the reference is to penniless prostitutes, available for two obols or pence. For *miropola*, compare *μυροπώλης*, "dealer in unguents"; Latin *pigmentarii* also means "ointment-sellers."

44. What a *celox* is. They call *celox* a very small kind of boat, what we call a *bamplus*, as Apuleius says in his \*book on the republic: "The man who cannot control a skiff had better look for a merchant vessel."

Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* was well known to Fulgentius, see 3 above, but no work of his on the republic is known.

45. What *celibatum* is. By *celibatum* they meant the abstinence of the unmarried state, as Felix Capella declares in his book *On the Marriage of Mercury and Philology*: "Minerva was delighted to lose her spinsterhood."

Felix Capella is more usually known as Martianus Capella, of the earlier 5th century A.D., the reference being to his *De nuptiis Philologiae* 1.5. Fulgentius's longer title for this work came to be widely used, though more often with Philology named before Mercury, but does not agree with the manuscript tradition.

46. What *exercitus*, *nictare*, *ualgia* are. *Exercitus* is a word for despised, as Plautus says in his *Miles gloriosus*: "Have you really brought disgrace upon us and our household?" and earlier on: "You can see more wry mouths than ones shaped for kissing, for everyone is making faces at him." For we call *nictare* to make faces, while *ualgia* are contortions of the lips due to vomiting, as Petronius says: "With his lips wryly twisted."

Plautus's *Miles gloriosus*, first 172, then 93-94. Petronius's fragment 11 (10), Fulgentius again being the only source.

47. What *summates*, *simplones*, *ganium* are. *Summates* is the name for men of high rank; *simplones* are guests at table, for the friend of the bride-

groom who accompanies him at the feasting is called a *simpolator*; while *ganeum* is a tavern, as \*Sutrius says in his \*comedy *Piscatoria*: "Men of high rank have become frequenters of low taverns."

For *simpolones*, compare *συμπόσιον*, "banquet"; the *Piscatoria* would be a play on the theme of fishing (a group of *piscatores*, "fishermen," appears in Plautus's *Rudens*).

48. What *praesegmina* are. *Praesegmina* are the amputated portions of a body, as Tages says in his \*work on divination: "With limbs dissected."

If a genuine work, Tages on divination is presumably fathered on the Etruscan deity mentioned in 4 above.

49. What a *congerra* is. *Congerrones* is the name for those who flock together on someone else's property, and so among the Romans the Bruttians are called idlers (*gerrones*).

The Bruttians were from Bruttium in southern Italy; after the second Punic War, as allies of Hannibal, they lost their independence and were declared public slaves by the Romans, to be employed as lictors and servants of the magistrates.

50. What a *cistella* and *crepundia* are. They use the name *cistella* for a small casket, as Plautus says: "Bring me the trinket-box with the *crepundia* in it," that is, with the child's baubles.

Plautus's *Cistellaria* ('The Trinket Box'), 709. *Crepundia*, toys or trinkets, called in Greek *γυμνολατρά*, figure prominently in this and other New Comedy plays.

51. What *fabre*, *pecuatus*, *aricinae* are. \*Antidamas in his \*books of moral philosophy says: "Who would think that a skillfully constructed creature like man would turn sheep-like," and "God changed men's minds into so clod-like a form." *Fabre* is a word for skillfully, *auerruncare* is to remove, *aricinae* is like pottery or clay, and *pecuatus* is foolish.

Antidamas on philosophy, presumably the same unknown writer as is mentioned in 2 above.

52. What *alucinare* is. *Alucinare* is the term for dreaming false dreams. It is derived from *alucitae*, which we call gnats, as Petronius Arbiter says: "For a hundred gnats were bothering me in the spring."

Petronius's fragment 11 (12). *Alucinare* is to have hallucinations.

53. What a *culleus* is. *Culleus* is the name for a leather sack in which condemned criminals were tied and thrown into the sea, as Plautus says in his *Vidularia*: "If you want a good crop, have him sewn up in a sack and carried out to sea."

Plautus's *Vidularia*, fragment 17A (18).

54. What an *elogium* is. An *elogium* is an inheritance in the bad sense, as Cornelius Tacitus says in his \*book of jests: "So he died with the legacy of his conduct passed on to his sons."

Cornelius Tacitus was the name of the historian of the 1st century A.D., but no book of jests is recorded for him.

55. What a *lixa* is. *Lixa* is the name for a camp follower, as Lucan says: "He waits while the humblest camp follower quenches his thirst."

Lucan, *Pharsalia* 9.593, of the younger Cato.

56. What *sudus* is. The word *sudus* means serene, as Tiberianus says: "Lucifer, serene to look upon, draws away his golden fires."

Tiberianus's fragment 5, otherwise unrecorded.

57. What *luteus* is. *Luteus* is the name for bright, as Pacuvius in his \*tragedy *Thiestis* says: "There was no dawn with its gleaming pair of steeds."

A tragedy *Thyestes* is attributed to Ennius by Cicero and others (see 19 above), and may well be what Fulgentius means; see H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge, 1967), p.412. But Varius, the friend and editor of Virgil, also wrote a highly esteemed tragedy *Thyestes*, as did Seneca.



58. What *abstemius* is. *Abstemius* is a word for cautious, as \*Rabirius says in his \*satire: "The strong wine of Mettenia shuns the label of being abstemious."

Rabirius could be the epic poet listed by Ovid, but only fragments of his work remain. For Mettenia, the early Roman wife killed by her husband because she dipped into his wine store, see the fuller allusion in Fulgentius's *Ages of the World* 11.

59. What *uadatus* is. *Uadatus* is a word for being bound over or having one's freedom under legal restraint, as Fenestella says: "He was kept in check by bail, his friendships were held by a knot."

Fenestella, died 20 A.D., is mentioned as a poet by Jerome, but only a few excerpts and fragments survive.

60. What *manubies* are. *Manubies* mean the ornaments that kings wear, as Petronius Arbiter says: "The ornaments of so many kings found in the possession of a runaway slave."

Petronius's fragment 12(13).

61. What an *aumacium* is. *Aumacium* is the term for a public privy of the sort found in theaters or at the circus, as Petronius Arbiter says: "I flung myself into a privy."

Petronius's fragment 13(14).

62. What *delenificus* is. *Delenificus* is a word for flattering in speech, as \*Lucretius the writer of comedies says in his \**Nummolaria*: "I don't know the motive for your words reaching me with such glibness."

A playtitle *Nummolaria* would mean "The Story of the Coins," compare Plautus's *Trinummus*.



*ON THE AGES  
OF THE WORLD  
AND OF MAN*



## Introduction

The canon of Fulgentius the mythographer in R. Helm's edition (1898, pp. 129–79) includes a work named in two of the four surviving manuscripts as *De etatibus* (for *aetatibus*) *mundi et hominis*, a derivative compendium of Biblical and classical history in fourteen books or sections. The work was first printed, from an inferior copy, by P. Jacob Hommes (Paris, 1694; revised, 1696); portions were edited by A. Reifferscheid in *Rheinisches Museum* 23 (1868): 133 ff., and in his *Anecdota Fulgentiana* (Bratislava, 1883).

The best manuscript, Vatican Palatinus 886, dates from Lorsch of the ninth century;<sup>1</sup> other copies range from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries. Three later manuscripts assign the work to Fabius Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius, Claudius and Gordianus being family names of St. Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe in North Africa, who died in 532–33. The identity of the bishop with the Fabius Planciades Fulgentius who wrote the *Mythologies*, the *Content of Virgil*, and the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* remains unproven, but the manuscripts in question are late enough to be a party to a confusion, of two separate writers named Fulgentius, kept distinct at least through Carolingian times. As may be seen from the version that follows, the prolix style and the habit of viscous moralizing are all too similar to those of the mythographic works. One conceit in particular, as already indicated in the general introduction, seems to be repeated or adapted, with the Muses confused for the Hesperides, from the opening of the *Content of Virgil*.

An elaborate prologue addresses an unnamed patron, for whom only a wish to complete a series of literary tasks, as in the *Explanation*, has persuaded the writer to undertake the labor. An apology for imperfections is mingled, as in the opening of the *Mythologies*, with complaints of living in a commercial age and with boasts of his ability to achieve high style, together with an involved explanation why, as a "device of poetry," he chooses to leave out one letter of the alphabet in turn from each section, that is, leave out all words and names containing that letter. To innate prolixity is thus added one further, very considerable hindrance to clarity, and the result is

Latin appallingly turgid, rhetorical, and periphrastic. The matter itself is an undistinguished summary of world history, drawn largely from the Bible, Eusebius of Caesarea (died ca. 340), and, especially for the later sections, the *Historiae adversum paganos* of the Iberian priest Orosius (died ca. 430). The work ends abruptly with a rapid review of the Roman emperors up to Valentinian III (died 455), leaving open the question, considered further below, whether the work is complete or not. The technique varies between distorting words by omitting the key letter (*oc* for *hoc*, *Acab* for *Abab*, in section 8, from which *H* is left out), substituting for it an associated letter (*Squitarum* for *Scit(h)arum* in 3, lacking *C*), and the more difficult feat of doing without words or inflectional forms which would have included the banished letter (Adam, Satan, Cain, and Abel are not named in section 1, lacking *A*). The whole work amounts to no more than a model of misplaced ingenuity, a "black cloud of foolishness" as Fulgentius himself says, and even in the Middle Ages where such writings of display had their vogue,<sup>2</sup> seems to have attracted few admirers or imitators.<sup>3</sup>

With such a work, perhaps more so than even with the *Mythologies*, a translator of Fulgentius, if he is to give anything like a true picture of the "hideous rashness" of Fulgentius's style, has to resist the constant temptation of improving upon him, even of making him consistently coherent and intelligible, by straightening out his bizarre convolutions and simplifying his grotesque distortions. The motto or excuse must be, "Be Kent unmannerly when Lear is mad," for no standard phrasing, ancient or modern, can adequately convey the peculiarities of the original.

Some commentary and identification of details are provided in note form after each section below. It remains to say something of the alphabetical and numerical schemes employed by Fulgentius in the shaping of his work, with particular reference to his remarks at the close of the prologue and to the question whether or not we are dealing with a completed work.

In the prologue Fulgentius compares the Hebrew, Greek, Libyan, and Roman alphabets. By Hebrew he means the standard run of 22 letters, aleph to tau, as in the headings of Psalm 118 (119). His Greek also is the standard classical 24, alpha to omega, omitting earlier digamma (*f*), san (*ss*), koppa (*q*), and xi (*x*), which soon fell into disuse as letter symbols. The Roman 22 referred to would be the modern alphabet with the omission of *j*, *w*, and *y*, and with *u/v* counting as one. By Libyan Fulgentius presumably means the classical Roman 22 with the addition of *y*, in use in the Latin writings of North Africa to which he subscribed.<sup>4</sup> In adapting the alphabet for numer-

als, he follows the traditional Greek system (in use by the third century B. C.), taking alpha to theta for 1-9, iota to koppa for 10-90, and rho to omega for 100-800, with the last one, omega, equal to 800. By *episemon*, for ἐπίσημον, "mark, symbol," he seems to mean the Greek system of diacritics (dots, strokes, accents, and other symbols) commonly used to distinguish numerals from letters. His *cnf* is for the Hebrew פק (qoph, vau, pe in Roman order)—the koppa (κόππα), which fell into disuse as a Greek letter but was retained as a numeral standing for 90, and which gave rise to the Roman letter *q*.

So far there is reasonable clarity. It is more difficult to follow Fulgentius's arithmetic in the closing sentences of his prologue. If digamma (for 6) and koppa (for 90) are included in the classical Greek alphabet, the twenty-second symbol, phi, stands numerically for 500, the figure Fulgentius assigns to the twenty-second and last Roman letter, *z*. If the multiplier twelve is used, as he proposes without giving a reason, 6000 (presumably years) becomes the "age of the existing world," a round figure for the traditional (Septuagint) reckoning of years from Adam to the birth of Christ, and 276 (12 times 23) the days, that is, nine months of thirty days each and six additional days, representing approximately the span of human conception to birth. Possibly twelve is introduced because it happens that 12 times 23 and the sum of the series  $1 + 2 + 3 + \dots + 23$  both come to 276. Even so, it is hard to see why he continues with twelve, how twelve times twelve can represent "the span of human life," or how this figure of 144 may be reconciled with the twenty-three periods or *lustra*, regularly five-year periods in classical usage,<sup>5</sup> i.e., 115, also assigned to the "activities and lives of men" in the next sentence. At one place in the Bible, Gen. 6:2, we find "His days shall be an hundred and twenty years," close enough to 115,<sup>6</sup> but had this been in Fulgentius's mind one would have expected twenty-three sections in his work rather than the existing fourteen; and fourteen *lustra* of five years better suits the more usual and more realistic estimate of the human span by the Psalmist, 90 (91):10, threescore years and ten.

Here an additional complication arises. Although in the surviving manuscripts the main part of the work consists of only fourteen sections, which leave out in turn the letters *a* through *o* (disregarding *j*), two copies introduce the work as running "from *a* to *z*," and specify twenty-three books, and two copies conclude: "Here ends the fourteenth book of Fulgentius, lacking *o*," then "Here begins the fifteenth book, lacking *P*"; on the other hand, what is now the penultimate section, 13, states that the deeds of the Roman

emperors are to be reserved for a final section (*postremo loco*), as in fact is the case. A variety of explanations seems possible. Either the full work continued through the expected twenty-three sections, and no copy survives of the last nine, which would presumably have dealt with either Fulgentius's own age or the end of the world and the state of heaven; or, as seems most probable, Fulgentius grew tired of his device and ended prematurely without explanation, much as he does in his other writings; or he came to a halt with the letter *o* because it was the equivalent of omega, the final letter of Greek; or his final allusion, to the emperor Valentinian III, more or less coincides with the close of his source-text, book 7 of Orosius.

In the prologue to the work Fulgentius also announces, what is perhaps implicit in its title, that he is to follow a "harmonious distribution" in equating "the separate ages of the world and those of mankind," that is, in reproducing the traditional division of time from the Creation into seven ages and in assigning to each age a corresponding period in the normal progress of the individual from birth to senility and the grave. That his working out of this scheme is characteristically confused and lacking in thoroughness may be seen by comparing it to such a clear statement of the tradition as is found in Bede's treatise *De temporum ratione*, chapter 46, written in the year 725.<sup>7</sup> Bede distinguishes eight ages of the world—six covering the period from the Creation to the present; then two more after universal death, an age "of repose" in the "eternal sabbath," and the ultimate time of the "blessed Resurrection" and the "heavenly life" through eternity. The first age, from Adam to Noah, corresponds to man's infancy before speech (*in-fans*); the second, from Noah to Abraham, man's childhood wherein the faculty of speech is acquired; the third, Abraham to David, man's youth when he "begins to propagate his kind"; the fourth, David to the Babylonian captivity, man's maturity when he acquires the ability to govern; the fifth, Babylon to the birth of Christ, man's old age and its misfortunes; and the sixth, the Christian era, representing senility and eventual death. Bede also establishes the parallel between seven ages of the world and the seven days of Creation, and works out the total years to the end of the sixth age, Christ's birth, as 3952 according to the "Hebrew" version (i.e., Jerome's Vulgate) of the Old Testament or 5330 according to the Greek Septuagint.

Fulgentius has some notion of a comparable system, though he does not adhere to it with complete consistency. Of his fourteen sections, 1-6 each specifies a numbered age of the world and mostly gives a passing hint of a corresponding stage in man's individual life: section 1, dealing with



Adam and his sons, is the age of innocence and birth; 2, from Enoch to Noah, mentions the follies of boyhood and links the Flood to the catechumen preparing for baptism and the chrism of confirmation; 3, mainly to do with the tower of Babel or Babylon, alludes to youth which is both full of pride and eager for education; 4, on Abraham, speaks of marriage and the acquiring of wisdom; 5, on Jacob, refers to the offspring of marriage and the acquiring of possessions; and 6, on Moses, mentions man's reaching maturity. Sections 7-9 continue the record of Old Testament Jewish history to the birth of Christ, but instead of giving a numbered age of the world seem to be following a numbered set of years for the lifetime of the individual, apparently based on a system of fives, the sixth age of the world specified in section 6 now becoming in 7 the equivalent of a man's years from age 30 to 35 (a reckoning by *lustra* or five-year periods has been rather puzzlingly hinted at in the prologue). Thus, section 7, dealing with Samuel, begins with a man's "reasoned course of existence" at 30 and ends with a reference to his affairs at 35. No more is made of this in 8, which deals with the period of the kings of Israel, notably Saul, David, and Solomon; but 9, an attempt to cover the remaining Old Testament history, specifically the Maccabees, Judith, and Esther, brings back a reference to man when he is past 40 years old. In the remainder of the work, sections 10-14, both the numbering of ages of the world and this belated numbering of an individual's life span seem to be forgotten, and Fulgentius's efforts are concentrated on bringing to an approximately contemporary date both Biblical and Gentile history. Thus, section 10 reproduces the hostile tradition of Alexander the Great; 11 covers incidents in early Roman history; 12 gives highlights from the Gospel narratives; 13 deals similarly with the Acts of the Apostles and scraps from Eusebius's version of early church history; and 14 runs through the Roman emperors as far as Valentinian III, who died in 455 A.D. In ending with a section 14, Fulgentius may still, though he does not mention it, have in mind his five-year scheme, since five times fourteen would produce the traditional human span of the Psalmist. Similarly his round-figure calculation of 6000 years from the creation of the world which he makes in the prologue may be a rough echo of the more sophisticated traditional span which, for instance, Bede calculated from the Septuagint.

Fulgentius is perhaps more consistent, and more in accord with his individual moralistic attitude, in his interpretation of world history and his sense of its continuing applicability to man's ethics and behavior. He is, in fact, constantly in search of evidence to justify the ways of God to man, to estab-

lish parallels and analogies between the past and present ways of man, to stress how inscrutable are God's purposes, and to detect those apparent injustices in God's decrees which can be made to show how both human nature and divine justice are unchanging. In what is essentially the moralist's approach, and one very close to the approach of the allegorizer which he exhibits elsewhere in his expositions, he is concerned to stretch any usable detail to make it fit his ethical formulas. One must add that he also has the habit, common to much medieval writing on such themes, of lingering over details of lust and sexual misdemeanor in a pose of righteous indignation.

1. Not the 13th, as Helm states (p. xiv); see W. M. Lindsay, *Palaeographia Latina* (St. Andrews, 1924), 3:23-24; M. L. W. Laistner, *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1957), p. 211.

2. For the tradition of so-called lipogrammatic writings, exploiting the omission of one or more letters as a formal mannerism, one of Addison's types of "false wit," see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. W. R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 282-83, who cites examples from the poems of Lasus, the teacher of Pindar (6th century B.C.), through the *Iliad* of Nestor of Lavanda (flourished ca. 200 A.D.) and the *Odyssey* of Tryphiodorus the Egyptian (5th century A.D.), to late manifestations in the work of Peter Riga (ca. 1200) and 17th-century Spanish romances. More specifically, one thinks of the Pindaric ode without the letter sigma, and the five novels by Lope de Vega (died 1635), each lacking a different vowel. Fulgentius himself, in the prologue below, refers to the twenty-four books of the poet Xenophon, "with one letter left out of each book, an admirable work to which all of us involved with it have rightly given preeminence." Unfortunately this looks like a further piece of faked evidence, taking a famous name and inventing a work to go with it, on the same lines as some of the authorities manufactured in the *Mythologies* and the *Explanation*: of the two Xenophons known in Greek literature—the famous historian of the 4th century B.C., and the author of the novel *Ephesiaca*, Xenophon of Ephesus who flourished in the 2d or 3d century A.D.—neither is on record as having produced lipogrammatic work.

3. Such Fulgentianisms as turgid syntax, strained wordplays, frequent use of exclamations, and moralizing phrases reminiscent of the Bible in the hand of tropological expositors reappear, to name but one instance, as stylistic features of the *De excidio Britanniae* by the priest Gildas, who died ca. 570.

4. That is, the Libyan cursive alphabet of 22 (rather than 23) letters (witness the passage introduced by Plautus in his *Poenulus*, act 5), or else early Numidian, an offshoot of Punic or Carthaginian, the writing used by the ancestors of the Berbers and the progenitor of the Tamachek writing still in use among the Tuareg of north-west Africa; see D. Diringer, *Writing, Ancient Peoples and Places* (New York, 1962), 25:124, 132.

5. As in Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.37.2.

6. The notion of 120 years as a human lifetime is not peculiar to Fulgentius:

Curtius (1953), p. 253, finds it in Tacitus, *De oratoribus* 17, and Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 2.71; add Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 2.12.

7. Edited by T. Mommsen, *Bedae chronica maiora, chronica minora*, Monumenta Germaniae historica, auctores antiquissimi, 13.2 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 247-48; English translations by C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (Ithaca, 1947), pp. 23-24, with a discussion, pp. 22-27; and by J. Campbell, *Bede: The Ecclesiastical History of the English People and other Selections* (New York, 1968), pp. 395-96. For the tradition involved, see also C. W. Jones, *Bedae opera de temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943). The division of the ancient world into six ages is found in Augustine, whence Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 5.38.1-6) and later medieval writers; Lactantius, *Divine Inst.* 7.14, specifies six ages each of one thousand years, a notion derived ultimately from II Pet. 3:7-8.



Translation: On the Ages  
of the World and of Man

Prologue

It has been very necessary, most renowned of men, to think of this span of time in which we are now confined, in an unbroken silence, without any enthusiasm for discussing it, particularly when nothing else is involved but the business of pursuing money, and every single day an unremitting concern for making profits spreads its corruption through our minds: the greed of a moneygrabber, not the words of a commentator, better suits our mood and is far more appealing. In these concerns no grief is extended to those who mourn, no sympathy is felt for those in want, but calculation of interest solely for accumulating wealth goes on all through the night. Beside the avaricious mind, the voice becomes insignificant. Believe me, as God is our witness, I confess I wanted to ignore your request for these writings, but I had impressed on my mind that in no respect should it be found disobedient to your command. Be therefore satisfied with this load, which I have garnered for you from the flowery gardens of the Muses,<sup>1</sup> and like Eurystheus you have taken upon yourself the task of making me sweat like Hercules.

Also I beg you, as a reader concerned with my writings, notice carefully that, if reading the work subjoined does not offend your judgment (though I have little enough hope of this), I have been pleased to carry through a device of poetry; but if the writing grows confused and darkens into a black cloud of foolishness, even so many lamps burning through the night must die away into the ashes of silence, and nights be prolonged till dawn without achieving anything worthwhile. Therefore, Master, for whatever reason I am seen to begin this little work of mine, or from whatever impulse I am known to take upon myself this hardest of labors, it was appropriate, in so signal and ambitious an affair as this, when the height of skill should be employed, that you realize the true order of the letters is not to be followed, and thereby the orderly arrangement of so wonderful a work as this may not lose its due eloquence. When the mind is preoccupied with letters which can

be discarded, the work has a less pleasing effect. Where it is permissible to discard whatever you find unsuitable, so long as the letters which are avoided get in the way, it becomes indeed the exertion of a troubled spirit. Decide then in your own able mind whether, when you find what you do not want among what you seek, you may not be choked by such bursts of ingenuity. For the more thoroughly I once confine myself to a method not expressly imposed on me, the less polished I estimate will be my way of describing it, and I do not propose to depart in any way from the true order of the subject I have undertaken. I beg you therefore, Master, that when no elevated eloquence is forthcoming you do not conclude I was capable only of a homespun style. There is in me a plenteous and broad flow of words, which my work would wonderfully illustrate were it not proscribed by the limitations of what I propose to do. You told me you had read the work of the poet Xenophon in twenty-four books,<sup>2</sup> with one letter left out of each book, an admirable work to which all of us involved with it have rightly given preeminence; there it was the case that no difficulty was involved when the spelling of names had to be filled out with the remaining letters, and in Greek it is permissible to change letters where anyone is constrained to do so by the grip of necessity, as *e* to *i* and *o* to *u*, something not found to be permissible in Libyan. I have persisted with this in regard to the name of the first man, his consort, and his two sons, compelled even to do without them because of this heavy labor, to the extent that I did not permit myself to make any use of names for those whom the true order of the Scriptures demanded should be named. And, of course, this may be put to me: The work will not be worth admiring unless your preoccupation with this ambitious scheme is laid aside.

Thus, having reviewed basic notions, the scope of my work may be dealt with. In Hebrew the spelling of words is covered by twenty-two letters, the range of our own language, Libyan, requires one more to be added, but the Roman or Latin has that same total; to show the full range of the Greek language you must add one more to the number of twenty-three letter symbols. Thus for anything in works such as these where Greek thought predominates, the normal range of our language, the middle order of Libyan, which displays not twenty-four or twenty-two letters but has one less than Greek and one more than Hebrew, must be supplemented. With these twenty-three letter symbols, by which a universal range of words can be accounted for, we must equate the separate ages of the world itself and those of mankind. In this way, man because he progresses, the world because it

exists, and the number of letters because it comes to this total, a harmonious distribution can be discovered in my book: as you observe the connecting links of its contents arranged in natural order, you discover both a full description of men's ways, a clear picture of natural laws, and the range of letters in congruence with them. Furthermore, you may the more readily show your admiration for all this when in each book one letter in turn is left out, the first letter from the first book, the second from the second, and so on until by diminution the final book discards the final letter. My powers of expression are limited by being held in the grip of this restriction, which needs great skill to control, lest, because of what I have explained as having to be left out, I should in any way be marked out for attack by the judgment of my readers. Thus if you might wish to set the start of my exercise according to the shapes of the Greek letters and the Greek system, in which from the first figure symbol to the last one,  $\omega$  or omega, the numbers total up to eight hundred, and then want to calculate the total which has to be linked to the Roman and Libyan letters, the sets of numbers could in no way be reconciled; for  $k$  and  $b$  are not the same as in Greek, and the Roman series does not recognize the *episemon* and the *cuf* which the Greek interposes to serve as numbers. Thus with our letters, if you count by them as far as the last one,  $z$ , the total comes to five hundred, whence twelve times five hundred shows the age of the existing world, but if twelve times twelve is taken it must show the span of human life; again, if you reckoned twelve times twenty-three, you would discover the number nine for the months and six for the days, the precise period for man as he comes forth from the womb, as taken from the inception of birth, whence also the span of death may be indicated. Just as in man, therefore, his activities and life span are covered in twenty-three periods of five years (*lustra*), and the total range of words is covered by twenty-three letters, so also in the world twenty-three periods of time are to be set in order, whereby in each single book, as has been explained, both the letters of each age may be observed, and the activities and lives of men depicted, and the events of the world itself made clear.

### 1 (lacking A)

Thus the first age of the world is to be reckoned from the first man, the unfortunate who scorned the Lord's decree, and from his consort, who se-

duced this guileless being, both of whom the envious serpent is seen to have deceived, and the woman is found to be the primal cause of death for her wretched descendants.<sup>1</sup> For what did it profit, either the serpent that it did not perish alone, or the man that he ate of what was forbidden, or the woman that she made the man consenting to her, unless it was that on all of them should fall the retribution of God's just doom? For the most high Creator of all things did not set a trap with the forbidden fruit, but gently discouraged man from the tree by marking it distinctively, so that he might continue to live. Notice then that the deceit of the serpent was suffered in the hope of divine favor, that the woman was impelled by the promise of eternal life, and that through her blandishment the man in his greed was driven to eat the sweet-tasting apples. Thus Satan the idle product of bliss, who first earned the position of being a procurer with apples in the stewardship of these parents, progressed to becoming a procurer of envy in their sons, destroying the elder one by murder and ruining the younger one.<sup>2</sup> Ah, nothing is safe from the wiles of the serpent, that the man who stood for the beginning of life should become the symbol of death for his posterity, and the woman who gave birth to the living should emerge as the destroyer of her own descendants! Alas for the world, alas for men, whose beginning is death, whose end is the judgment.<sup>3</sup> For what profit to man was the course of life, when it was decreed that his span of years must end? That everything with which he is associated should be impermanent—what kind of life is this? Weep then, man, I urge you, because you have life: what you esteem is fleeting as the wind; wealth does not serve the dying, honors are of no avail to corpses; naked one enters the world, and naked one leaves the world.<sup>4</sup> Let there be honor only to the invisible God, ever without end, Who ranges at the lofty, exalts the downtrodden,<sup>5</sup> and always by destruction brings to naught the schemes of men; yet truly righteous, truly holy is He; and what, even were it able to exist eternally, might this world's presumption effect or produce? But let us now examine the first stage of the world, how its development was in harmony with man as he emerged from the womb. Then, the new seed of the first womb succeeded, with enmity and poisonous jealousy, the offspring of the state of innocence; and now, as child succeeds child, innocence may still exist, but shows the effect of this innate enmity. The first man learnt how to say the various sounds of the names of the birds and beasts, even in his state of innocence he learnt how to produce melodiously unrehearsed sounds. Thus the first age of the world, brought forth by virtue of the divine power, was decreed up to, and including, Enoch. It coincided with the time of the innocents, for God esteems nothing greater than the pure state of innocence.



## 2 (lacking B)

Whereas in the first section, in which in the tight fetter of a binding restriction I abandoned the full faculty of expression, and, subjected to a firm grip, gave up the full display of ideas and phrasing, in which I was unable to name in any way Adam or his consort and their children who differed so markedly, the one stricken in poisonous jealousy by the crime of fratricide, the other the protomartyr of innocence, it was fitting to describe such things, —so now the second age of the world is to be looked into, which we must pursue from the blissful translation of Enoch<sup>1</sup> and an inhabitant of earth gathered up to paradise (whereby death, though it seized all the children of earth in its greedy jaws, yet in that one case abandoned its fraudulent monopoly) as far as the roaring waters of cataclysmic destruction and the down-pour issuing from the skies for the avenging of crimes. In this Noah, both confined and transported in the happy care of the life-preserving ark, both heir to the age gone by and to become the founder of the age to follow, was whirled in safety in a disaster which yet was propitious for him.<sup>2</sup> By acting righteously he earned the right to escape from a world in ruins and to rule in a newly formed one. How much better would it have been, my God, to build this unruly world anew and to end even the righteous Noah by some completing act of death, especially since for God the fatigue of his labor was never sufficient, nor did he exert himself to excess in achieving anything, but relied on orders for anything which had to be done, although he did not have to extricate himself completely from the tree of transgression into a second age of sinful Adam, and no child of the past age of this unruly world was thereby stained with sin. But You will be the only knowledgeable witness of Your ordering, You who can do all things in righteousness and establish secret decisions. Let me then describe what this age achieved in the course of the world.

First, therefore, the angels banished from heaven for sin burned fiercely with the heat of lust, and contrary to the law of nature took part in human sexual union.<sup>3</sup> From this congress the concoction of a monstrous birth took place, and contrary to the law of nature a massive giant extended itself to a most enormous size: from its mother's seed it received a form like a human, from its father's labors in love it took on the prodigious strength fitted to its vast height. Thence among those bloated results of the sins of men and angels Noah, alone found righteous in the sight of God,<sup>4</sup> was chosen as father of the ark and was preserved by his mother the ark, became the tenant of his

own construction, became the associate of snakes, the host of birds, the companion of cattle and wild beasts: he beheld his sons playing with horned reptiles and serpents, he had no fear for his granddaughters as they chattered happily seated beside elephants. This nucleus of the world to be, destined to come into existence in the age to come, outlived the remnants of the previous population, and the death-dealing waters roared on all sides round this safe contrivance as together with the first destruction of the world they strove to destroy its future seed; but even as the world was destroyed the safety of the righteous could not be imperiled by any upheaval. Now, therefore, as I reveal the circumstances connected with the first age of the world, when the poison of jealousy developed in Cain and he begged his brother for assistance with milk, which the one sacrificed and the other drank,<sup>5</sup>—let me now reveal how in the second age a like affair matches this one. Just as a time of folly develops in boys, so there arose a wild disposition in the giants; just as with them an instinct (*instinctura*) for destruction predisposed to evil, so for boys immersion (*tinctura*) in the water of baptism washes evil away; then an evil angel yearned for sin, now the fruit of man's evil desire is purged away; then the substance of a sinful world transferred to one descendant escaped from the cleansing waters into a new age, now by the sole effort of Christ's redemption unredeemed man is reborn in the confirmation sacrament of the church; then man escaped from the world (*ex mundo*) into the ark in order to flee (*fugiat*) the holocaust, now he flees (*confugit*) from filth (*ex immundo*) to the ark of the church in order by receiving baptism to evade (*effugiat*) the fiend. Then man shut wild beasts and snakes in the ark, now man eludes the roaring threats of lions and the swelling crests of serpents in the edifice of the ark which is the church. Man then was given the law not to eat flesh with the blood in it, now man receives a law by which he may be filled with the flesh and blood of Christ. The waters roared round that man, seeking to drown and choke him; water sanctifies man now by its work of purification. Observe therefore that by the work of water all things are matched and linked together by an almost exact correspondence. There two birds with the task of serving as messengers were despatched from the side of the ark, one of whom returned with the evidence of an olive branch and, in obedience to the behest of him who had sent it, brought the joyful news of the subsidence of the waters, while the other lingered to eat of dead flesh through a perverse compelling urge, and did not return any blacker in mind than it was black in body.<sup>6</sup> You may discover this is the same with man, that microcosm, when the true Christian (*catholicus*),

grafted to a fruitful stem through the olive branch of baptism, regularly and daily returning to it keeps the church firm in his memory, but the heretic (*hereticus*), held captive by the foul curse of sin, not only neglects to return to mother church<sup>7</sup> but, urged to an alien course, throws scorn upon it. Blessed is a man, and limitlessly blessed, if unrestrained indulgence from his ancestral vineyard does not cause scandal. That drinker of strong wine lost the righteousness by whose aid he prevailed safely in the midst of the roaring waters.<sup>8</sup> What then is our achievement, human frailty? That most holy patriarch fought with the swelling ocean, the threatening sky, the roaring deep, a raging destruction; and yet that conqueror of all these elements was himself conquered and shamefully debased by a little strong wine; with skill he built an ark of three stories,<sup>9</sup> wherein the water seeking to invade could find no crack, and yet soaked in the drinking of wine he showed his naked private parts to his sons in a shameless exposure. Let this be sufficient, as much as the theme requires, for a description of the harmonizing evident between the second age of the world and that of man.

### 3 (lacking C)

The due order of the work now in progress requires that the third age of the world and of man be shown in the same fashion by a third purging, keeping the third letter of the series suppressed, lest by not removing itself from this section it disturb the due order of the work as it progresses.

This section will in fact make a start with the founding of Babylon in the age of King Ninus and Queen Semiramis,<sup>1</sup> dealing also with the tower set on its base on an infamous site and inspired by a common unity of people and the sameness of their language, a tower which with its tiled sides and Puteolan brick-dust or asphalt<sup>2</sup> rose ever higher and nearer the loftiness of the stars, and with its corners almost threatened the orbit of the moon—but then the diffusion of languages scattered through the world destroyed the central purpose of what had been undertaken, in that when one of the builders asked for something he wanted someone down on the ground would offer him something else, and when there was something chosen by the planners, the laborers would interpret it as something different. What a mighty and inestimable plan on the part of God! What depths to God's

fountainhead of wisdom! One united tongue, one spirit, and one united work that mortal man had undertaken, and yet what humanity rejoiced at to have found diversity in completing what it had begun, the wisdom of God all the more readily destroyed, mocking men's vain ambition. Thus in the impulsive notions of men's minds there sprang up a broad divergence, so that what was said meant one thing and what was heard was construed as something different. What was said emerged as the opposite of what was intended, and what the sounds of speech had uttered the ear, as a foreigner's, interpreted differently. A division arose in what had been one and the same coherence of members; the tongue strove to make known what the hearing vainly strove to understand, the hearing passed on what the tongue had in no way sought to utter; and as each of the senses butted the other like a ram, the work was abandoned half-finished. Also at that time there sprang up through infamous design the walls of Babylon, which Semiramis is said to have erected in a swollen ferment of vainglory.<sup>3</sup> For after the death of her husband Ninus she labored to convert the foundations of this ancient work to a better state, in fact fancifying her set of morals (*morum*) rather than extending the range of her walls (*murorum*). For she was the executioner of her own lovers and the mistress of those doomed to death; then came the height of her lust: as she flamed with desire for her own son her dignity as a mother was burned away and she became his bride.<sup>4</sup> But it is not to be wondered at that she should take as her husband the very same son whom she had conceived in adultery and born to such a father, so that he whom she had produced with groaning from her thighs should now be fired with the ardors of lust and drive his seed into the gluttonous maw of those same thighs. Ninus as well, no different from the evil ways of his wife and deserving marriage to this debased woman, by first invading the boundaries of his neighbors became first to establish the first stages of dominion in the world, and by first invading the territories of the Scythians, who lived in calm and undisturbed peace,<sup>5</sup> made his sword reek with foreign blood. With the hostile carnage of warfare he wrought havoc on human affairs hitherto conducted in pure gentleness. Let us then ask what resemblance the condition of those times has to the present state of man. Just as the vastness of the tower was raised up to the skies, so the period of man's youth is inflated by ambition. That wondrous work was destroyed by the dissemination of languages, and so is their folly ended by the dissemination of learning; ill-understood speech destroyed its presumption, and so does ill-understood learning expose the mere senses. Semiramis was inflamed with the ardor of

consuming lust, and so is youth fired to immoderate excesses by the flame of desire. For those, God scattered languages with a divergent confusion of meanings; these, wisdom elevates to a full knowledge of her ways. In the world of those times Babylon was set up as the first power to possess dominion; in men wisdom is taken as the ornament of rule. Then, Semiramis ruled contrary to justice; our age threatens to become the procurer of lust. She was both fired with lustful yearning and defiled with a spate of blood, while our age either boils with lust or is inflamed in the ferment of altercation. She greedily invaded a foreign realm; a man of our time pursues the embraces of wife or daughter. Then, the circuit of the walls was erected with wondrous elaboration; now, the state of youth is strengthened by the potent ties of virtue. What else beside these resemblances would you by any chance find worth comparison? Semiramis became the mistress of shameful crimes; our age is becoming the daughter and the handmaiden of destruction. Thus man is a microcosm of the world which he is both seen to be born into and found to resemble; you may detect nothing very different between the two. It remains to show the fourth age of the world and the progress in it of man, and this includes both the age of Abraham and the same affinities.

#### 4 (lacking D)

Thus Abraham became the first worker of righteousness, in that he claimed the ineffable gift of the Godhead, and just as he showed obedience according to his knowledge, so he fulfilled the service required for what was promised him.<sup>1</sup> He was commanded to abandon without delay what he possessed, and to seek as a wanderer what was unknown to him, in essence what he had pledged without knowledge and arranged without plan.<sup>2</sup> He was tested by the subsequent return of his substance, of which he had knowledge; he was tested by the physical pain imposed by the operation of circumcision, the virtue of which he did not know;<sup>3</sup> he was tested by the restoration of his son Isaac which in his generousheartedness he earned without pleading for it;<sup>4</sup> and because in these three trials he was found firm, he is described as the ancestral father of righteousness. The Almighty dealt generously with his son and richly sustained him, returned and freely restored him;<sup>5</sup> he showed himself grateful in receiving him back and did

not in any agitation murmur at his proposed sacrifice. He did not lose his son, because he was willing to lose him; he handed him over to sacrifice without showing distress; and by not trembling with anxiety at losing him, he in fact made things better for himself. So he was commanded in his ignorance, and inspired by the promise of dominion he did not hesitate to leave his homeland, abandon his possessions, turn his back on his parents, and become an exile and a wanderer. And I can tell of another miraculous happening at this time. Did not Job also belong to this period, that protagonist in a mighty struggle, that conqueror of Satanic forces, in whom no evil found its abode, and righteousness discovered no guile? For by him the vanquished prince of darkness was shamed, and because he deserved it, not because he coveted it, the Author of goodness granted him a crown. He showed himself unperturbed at the death of his sons, content in the alienation of his substance, a patient bearer of afflictions, sustained in mind at the loss of his honor, strong in contending with his afflicted frame. Since he did not bemoan what he had lost he received the greater reward; because in his patience he did not lament these losses, he gained all the more for his great longsuffering; and although the restiveness of his wife served as an incentive to sin, yet his righteousness and patience conquered over all, and he wore down the rage of his impatient wife, fought and crushed the force of Satan, and gained (*meruit*) a heavenly reward because he deserved (*promeruit*) it.

But human nature asks where lies any resemblance to itself in such matters, and this I may deal with more fully. For when a mind imbued with learning has by such skills equipped its senses to a hope of future knowledge, straightway scorning the cloud of natural folly as the abode of sheer earth it will desire to know the workings of good deeds, and just like the complacency of Abraham of old, so now the hope of future goodness will be pursued. Thereafter, with the foreskin cut off from those who would seduce him to the flesh and to lust he will look only to union with his wife, and will have no desire to dissipate his youthful embraces in promiscuous gratification, where love grows bitter (*amor amarus*), its results tarnished, and its effect always mercenary and open for sale. Thereafter, sexual congress, entirely fitting to all fathers, who are yet also sons under heavenly control (this for a prudent man being as much by his own choice), would begin to observe its own restrictions. For every man who is prudent and rightly perceptive prizes the excellence of his Maker more than he is constrained by love for his children; he puts this before all affection and is fully prepared to serve the One who has no wish to lose any part of His own; as Solomon says, "The begin-

ning of wisdom is the fear of God's majesty."<sup>6</sup> Note then how that whole span of time is in harmony with the ways of men: in youthful hearts wisdom is desired, in Abraham this heavenly gift was confidently awaited; then Gentile flesh retained the foreskin, now a man's age as it advances acquires a circumcision from evil desire; then the son whom it was the father's delight to have begotten was offered for sacrifice for the love of God, now love of lust which is the alluring evil of sin can be brought to an end.

## 5 (lacking E)

Now the fifth age of the world has come to hand, and in the same way the life of man is adapted to it. For this period I shall show the workings of righteous men, the first two proved so by their twin birth, the younger catching the elder by pulling at his leg in such a way that he either would be first in emerging to the light of day or would maliciously delay his brother's birth.<sup>1</sup> What is to be inferred from this? Man did not as yet show hatred in his heart, for one in whom there was still no life did not, when born, take on the poison of malice. Surely it was not by divine decree that true malice rather than a mere imitation of it was first formed in the mother's womb, for in what place could malice take up its abode when there was as yet no soul? The one who sought to be the first born was in fact born to poverty; he coveted the rank of first born, but this would only be achieved by overcoming nature itself. O wondrous and holy decision of the Creator: the elder, who gave no cause, was hated; the younger, who conceived of malice while still held in the womb, was favored. There was no righteousness in the younger, no offense was to be found in the elder, to show why the grace of God should be so disproportionate. But it was as the apostle says: "O man, can you ever presume to give instruction to your Lord?"<sup>2</sup> And it would have been a small matter that he showed his malice while still enclosed in the womb, except that he went on enviously to seize his brother's birthright. When he prepared for his famished brother a red pottage as a snare, he craftily exchanged the savory food for the birthright, and showed no pity for his brother's exhausting labors in the field.<sup>3</sup> This too would have been a small matter, except that he went on to set in motion other tricks. When he had provided this crafty meal he armed himself at his mother's urging,

the touch of the deprived one worked its deception, the thief deceived his father with the device of hairy skin, the crafty one stole what was due to the first born.<sup>4</sup> He was blessed in his produce, he became the leader in mastery over his brothers, he was confirmed as lord over all his enemies. What offense was to be found in his innocent brother, who suspecting nothing evil was roaming the field in search of savory food for his father? What did not the mother's trickery deserve, that his harmless innocence should be ensnared by his brother's fraud? I stress that he had no envy for his brother, did not steal from his father, did not snatch away the food from the usurper, did not covet a birthright not his due. Moreover, when with an armed force he encountered his brother after he was married, he did not show any malice, was the first to offer the kiss of peace, deliberately forgot his wrongs, and welcomed the other with his consorts and children.<sup>5</sup> What offense to God did he commit in all these matters? And why, being so generous, was he not the one to be favored? The sacred Godhead may know His own counsel, but it cannot be comprehended by human nature. For the Lord sees in the heart what the human eye never discerns. What am I to say of Leah the weak-eyed, hating her fairer sister Rachel and substituting herself in her marriage-bed, seizing as the elder what had been pledged to the younger, deceitfully with the ready aid of night securing her sister's betrothal, and in the morning by a successful fraudulent trick turning servitude to marriage.<sup>6</sup> This too would have been a small matter, except that with mandrake fruit she maliciously procured an adulterous conception by night. What further? As the two wives quarreled their dispute led to concubines as pretended wives, whose offspring the husband adopted along with his legitimate children. By such evil is human nature enchained and constrained, that as one sister worked her envy on the other, the husband preferred for his consort a slave-woman to a wife.

Let us then ask how this age of the world resembles that of man. A true picture of the world is fully shown in these happenings, when one sees feminine malice in Leah, misfortune in her fair sister, malice towards a brother in Jacob, a certain negligence in his elder brother, the marks of suffering and the heavenly reward of a future crown in Job,<sup>7</sup> and the common way of life in Jacob when he did not restrain his love of concubines and when he was party to the lust of his wife. Notice, therefore, that in this world one man chances to gain a fair wife, another is condemned to an ugly consort, but some consolation is given him by God in the boon of children. We see the righteous suddenly ruined by evil men, we observe an evil man



suddenly loaded with great riches; sometimes the less worthy is raised aloft, sometimes the mighty, brought low after inflated glory, is trampled underfoot by all.<sup>8</sup> Praise be only to the Lord and His unchanging goodness; for humanity cannot change a single one of His decrees.

## 6 (lacking F)

Take up now the sixth age of the world as determined by the plan of this book, the age which was both distinguished by God's witness and illustrative of man's fulfillment. As this period took shape Christ our Lord was deemed worthy to appear, revealing His full nature in both substances, strength of body and wisdom of mind, in that He was the power and wisdom of God but also perfect man.<sup>1</sup> There was made manifest in this age both the torment in Egypt, the restoration under Moses, and the giving of the law. First, then, the Israelites in their slavery were tormented by harsh bondage of their limbs, and God's chosen people, when the purchase of straw for the labor inflicted upon them was refused, by this punitive treatment were scattered in their search for stalks.<sup>2</sup> Male children were condemned to the death sentence;<sup>3</sup> but see how in an ark of reeds on the river's edge the safety of the restorer of the Hebrews was preserved, until the king's daughter was attracted by the sound of the whimpering babe and, softened by the appeal of Moses's beauty, took under adoption the one sentenced to death and gave to his mother for nursing the babe disclosed to her in his basket of rushes.<sup>4</sup> Ah, the hidden purposes of God:<sup>5</sup> did the queen realize that destruction for her father and his land lurked in this ark, or the mother know that the salvation of the Hebrews was crying as he whimpered on the river's edge? But observe how with the passing of the baubles of innocent babyhood and the emergent dawn of boyhood his youthful energy grew hot. Then his temper first showed a foretaste of Israelite independence in the murder of an Egyptian, whom in revenge for a brutal wrong he slew, felling him to his feet and making him collapse in the sand, thus proclaiming to the Hebrews this first relief from the blow dealt to their hopes of continuance as a race. Thence, fear-stricken, he sought out foreign abodes in exile, as a stranger among the Midianites he worked for hire as a shepherd, dependent on their orders for his existence as a slave. When God had observed the full evil of

the Egyptians and realized the total bondage of the Hebrews, then the proven justice of the divine grace came near to Moses, prepared to reward him with gifts. Forthwith the smoke of Mount Sinai, swirling in dark mists, and the secret places of the hollow mountain, echoing with the roar of thunder, evidenced the awesome arrival of God;<sup>6</sup> and fire, flashing in vivacious spurts, its tongues fluttering in vibrating eddies, licked the green branches of the bush with a yet harmless motion, and like the grass offering a slavelike submission to the divine steps, playfully waved in innocent flutterings.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter the holy sweetness of God's voice radiated forth, piercing the heart of the silence of His wondrous dazzling glow (if indeed such a voice can be described, for the Godhead itself and the blessed ear of Moses who received it were the only witnesses to what it uttered), saying: "I have heard the heavy groans of my people rising up from the bondage of their travail,<sup>8</sup> and I have heeded their male children already at birth condemned to death by drowning; wherefore I have chosen you to be the destroyer of the Egyptians, the leader of the Israelites, the controller of the elements, the master of their magicians, the lord of their plagues, and the divider and ruler of the sea." Thus God, reversing His role as defender of the Egyptians' crime, brought down destruction upon them. The elements lent their compliance to serving the commands of this one man; also the rod submitted itself to this leader, and on it the whole matter of his maintaining the upper hand depended; for it first changed completely into a serpent and by that power swallowed the serpents of the magicians, was able to make its wood come alive and crawl contrary to nature, had the material of its wood devour living creatures.<sup>9</sup> Nature labored to become what it had not been, so that Moses could demonstrate his powers of control. The waters of the Nile grew red with blood, drops of rain hardened into stone, the dust of the earth erupted into open sores, the mud came to life in the form of frogs, the ashes grew black in a thick darkness, the wind produced a swarm of flies<sup>10</sup> and locusts, among the Egyptians the light of day lost its power, condemned to endless night; from the Hebrews night departed, restrained by a three-day banishment. For the former darkness neither allowed the light to appear nor withdrew itself, for the latter the captive light endlessly persisted and did not concede its power to night. In this temporary havoc wrought by the night the firstborn of the Egyptians were wiped out, and the doorposts of the Jews were safe when daubed with lamb's blood.<sup>11</sup> What agony for the many: at the last their leader, thirsting for Israelite blood, swelled up drunk with its crimson draughts, and the instigator of death for innocent babes

slept covered in a watery shroud.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter the cloud was sent before to guide them, the morning dew fell with manna, a fleshly shower contrary to nature descended in a downpour of winged creatures.<sup>13</sup> What merciful goodness is yours, O my God, that a drop of rain should fall, the moistened earth absorb it, the crops begin to glow in the sun's heat, the stalks acquire their wax-like ripeness, and that in order not to make any delay for the hungry, food ready for eating in fact fell in this way, and tasty manna was distributed in complete compliance with their wish. There was no need to thresh corn for grinding, no heat needed for cooking: the food was ready prepared and sent from the skies, the only delay for those who would eat of it being either their own inclination or the setting up of a table; also, this rain of birds had the power not to dissolve into liquid only fit for drinking, but lasted so that it could be chewed in the teeth. The rock, inscribed with the text of the law, was engraved by God's finger.

And all this does not lack resemblance to human affairs; now that mankind in its maturity and age of fulfillment has dispensed with the darkness of the time in Egypt, and disposed of its earlier sins through the purposeful blood of the Lamb, now that the disturbance of the Red Sea and the swelling of its salty spirit have been passed through, the manna of beneficent wisdom is savored, and man instructed in the precepts of the law walks a safe path through life with the pillar of knowledge providing a clear guide, and, by the expenditure of toil, the longed-for land of promise is attained. Now that after Moses, leader in the desert-wandering<sup>14</sup> and destroyer of the Egyptians, the awesome purpose of God has been made manifest to us through knowledge of the law,<sup>15</sup> we are straightway borne up by Jesus, our good leader, by whom we also are led to the land of the promised bliss.

## 7 (lacking G)

The thirtieth year of a man's life is now reached and has to be fitted into this section of my work; in it is to be described the reasoned course of existence, purged of the outbursts of unsettled youth, comparable to that period in the world when the Hebrew people placed themselves under the rule of judges. Then, indeed, the lifelessness permanently imprisoned in Hannah's womb had lost its ability to conceive, and nature, enchained by the fetters of

sterility, rejected the excitement of healthy childbearing, for her womb refused the seminal liquid an entrance into its languid recess, and her beauty, darkened by the shadow of barrenness, turned to hate Elkanah her husband's affection.<sup>1</sup> A rival fertility opposed her in the childbearing of her sister Peninnah, who as a mother pregnant with frequent conceptions tormented the mind of her unfortunate relative. But observe how God's mercy appeared to heal her melancholy, and how God in His grace did not abandon His role as the sovereign antidote for the afflicted. In her sterility she received but one portion of the sacrifice, and in her grief she murmured at her sister, loaded with the gift of a triple share; though the comfort of her husband found her not unmoved, yet there came to her that ulcerous wound produced by the poison of burning jealousy. Thereafter, as her growing sadness impelled her, she was prostrate in the temple, choking back her tears and masking in silence the prompting of her agitated heart, in silent withdrawal she would knock on one small shaving of the gate of heaven. But see how the Physician, who never sleeps, who requires no vocal reminder but the unveiling of secret thoughts and the hidden depths, wondrously untarnished, of the ear, how He sets up no exchange by words, does not ignore a secretive silence, for in His hands silence gives tongue with clamorous roar and conscience, however hidden it may be, cannot retain its secrets; how He is there to hand to make fruitful the barren sterility, to dry the weeping eyes, to grant supplications, to satisfy the desires of those who yearn, to raise the fallen state of the sick.<sup>2</sup> See how in such a holy and wondrous relationship between the wife who petitioned and the Lord who bestowed, as in tears she begs what she desires and the Lord grants her desires, how Eli the priest intervened and with an overhasty misunderstanding attributed to strong drink the woman's perplexity of mind;<sup>3</sup> but when he realized drinking was not to blame, but that this was the penalty of tears, he lent his aid to the matter she desired, and since God would not speak in His own voice He confirmed what He had promised by the mouth of the priest. So the once enslaved barrenness dwelling in Hannah's womb was driven out, and fruitfulness was ordered to take up its abode in a womb where it had never yet abode. Some force unknown to her enabled her to be a mother, and fruitfulness offered new bargains to the one who had been sterile. Ah, that tears should conceive and prayer be impregnated through the supplication of this weeping wife: she conceived her son in the temple, something she did not achieve by meeting her husband's embraces in the marriage bed. It is thus made clear that when God's help is not vouchsafed, nothing is to be ex-

pected from the gift of nature. But observe that insofar as it behoved the Lord to grant children to those who supplicate Him, the birth of Samuel was brought to pass; prayed for in the temple, conceived in the temple, having before pleased God in his birth, he continued to please Him in his ways. Now therefore the priest Eli was displeased with his sons,<sup>4</sup> and in refusing to spare his offspring did not spare himself; for anyone who is constantly indulgent acquires much blame, and one who does not help in stopping a small segment from collapse drags down with himself all that is sound. Ah, the wondrous and secret decrees of God, for much as His mercy would accommodate itself to distresses, it does not have the means to do so, and much as it is inflamed by the assaults of sinners, the remedy does not lie in striking them down; thus the blame laid upon these two sinners<sup>5</sup> did not excuse the loss of the ark of the covenant, nor mitigate the loss of a thousand innocent victims.<sup>6</sup> Were not such crimes as these two men committed full to overflowing, when they exposed the sacred objects of the sanctified to pollution with the taint of the uncircumcised, and even the numberless excesses of a sinful people had never reached such depths? But, just as in working to make the world God's aim was not to make a universe incapable of working for itself, so His concern is not to allow any part of the sinful to be destroyed through the destructive assaults of the world; He does not seek a goodness of use only to Himself, nor is it for His own benefit that He punishes hostile evil, but He seeks the good on their behalf, and punishes evildoers for their own good; for as you realize by the clear unfolding of events, He is mighty in . . . <sup>7</sup> to condemn the end of evildoers to the penalty of a second death, and to enrich the undeserved death of the good with the gift of eternal life. Notice, finally, that although He decreed that the ark of the covenant should be captured, yet in no way did He hold back His vengeance on those who thus polluted it.<sup>8</sup> He afflicted their posteriors with erupting piles, poisonous sores fetid with matter. The punishment was made to fit the crime and, with victory achieved by the enemy yet fatal to them, the crime became the punishment. Those who wept in torment lacked what the joyful and triumphant had seized, and what had been thought the crowning victory became the tormenting vengeance of retribution: the enemy sought a remedy by the power of which what he had gained could be lost, and considered it torment to go on possessing what he had seized as spoils. At his own loss he made a gift of calves and a cart, shaped in gold the very punishment and its locality, and by the very torment of his victory added to his losses. The ark required to its enemies as they perished what it had lost with

its own fallen supporters. Such was God's anger that He did not spare His own, such was the victory that, once celebrated, it turned its back on their foes. Observe then God's unrevealed plan: one as a boy was molded by the events of his babyhood, the other as an old man was destroyed by his weakened mind; one was called and ordered to be a messenger through his dream concerning Eli<sup>9</sup> and it was pledged him that he should be the high priest, the other having received the message was made to fall lifeless from his seat, and his descendants were banned forever from the priesthood. But it is in fact highly tedious to trace the events in the world at this period. What am I to recall of such an involved record of complications, wherein Samson received as a gift the invincible prize of his long hair, when stronger than a lion, harder than iron, on his own superior to a thousand foes, he weakened enough to be conquered in the toils of Delilah.<sup>10</sup> Her lust could not overthrow those ramparts of his strength, and yet she tore off the Nazarite his God-given hair; and he was banished to the shadows, deprived of his sight, and provided sport for those to whom he had formerly been an object of fear. I leave aside this son of Manoah announced in the statement of God's angel, whom the mother received unbidden, and the father grew afraid to look upon because of the admonition that Israel had earned itself an unsought defender, and the Philistine had found his destroyer.<sup>11</sup> Thousands upon thousands were overthrown by three hundred,<sup>12</sup> and a victory in battle could be celebrated because of the pitcher rather than the sword.

Let me show how all these events are matched with the state of man's life. Do not matters change with the thirty-fifth year of human life? One's sons become a problem: just as you do now find some sons like Samuel to delight their parents, so you now come upon others like Hophni and Phinehas, serving to destroy their father as much as themselves. Regarding the progress of marriage—for the many that barrenness condemns and beauty commends, there are just as many that fruitfulness blesses and ugliness mars. In all these things God's balance is praiseworthy, for it provides consolation as a counter-effect to grief, lest it should penetrate further (*ne plus consumat*), and checks the growth of pride, lest that should swell yet more (*ne plus adsumat*).

## 8 (lacking H)

The previous section, having dealt with the establishment and custom of the judges, leads on to the present section, in which I must detail step by

step the establishment of the kingships and the deeds of the kings; for in this age the thick-skinned obduracy of Judaea and its customary obstinacy reared its stiff neck in intransigence and did not cease to provoke God with its evil deeds; confronting Samuel they requested a king chosen by themselves, and a manmade kingship was asked for by those for whom it was shameful to have God as their king.<sup>1</sup> Thus after Samuel, the consecrated high priest, had put to God the wish of the people—there was no need for an intermediary who could know how to probe His deep secrets, yet tradition demanded that He instruct His priest so that he might either reject or implement the people's will. But observe how one seeking for Kish his father's animals made his blundering search for the she-asses and thereby obtained the kingship, one who according to the Israelites possessed the highest qualifications and yet was a lowly searcher for the most lowly of beasts.<sup>2</sup> How differently and much better did God make His plans than the way in which Saul in his lowliness made his laborious search. For he made his way in search of the priest and yet was only saddened at the loss of his asses; but the priest rejoiced not for the flight of asses but for the grant of kingship. Saul hoped he might return to his father what he had lost, and he found what his father at no time had owned or hoped for. Then the horn<sup>3</sup> consecrated to God's will, wherein both the riches of kingship were filled to overflowing and the secret art of the priest was linked to divine inspiration, persuaded the prophet to bear witness to the compact, and sprinkled his head, little expecting it, with the outpouring which marked the first stage of a royal diadem; and lest there should be only an earthly testimony, he was able to prophesy before he assumed the rule.<sup>4</sup> Then the mighty power of divine providence made known the choice, and as greatly as His majesty grew from the nature of kingship, so did His loftiness exceed all in height. Thereafter, so long as the standard of God's precept was maintained, the beneficiary of kingship both flourished and triumphed victoriously over his enemies. But observe how disobedience, the destroyer of all good, which had eaten into the roots of all good works since the creation of the world, how covetousness, as it had done elsewhere, worked its way into Saul's rule;<sup>5</sup> and just as He first drove out the devil from the heavenly kingdom, then made Adam for the first time an exile from the earthly paradise, then later brought to naught the pursuit of Pharaoh and the chariots of the Egyptians, drunk as they became with the waters of the Red Sea when the salty intoxication of such a drink led them as they drowned to the revelry of hell, so also Saul by his wish for fat flocks and his appetite for fat bulls drove out from his kingship what it had ensnared and entrapped, imposed sentence of death and,

what was twice as bad, replaced the anointed counsellor of the Lord with a familiar spirit.<sup>6</sup> What cause was there then to show mercy to this hostile king? How could he now appear more merciful than God himself and His mercy? But these are your secret mysteries, O God, in which human nature stumbles in ignorance. Agag<sup>7</sup> became the enemy of the Lord, and Saul also became the enemy of the Lord; Saul spared King Agag and so displeased God, David spared Saul and so pleased Him;<sup>8</sup> the one lost the kingdom by showing mercy, the other gained the kingdom by showing mercy. Either the mercy shown by both went beyond God's will and should be condemned, or the indulgence shown by both should be pleasing to Him. But with Saul it was not less the desire for plunder that drove him to maintain his enmity, and the wish to show kindness to the one in his power was no more important than the desire for plunder; when patient tolerance came to David, on the contrary, there was no desire for dominion. Observe, therefore, that David submitted his vengeance to God's mercy, but Saul scorned God's mercy in exploiting his own evil one; for God allowed Saul to be the avenger of his own wrong, while David turned to God to avenge his. Thus the one was raised up by righteous mercy, the other was cast down by unrighteous mercy. Furthermore, David was raised up to dominion as the faithful follower of his Lord, acquired the rule from being the most lowly of shepherds, less forceful than all his brothers; but notice the shepherd's bravery, how he plucked the prey from the jaws of lions, how the rich helmet of Goliath was pierced by the whistling flight of his sling-stone, and how a hundred Philistine foreskins were collected in his honor.<sup>9</sup> How wondrous are your gifts, O God, in such matters, for what You bestow in mighty generosity exceeds even the power of belief. A mere lad became the destroyer of a lion, an unarmed champion triumphed over an armed one, a shepherd exulted over the giant race, unaided he gave Michal, his wife, the dowry of a hundred foreskins, the master's servant succeeded to the master's kingdom. How great your superabundance of grace, O Lord my God, as herein once again its opposition stands firm against the enmity of men. You grant to the undeserving what You have no obligation to grant, and You accept from the ungrateful mighty rebuffs which You in no way deserve. You raised this destitute one from the dung, that he might take his seat with princes;<sup>10</sup> You granted victory to his people, You granted power to the dwellers in his cities; and yet as an adulterer he shared in the crime of murder.<sup>11</sup> He rejoiced at the corpse of an innocent man slain in battle,<sup>12</sup> and the member (*glandula*) of this lustful adulterer roamed at large in another man's bed; I could not



hope to describe the marital exploits which involved so many and such important wives, and yet this lecherer deprived a poor man of his single union with one wife. No restraint tempered the lecherer's mind, no thought of acting like a king, no possession of many wives already, and, what is worse, no trace of any sense of shame. Yet in all these matters what wonderful forbearance on the part of God, whose ways I cannot explain in words or take up with any hope of dealing adequately with them. Being a just man he could not abandon his crime unavenged; being a righteous one he recognized it was to be avenged in his soul; by admonition he was driven to repent, fully punished himself in this life so that he might lessen the punishment through eternity;<sup>13</sup> he renounced for his own wife what he had heaped up for someone else's marriage, and where any further grief and sin remained, his son became the avenger of the father's crime;<sup>14</sup> just as in the itch of sex he had burned with the fire of lust, so now when smitten with the fear of sex<sup>15</sup> he abandoned his rule in flight, relying solely on the witness of what he had once committed in secret. But, my God, why once again should the dispensation of Your decree require such mystery? Why should the offspring of this shameful crime enjoy succession to his father's realm? Was it necessary that Bathsheba, stained by the blackness of so shameful a crime, should consider herself queen when her son was ruling, or that Solomon, shamed by his association with her adulterous womb, should either earn the privilege of building the temple, or delve into the storehouses of wisdom, or become the even more powerful successor to his father's rule? What kind of a father was this? That other destroyer of marriage, that other shedder of blood, where there was no legal wife for the marriage bed, no legitimate union, but the fatal writing of a letter had been the means of procuring the lady and the way to her conquest;<sup>16</sup> but God did what was fitting, showed an undeserved mercy, manifested His indulgence to sinners, and because He is ever good, rewarded good for evil. But see how the son of their sin himself incurred sin, and how the offspring of adultery did not come to a good end. He could speak of trees, from the hyssop to the cedars of Lebanon;<sup>17</sup> his queen from the south<sup>18</sup> could experience his wondrous wisdom, and yet although he built that temple beyond description, ordered it by his own inspiration, assembled it with his skill, put it into operation by his own decisions, adorned it with riches, made it shine with gold and gleam with jewels, yet he reflected in his life whatever innate quality he had taken from nature, and showed in his rule that same fire of lust, revealed in his inborn yearning for the dregs of life.<sup>19</sup> Thus he became an experi-

enced adulterer with concubines, the pursuer of a tribe of wives, the drover of herds of young maidens, a lover of the foreign-born contrary to the ban upon them, and, what was worst of all, in his old age a worshipper of Gentile gods, not in that great wisdom of his but in folly.<sup>20</sup> Why should I mention so many ruins of kings, so many sins of wrongdoing, so many crimes of sinfulness, as when Ahab, rapacious seizer of another's vineyard, received a just punishment suited to his offense,<sup>21</sup> and although he was an eyewitness of a divine miracle when Elijah wrested burning flashes of lightning from the sky and flames whirling over the sacrifice as a witness to the true God, then when he had achieved the destruction of the priests of the groves, the rain clouds, kept away for a three-year absence by the prophet's command, returned in a trice once more, and a shower coming back reclothed with green buds all that had dried up, parched by arid sterility,<sup>22</sup>—while this was proved by so many and so great clear signs, he yet drank in by night the poison of his wife Jezebel's vicious persuasion.<sup>23</sup> But see how God's right hand was turned in vengeance against this idol-worshipping queen, and how she was seen to be devoured in the jaws of swine and scattered in the dung of the stable.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, because the evil deeds of the later kings go beyond the scope of this book, who cannot detect in the resemblances of the few items described the activities of all mankind? Therefore let everyone strive towards what he hopes will be observed in himself.

## 9 (lacking I)

The chronological sequence of events requires that the even tenor of circumstances, preserved into the present age, should not now be lost; for the age past forty expects a section in my work, in which it may rejoice that the limit of its affairs has been reached. I must therefore describe the time when the insurrection of the leaders of the Hebrews and the Maccabees was made. For as God observed that His people had defected and the measure of wrongdoers was filled, when Jezebel gave the priests of the sacred groves preference over God,<sup>1</sup> and Manasseh stained with blood his teeth, which cut like a saw through the bodies of the prophets, and introduced in the temple images not of gods but of demons,<sup>2</sup> burning with anger He drove the Hebrews from their own kingdom, and as they had chosen foreign gods to worship, so as exiles they wandered through the corners of foreign realms. For Nebu-

zaradan, the captain of the royal kitchens, the more to emphasize the reproach and shame of war, that a chosen people distinguished by mighty do-mains could not endure the humiliation of a cook making war on them,<sup>3</sup>—Nebuchadnezzar setting him up with an armed force drove out Zedekiah, the king of the Hebrews, depriving him of the boon of his eyes and binding him along with his people in iron, plundered the temple he had de-filed, polluted the sacred altar, and profaned with heathen sacrifice the ark of the covenant consecrated to the tables of the law which deserved high reverence, likewise the golden vessels which, intended for the reverent use of the priests, became tarnished with the drinking of strong wine by these barbarians. But observe how the dedicated right hand did not cease to work for its accustomed restoration; for it fully armed for war the seven Mac-cabees brothers, sprung of an illustrious race, demonstrating that what the whole sinful people had not been able to do with their king, this small number could perform with the favor of God.<sup>4</sup> How lofty and wondrous, O God, are your secret ways! A sinful people could not cope with a fight-ing cook and surrendered their king to be blinded; but the puny race of the Maccabees, being pleasing to God, held back the whole weight of Nebu-chadnezzar arrayed against them, not only by defending but also by success-fully attacking achieved victory, restoring distinction to the Hebrew now on the offensive, whom he had previously despised and slighted and marked out for the shedding of his blood, whose king he had recently taken out, bound in iron, and reft of his eyes. Human nature may learn from this, what has been shown before this, not to yield to the enemy either when God is on their side or in a time of stress.

Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar's general over a whole devastated region of the earth, had besieged Bethulia, a spacious city of the Hebrews, and as he strove to scale the walls was pressing on its ramparts now encircled by a fearsome army.<sup>5</sup> For in the eyes of the people the certain capture of death awaited them, and gnawing hunger eating at their hollow frames made corpses of the living. No tears for the eye remained for them, no moisture in the mouth, no sap in the limbs;<sup>6</sup> swelling set up in the knees, pallor seized the face, decay gripped the step, whereby dead limbs yet deprived of burial were considered to retain human power only for speaking. Famine had invaded the innermost recesses of the homes, death had laid siege to the doorways, Holofernes laid waste the fields and meadows. What salvation could the oppressed either hope for or seek, when death ruled supreme as it moved over field and home? But observe this glory of women, this chaste maiden, coming forth from the confinement of the walls, emerging as the

one who could work salvation for her people, armed with beauty of countenance, distinguished by modesty of manners, fired by the urging of God, advancing to seize the head of Holofernes. She wandered in safety through the whole battlefield, demanding that the ruler should be choked with a noose. When this was discovered she cleverly proffered smooth words, with pleasant chatter lent her beauteous countenance as a means of seducing this adulterer. One opposed the other, the allure of her eyes and ruinous love on the one hand, a countenance hiding the plan of a deadly noose on the other. See how the ruler was exhausted with drinking, parched with heat, surfeited with strong wine, and thereby made available to the sword his liquor-filled throat. See then how, though no voice announced the coming of warriors, no blood of assassins flowed, yet with all speed battle was joined that night, his head was carried off in her wallet, the woman's trophy was secured, the ruler's couch was emptied, a single maiden became the salvation of the Hebrews, the putting to flight of the Persians,<sup>7</sup> and an undying legend through the centuries till now.<sup>8</sup> But no voice in this conflict announced the clash of warriors, no blood of assassins flowed, yet his head was carried off in her wallet, removed with only the night to witness it.<sup>9</sup> For her comely form had served as the allure in this astonishing exploit, which had secured the head separated from the body, and the salvation of a despairing people.

This also I do not choose to omit, that God the Consoler had raised up Mordecai for the salvation of the Hebrews in captivity.<sup>10</sup> For Esther, the Hebrew maiden chosen to rule, destined to save her people, to raise up her uncle<sup>11</sup> and to bring Haman low, had submitted to this rule. Such, my God, are your illustrious and most awesome unrevealed purposes. For the king<sup>12</sup> was at the time alienated from Vashti his consort, and stretching out his scepter raised up Esther as his wife as she sank down in trembling. But, in truth, Haman, the king's associate in the rule and the spokesman of his secret plans, trembled at the king whom he had deceitfully opposed by whispering for his own ends. See how suddenly Mordecai, condemned to imminent punishment, was brought to favor by a compensatory restoration; and Haman having made ready a gallows for him one night, early next morning found himself awaiting the very same gallows.

### 10 (lacking K)

Having covered the span of Jewish history, which, leaving out ten consecutive letters, I have detailed from the creation of the world to this present

age, wherein just as God's grace revealed itself at work in the beginning, so His anger is manifested in the end, I must now turn to Gentile history, which at one time a favorable fortune has raised up from its spells of folly, at another hostile fortune has in a flash cast down to the brink of the abyss those whom at a happy turn of events it had guided up to the skies. I shall now take up the beginning of this, where for the Jewish dominion I have already reached the end. For Jerusalem was later captured and made subject to the might of Babylon, and through worshipping foreign idols and prostituting its own God it was led captive by a foreign power—it suffered full punishment for its sin and tasted the most bitter fruits, sown in evil, of its error—, for a long period Babylon controlled its might in a state of ferment, until it too experienced the poisonous flavor of what it had seized from the chosen people and the Lord's temple, then straightway voided whatever it had greedily absorbed of this sacred booty along with its own possessions. Certainly it was the avenger of Israelite evildoing, but woe to him who is chosen to be the scourge of evildoers; and just as Jerusalem wept for its relics scattered through the world and to this day not yet restored, so Babylon as it perished also lost to foreigners its own wealth. So fortune, swollen by this upheaval into a boiling rage of turbulence, produced its notorious evil in the little kingdom of Macedon. For Alexander, son of uncertain parentage, rose up, stained with evil, with the doubtful title of being the son of Philip of Macedon.<sup>1</sup> For some writers report his birth was due to a Dictanabus,<sup>2</sup> who in the upsurge of his lust had secretly embraced a magic image of Olympias, while others relate that she produced her venomous child when made pregnant by the scaly, suffocating embrace of a serpent.<sup>3</sup> But there is no need of such tales: since the control of his father Philip fluctuated in these matters, there is no need to dress up the adultery of his mother by inventing names, for she is said to have had a husband to whom few attributes of husbands applied. Thus although from the tyrannous and cruel rule of his father he succeeded to the quite adequate kingdom of Macedon, yet he in his furor pushed his insatiable empire beyond the bounds of the whole world; not content with what his father had seized with murderous tyranny, but reckoning the world all too small for him, he strove for something beyond the world. First, he seized the kingdom of Babylon which had stood firm for a thousand years, loaded as it was with so many conquests and victories over the whole earth. For to it had passed both the glory of Israel and the once famous might of Egypt, to it the preeminence of Sparta and of Athens, and the strength of Scythia, once invincible but now fallen, had yielded. In this spread of dominion, with only twenty thousand, one

hundred eighty thousand casualties are reported in three campaigns, but Babylon had no feeling of loss in such carnage. Who could believe this possible, O Lord my God, ineffable Creator of the whole world? The tally of the dead and dying is beyond count: the occasion of the upheaval in the Parthian domain is not on record. If what one province lost is beyond reckoning, who shall satisfactorily state, O world, your total account? Thus a host of such vast size did not deter the swift-moving ambitions of Alexander in his greed for empire, but without hesitation he would embark upon a campaign quite unprovoked, and find dubious victory over the one he had surprised. In short space he conquered those whose tally goes beyond counting; he vanquished whoever sought to flee him, pursued the fugitive, had the wounded bound with a golden chain of fetters, gave him a burial lacking all pity; his daughters even, like his sisters. . . .<sup>4</sup> As was deserved of one who in violation of his vow to his mother chose rather to be an avenger, and the father of his own sisters, he lost his life, he lost his rule; he showed no shame in delighting to expose the most shameful part of their body when the signs of a child coming to birth were first revealed. Thereafter, not even satisfied with his conquest of the Persian realm, to which the domination of the whole world had contributed, enough to fill even the insatiable chasms of his greed—and even one who up to that point could not be satisfied would not possibly have needed anything after it—, yet he sought out the bounds of India, hitherto unreached by anyone, and penetrated with his burning rapacity limits unknown to our world. First, with a burst of fire he broke up the animals displayed as insignia in battle array and put these beasts to flight with a surge of flame. Thereafter, having taken the Indian king Porus captive, he began to invade the recesses of Colchis.<sup>5</sup> Their gold was spurned by this Macedonian who could not be satisfied with acquiring the whole world. Then naked Bragmones, heat-withered Orientals, sunburnt Passadrae, inhabitants of the Caucasian mountain range, Drangae and Vergetae, people of Hyrcania, Chorasmi and Dahae, Amazons of Ocionitides, all these he fiercely attacked, insolently challenged, and piratically invaded; impetuously he penetrated to Meroë, unknown to our world and bursting with Faleranianlike liquid, beyond the heat of Syennesis; in haste, yet not without premeditation, he overthrew Candace of Ethiopia; fearlessly he faced the Atlantean cataracts hurling down the waters of the Nile.<sup>6</sup> What am I to say of his assaults in attacking the Maeotae, primitive eaters of curds, savage cannibals, naked eaters of fish?<sup>7</sup> As the searcher toiled on he even reached the oracular groves of the Sun and the Moon, which proclaimed

the destruction of his own royal personage.<sup>8</sup> What more can be added? No hidden mysteries of the world, no race shut off in remote corners of the earth, no secluded island of the Atlantic Ocean with its fringes sprayed in surf, but did not stand in awe of Alexander as its ruler, or dread his unexpected attack, or fear his plundering. Who, O Lord my God, so reckless in their passions as he? With his expeditions the world was exhausted, already there was nothing left it might reveal to human eyes, and yet the force of his greed was unsated. What God had been satisfied in creating was thought puny by the endlessly searching Alexander; he would have climbed up to heaven if either the art of using wings or the pathway there had disclosed itself to him. And where he thought the world all too puny for his wanderings, he came to his rest satisfied with three cubits of grave-earth.<sup>9</sup> Human nature may thus learn from him that nothing is to be taken for granted even by the mighty, for death is heir of rich and poor alike. He looked upon the might of Ethiopia and the spread of the Atlas Mountains, upon Oriental fire and Scythian ice. But what did it profit him, to conquer all that was unconquered, and then to succumb to a base disease? Whoever ponders in mind his deeds and his death, can scarcely believe that he himself must die; for one who is set straight by considering other evils, can never be frightened by the evil of death.

## 11 (lacking L)

Once the Persian and Macedonian dominion was broken, behold a short time after Rome raised its head from the upheaval, assuming its power in a shameful and evil beginning.<sup>1</sup> For Rhea, the mother of the twins, her name suited to her work,<sup>2</sup> who yet had not been embraced by the god Mars when giving birth—although if it were Mars, it could not have been the one who was the god—, yet the ancient idle gossip of the pagans had always been accustomed to describe her children as born of that brothel of their gods, dressing up the sins of harlots as divine indiscretions: truly a rocklike and insensate religion, to dress up common causes of sin with its own coloring. Yet Roman history celebrated such an origin, never ceasing to write flowing accounts of their shameful birth, of those exalted by an evil mother, of those produced by a vile nurse, and in its writings never abandoned exploiting

her evil life. Thereupon, lest the first stage originating in this evil deed should lack an evil development, the first foundations of the walls were reddened with the brother's blood, as the beginning of the wondrous city blushed to be dedicated with the gore of fratricide.<sup>3</sup> See too that this was a sanctuary set up for the protection of crimes, and where justice and sanctity should have been pursued, remission was provided for the crimes of evil deeds.<sup>4</sup> The products of crime became its army, and unpunished crime became its senate; and so that the supply of wives should not be out of proportion to the way of life, a seizure of maidens was shamefully carried out.<sup>5</sup> What pleasure could be found in such marriages? The bride wept because she was stolen, her father fumed because he had been robbed, her mother groaned because she was deprived, and lest there should be any pleasure even for the plunderer, the husband was not even assured that a divorce might not be occasioned by subsequent warfare. What am I to say thereafter of that Brutus who for noble motive (*Brutum inbrute*) killed his own sons,<sup>6</sup> of Tarquinius the destroyer of his own marriage to a foreigner when the wife turned a sword upon herself as evidence of his evil, and because she could not live defamed avenged the evil on herself rather than on the blood of the doer of evil?<sup>7</sup> I say nothing of Fabius, murderer rather than husband of Metennia, he who slew his wife when she was affected by a little strong wine, and did sacrifice with her blood within his own family because of an opened winestore.<sup>8</sup> What am I to say of Curtius, that filler of the chasm and of the splitting of the earth?<sup>9</sup> What did it profit him to have filled the abyss on the pretext of knightly honor? The earth would never mend what it had broken, and yet he did not sacrifice his life in vain. Mucius uselessly burnt his right hand, and because he sought to make a spectacle of himself by this futility, lived a futile life shorn of one forearm—thus did foolish vanity make a sacrifice which only served as a punishment for his wretched body and, as may be surmised from his nickname, the ruin of his limbs brought him dishonor.<sup>10</sup> What am I to say of the destruction at Cannae, three hundred times defamed by plunderings, when Carthage wore down the Roman forces and the Cremera was swollen with the blood of dead senators?<sup>11</sup> What of the upheaval of the massacre under Marius, overflowing with the blood of the citizens?<sup>12</sup> The victory of Pompey swept over the poison of Mithridates, over pirate hordes, over the lamenting Tigranes of Armenia, and over that disillusioned captive Vindomarus of Pontus.<sup>13</sup> First, this plunderer seized the wealth of Judaea and put to Roman uses the ornaments of the Lord's temple. What am I to tell of the victories of the Scipios in their triumphant conquest of Car-



thage, when its rich and ancient power perished in war, to the benefit of Rome's military position—for Rome, previously exhausted, recovered by regaining what it had lost, and on the other hand Carthage, previously victorious, but now ravaged, both surrendered what it had seized and lost what it had held?<sup>14</sup> What of the glorious victory over Corinth,<sup>15</sup> the slaughter of the Cimbri, the fury shown the Teutoni;<sup>16</sup> and so as not to pursue every detail: Rome grew by always taking pains over its economy, and so long as it did not spare itself its dominion was effective through the world. Just as Viriathus was sated with blood,<sup>17</sup> so the Carthaginian<sup>18</sup> was bedewed with it; I leave out the crime in Parthia, a leader condemned to a golden death, where greed found by a just punishment what it had sought by an unjust desire, and avarice when it gained those things it desired lost its life in imbibing of them, a novel judgment of the Persians, I declare, that when greed was sated with what it desired the very satiety became the punishment.<sup>19</sup> What of Caesar, who, himself unexhausted in a world exhausted by so many successive triumphs, did not spare the blood of the citizens when he failed to find the one he had driven oversea, little believing that he could rule half the world unless he could take it all by having his son-in-law slain?<sup>20</sup> Thus on every occasion the Roman empire, nourished on its own and foreign blood, either was depleted by the wrongs it was obliged to commit, or escaped depletion by those it deserved to receive; and always it grew by the ruin of other nations or more often by its own decline.

## 12 (lacking M)

There has now been reached in my little work a new and greatly longed-for age for a world illumined by a radiant arrival, one for which must be described in my hastening work the delectable gift of Christ's birth, whence indeed light shone in darkness, glory arose in the highest, peace in heaven, and bliss for the righteous.<sup>1</sup> View it as the angel announced, the shepherd heeded, the Chaldean acknowledged, and Herod trembled with fear.<sup>2</sup> Why then do you falter, O tongue? Will you be silent when faced with the coming of your Creator? By what sin are you restrained, if you remain silent when the very angels give tongue? Behold there falls a dew of words shimmering on the event, if hidden as to its annunciation. The proclaimer of a

heavenly union filled the ears of the Virgin, but her modesty was not to be imperiled.<sup>8</sup> He announced a union in which neither the divinity of the father was dishonored nor the purity of the mother violated; through her ear came the immaculate conception, fullness grew in her womb but there was no oppressive weight; and so the birth came about with the emblems of modesty untouched. But see how in this pledge what the holy messenger announced may be recognized. "Hail," he said, "full of grace,"<sup>4</sup> and what followed this. I confess that in dealing with this I was astounded at the superiority of rank the heavens maintained in their promises. See, as I see, how no explanation was thus far made to the very one who required it, no revelation from such wording to the betrothed, no hint of the amount of the marriage portion; and yet by the fruit of grace the Virgin was with child. But see how the excellence of the dowry was now declared and how the bearer of the promise made it known. The angel said: "The Holy Ghost shall light upon you"<sup>5</sup>—observe the unchallengeable meaning of the words. And this too: "Of his kingdom there shall be no end"<sup>6</sup>—which was a dowry far greater than this last one, and granted to one who should rule through eternity. After it the dawn cast its divine rays over our age; it dispelled from our minds whatever had grown dark with dense shadow; sadness retreated, distress fled, lest they should be found standing in the path of the advancing king. O pure and welcome event, in that, when the king came down to earth, one mightier than kings had appeared, in that God had manifested Himself to the Jews, in that unutterable wisdom had deflated the scribes and the Pharisees; yet He appeared to lowly shepherds, He was a light from heaven to the Chaldeans, in His humility He taught fishermen. The power of divine salvation was made available to the sick, and His miraculous doings shone through the world. Then, too, the water at the marriage feast was made potent as red wine;<sup>7</sup> the waves of Tiberias were hardened to support the feet of Peter,<sup>8</sup> the clay was made to produce eyesight through His life-giving spittle,<sup>9</sup> at the touch of Christ's garments an issue of blood was made to dry up and held in permanent check,<sup>10</sup> pardon for an adulterous land was put on record,<sup>11</sup> at His word the filth of leprosy was healed,<sup>12</sup> the crown of a thief was earned by crucifixion.<sup>13</sup> And of further matters: corpses walked on their own feet, beds were carried by the very persons who had lain sick upon them;<sup>14</sup> a fish presented Peter with coins when he had no money, and when cooked for meals, in a state where there was no life in it, began to grow larger.<sup>15</sup> At His word the sickness He had driven out faded away;<sup>16</sup> at His word uproar grew calm and lost its force, at His word the turbulent seas

grew smooth;<sup>17</sup> and, not to mention other things, nature itself could not become what He did not wish it to be, nature itself could not refuse to find the power to achieve what He ordained. But after this, in order for the full measure of Jewish anger to reach a climax, spite grew from goodness, and because blindness had taken the light from clear vision, the very Bestower of light became the object of His enemies' malice: truly this was the ruler of darkness, who had no doubt of the evil existing in the creatures of his molding. The embodiment of eternal virtue was scourged, the Savior of the whole world was spit upon, and God Himself was pilloried by being hung on the cross.<sup>18</sup> Who would dare to say this, or believe those who did say it, that the Jews could be roused to take such risks, or show their malice by such reprisals, or grow so blind to such goodness, that they could do this thing to their own God? But that He died as a son of the Jewish race, and rose again as an adoptive son of the Gentiles, was it not because the one race showed itself lacking in all gratitude for such goodness, and the other emerged in possession of a grace not purchased by any previous display of favor?

### 13 (lacking N)

Meanwhile, it had become necessary in strict time sequence to include a description of the acts and lives of the Roman emperors; but because it was shameful to give them precedence over God or the apostles, I shall shortly relate in a final passage what I have passed over. And so after the Jews pilloried on the cross the means of salvation and abandoned the cure for death whom they should have the more greatly esteemed, the exile from God was brought to an end and His wandering Son was restored to His side. Immediately He instructed His learned apostles in the faith, set them up as preachers of the heavenly word, glowing at the flaming touch of the Holy Spirit, and chose them as ministers of His baptism.<sup>1</sup> Immediately in the granary of heaven the true harvest succeeded the scattered chaff; the reaping ended in tears but the fruit of the press was gathered in joy. The net was cast, the final catch was hauled in, leaving behind the salt seawater, and from it Christ fed on dishes dried and drained of sin, and received them as prepared in heaven, mingled with honeycomb.<sup>2</sup> Observe then that the net was cast on the right side for its catch and a fixed number was hauled in, in that

it included the ten commandments of the law and seven spirits were possessed by the final state of life,<sup>3</sup> and in the final reckoning this amounted to seventeen. The apostle Peter (*Petrus*), to whom was given the key of the gate of heaven and by whom the flock of sheep was commanded to be led to its pastures, who received a double gift, whereby he might tend the sick world by applying the oil of baptism and the wine of propitiation, established the church on firm rock (*petram*), and thereby threw down the gate of death.<sup>4</sup> He bound what he willed in heaven, he loosed what he ordained on earth. This is the commandment which the loving associate of Christ received: a dutiful shepherd carries a lost sheep on his shoulders, and snatches from the jaws of the wolf the one that has strayed.<sup>5</sup>

Paul, as he kicked against the pricks, struggle though he might, was snatched away to be an apostle, when he sought to see he was struck down by a blessed blindness; the bedazzling blindness fell from his eyes, and his inflamed hostility turned to gentle persuasion.<sup>6</sup> What generous grace on the Physician's part, when at His sole command the scaly blindness was dispersed and the obstinacy of his heart was softened! The rapacious wolf became a sheep, or rather a young lamb, and where he had raged with malice he abounded in grace: those whom he sought out to torture by taking up their bills of indictment, he afterwards taught with letters of exhortation. A fuller struck down James with his club and, where he had once begged people for something he could beat, took upon himself this deed out of hatred in the place of those responsible; this fuller being a Jew with whom had been left a whole pile of dirty laundry.<sup>7</sup> The Ethiopian eunuch believed Philip and, purified by baptism, went on his happy way rejoicing.<sup>8</sup> He departed from there bearing the grace of belief and faith, bound for the ends of the earth where the gospel had penetrated with difficulty. Peter was cast into prison in the city and solely by prayer and the magical flight which came to him was borne away aloft to the sky,<sup>9</sup> and he was able to appear again and again in the form of a spirit, though eventually he perished forever in the face of death. The dead Dorcas was restored to those who grieved for her, and her recovery from death was effected through mercy.<sup>10</sup> The lock of the prison doors was broken open and Peter freed from becoming a spectacle before Herod and the Jews.<sup>11</sup> Sapphira with her husband cheated on the property they had promised, and because she avoided giving it all, lost by her stealth what she had been able to enjoy.<sup>12</sup> Peter saw a vessel lowered to him from heaven, full of various alluring foods of the world about to be offered to the apostle, and when he thought that if he ate of them it would

be an offense forbidden to Jews, he was told that whatever the liberality of God in His grace bade be set before him was fully purified for a Christian to receive.<sup>13</sup> Thus Christ, who also purified the hearts of His people with the water of baptism, purifies food for them. By Peter's stretching out his right hand a lame man was restored to a perfect ability to walk, and one who had been confined from boyhood to the one place, where he had only sat, now as a grown man learned to move and walk with unimpeded step.<sup>14</sup> From their envy of this miracle the Jews burned with poisonous jealousy, and those who should have offered thanks to God rather swallowed the baited hook of spite. Paul was threatened with death when Apollos, the proclaimer of things to come, lost his claim to divine powers; and because his spirit strongly pursued the apostles with outcries, he was cast down to make him cease.<sup>15</sup> Pharisee was matched with Sadducee, and Paul was dragged away from the midst of their turmoil, as the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead and the Pharisees positively asserted what they denied; by this means the apostle regained his freedom from the place where wrangling preoccupied his investigators.<sup>16</sup> The casting of lots handed over (*tradit*) the duty of an apostle to Matthias, and the betrayal (*traditio*) of Judas stretched a noose for himself.<sup>17</sup> Thaddaeus was sent to Abgar to heal his disease of gout, and, as Christ's letter had previously promised, the sufferer restored to health delighted in this boon: long-felt suffering left the king's limbs, and the sound health which had sped away and divorced itself from him as a boy returned to delight him once more as a man.<sup>18</sup> About the third hour, when the apostles were gathered together, the promise of the Savior was fulfilled and with a flash of fire the grace of the spirit fell upon them all.<sup>19</sup> Whatever the spirit declared was announced by the lips of the apostles, and Medes, Elamites, and Persians understood what they heard. By some this was considered mere (*mera*) drunken babbling, and yet it was rather a wondrous (*mira*) God-given power.

#### 14 (lacking O)

At this point in this rapidly moving narrative, the lives of the Roman emperors and potentates must be set in order, and the descent of their august power described. First then, Caesar,<sup>1</sup> from the time that he established

the empire, held first rank in the whole world; for the divine birth of Christ lent its support to his happy state, and he was able to conquer hitherto unconquerable tracts of the earth. Just as the whole free world arose from his rule, so the Deity was worthy of being born in the territory he ruled. For he first in imperial majesty set the bounds of the whole world, with wondrous success conquered the islands of Britain situated beyond the Atlantic ocean, emerged triumphant from the struggle at the battle of Actium,<sup>2</sup> and induced Cleopatra, the vanquished queen of Egypt, to offer to snakes her breast for suckling.<sup>3</sup> He first held or initiated absolute rule in perpetuity and a golden throne in the city of Rome. Fearlessly he stopped the gates of the temple of warlike Janus being forever kept shut.<sup>4</sup> He spread the recognition of his authority beyond the distant fringes of India. And to cover anything left out, he decreed a full account and census be taken of the world as it is bounded by the curves of the sea.<sup>5</sup> These, O God, are your secret mysteries, these the eternal gifts of your sanctified birth; yet it was not thought fitting that any share in ruling should be held by the King whom You brought to lowly birth, that God should be the ruler of Caesar as Caesar was the ruler of the world.

Then, to make clear the divine power, notice what happened later. Do you not observe how the empire grew weaker and weaker under other men, and successively more corrupt in later times through debauchery and apathy? Think of Caligula<sup>6</sup> fishing with gold nets and purple lines; think of that disgrace to the family of the Caesars, that besotted ruler, storehouse of evil, who destroyed any man he disliked and took any woman he felt he deserved, who stained his rule with crimes, and either planned or carried out such shameful acts as stuffing his intestines with tadpoles so that they squirmed about with distended rumbling and groaning entrails—he performed exactly what the endless saga of his evil ascribes to him. Thence virtue languished, broken by debauchery, and orderly discipline vanished, enflamed by insidious allurements. Yet the degeneration caused by such disaster did not succeed in affecting all the line of Augustus, for there were some in whom this lost virtue was restored and concern for spiritual things was reawakened with its watchful flame. For Vespasian,<sup>7</sup> chosen by Christ to avenge the injustice done Him, did avenge the evil of the Jews, brought to an end the Israelite iniquity, and yet did not condemn to permanent exile the remnant who sought to return from the bondage of captivity. Ending the obstinate and evil resistance of the Hebrews against God with an execrable famine, he prolonged their wretchedness, so that one would devour the babe hang-

ing from the milk-giving breasts of its starving mother, and (what an unfeeling brute animal would never do to its own young) a mother, reduced to utter savagery, consume her own offspring. These are the violent evils, my God, permitted by your wrath, that hunger should overcome natural kinship and a starving mother eat of her own offspring. Yet this punishment of the insurgents by God was just, for Judaea maintained in its sons this obduracy which held out in its defense to the very sentence to crucifixion: and they who had scorned to receive the flesh of the Son of God, prepared for food the flesh of their own children. Notice, therefore, that they had once ridiculed the five thousand satisfied by five loaves,<sup>8</sup> and now—such their life had become—in their hunger they tasted the flesh of their own children.<sup>9</sup> First, a ruler of the Jews<sup>10</sup> slaughtered the infants as he sought to take Christ, then a second such as he, seeking to avenge Christ, gave up infants to be chewed by their parents. What shall I set down of the swelling hostility of Aurelian<sup>11</sup> against God, softened by the effect of one miracle? For when the soldier . . . ,<sup>12</sup> the air grew thick, the fogs filled with mist, and fire itself, incredible as it may seem, is said to have given rise to water. Fire lost its nature by turning into wetness; Phoebus, the sun, sweated moisture in its rays, and as the Deity commanded, its flame turned to rain and caused terror by having unlooked-for drops of water in its fires. Thus might pagan obduracy learn that even the elements cannot assert their nature when Christ holds it captive to His will. Thus a shower of rain was a parching draught for the thirsty, and the flood of the pagan persecutor turned to flame. For he had published binding edicts against the Christian faith, affixed penalties, and signed public decrees for the crucifixion of the martyrs. These fires Your shower of rain, O God, put out, by the very same means the imperial prosecution was ended, and the scorching by armed force turned to refreshing moisture. What shall I set down concerning the gentle Nerva,<sup>13</sup> the blessed Trajan,<sup>14</sup> and Philip, who first joined in one the official cult of Augustus and the benefits of Christianity?<sup>15</sup> I must omit the insane tyranny of Julian<sup>16</sup> which surged out against the churches of God in wild onslaughts, when the opportunity was granted to the Jews of restoring their temple, and an imitation of the temples of Venus was considered fit for adoption. But the curling flame both destroyed in its rapid eddies the very cement applied to these walls of the Jews, and showed marks in their tapestries like the sign of the cross; and the presence of the Babylonian martyr<sup>17</sup> prevented the transference to Venus. Valentinian<sup>18</sup> scorned the soldier's sword belt and accepted the gift of an imperial crown.

## Prologue

1. *Pieridum*, the nine daughters of Pierus, king of Emathia in Macedonia, to whom he gave the names of the Muses; but the Hesperides are meant, see the introductory note.

2. Two writers named Xenophon are known, but neither was a poet; see the introductory note.

## 1

1. See Gen. 3.
2. Gen. 4.
3. Compare Phil. 3:19.
4. Job 1:21, Ecclesiastes 5:15.
5. Luke 1:52.

## 2

1. Gen. 5:24.
2. Gen. 6-9.
3. Gen. 6:2-4.
4. Gen. 6:8-9.
5. Gen. 4:1-8.
6. Gen. 8:6-12.
7. The notion of the Church as mother is probably taken from Tertullian, *Ad martyras* 1.1, and *De oratione* 2.6; see J. Plumpe, *Mater ecclesia* (Washington, D.C., 1943).
8. Gen. 9:20-21.
9. Gen. 6:16.

## 3

1. Semiramis (called Sameramis by Fulgentius) was the legendary Assyrian queen of Babylon and Nineveh (described by Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and thence Orosius, whose account, *Historiae adversum paganos* 1.4, 2.2-3, Fulgentius follows in certain details), who continued her rule after the death of her husband, King Ninus, and is perhaps to be associated with the Sannuramat of history who ruled Assyria as regent from 810 to 805 B.C. Semiramis was credited with the conquest of Persia, Libya, and Ethiopia, and with the enlargement of the walls of Babylon and their hanging gardens which were one of the wonders of the ancient world.

2. The building of the Tower of Babel, from Gen. 11:1-9, where in the construction brick and slime are mentioned, the latter presumably implying bitumen. Puteoli, modern Pozzuoli, was a port on the bay of Naples (mentioned in Acts 28:13); presumably the lava and pumice deposits from nearby Vesuvius provided suitable material for brick-making, though Fulgentius is, of course, guilty of anachronism in associating the place with ancient Babylon.



3. Orosius 1.2.
4. Orosius 1.4.7.
5. Orosius 1.4: "And barbarous Scythia, until then peaceful and innocent."

4

1. Gen. 12.
2. Compare Heb. 11:8.
3. Gen. 17.
4. Gen. 22.
5. Rom. 4:9-13.
6. Prov. 1:7, 9:10, similarly Ps. 110 (111):10, Ecclesiasticus 1:16.

5

1. Jacob, meaning "supplanter," was the younger, and Esau, "hairy," the elder; see Gen. 25:24-26.
2. I Cor. 2:16, Rom. 11:34, compare Wisdom of Solomon 9:13, "What man can know the counsel of God?"
3. Gen. 25:29-34.
4. Rebekah the mother, and Isaac the father; see Gen. 27.
5. Gen. 33.
6. Gen. 29.
7. See section 4 above.
8. Luke 1:52.

6

1. I Cor. 1:24.
2. Exod. 1:8-14.
3. Exod. 1:22.
4. Exod. 2.
5. Compare Ecclesiasticus 11:4, "For the works of the lord are marvellous, and his doings are hidden from men."
6. Exod. 19:16.
7. Exod. 3.
8. Exod. 3:7.
9. Exod. 7:10.
10. *Cynomist*, for *κυνάμνισα*, "dog-fly."
11. Exod. 12.
12. Exod. 14.
13. Exod. 16.
14. *Bremi*, for *ἐρήμιος*, "desert, abandoned."
15. Deut. 31:7.

## 7

1. I Sam. 1.

2. Ezek. 21:26.

3. The original of this sentence (Helm, p.151, 20-24) serves as a notable example of Fulgentius's remorseless striving for antithesis, alliteration, and assonance: "Ecce enim inter tam sacra admirandaque commercia mulieris petentis et domini concedentis, dum dolens quae desiderat quaerit et dominus desiderata concedit, sacerdos interuenit et inconsideratione praepropera merorem mentis merulentiam credit mulieris."

4. I Sam. 2:22-25.

5. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli.

6. I Sam. 4.

7. Lacuna assumed.

8. I Sam. 4-6.

9. I Sam. 3.

10. Judges 14, 16.

11. Judges 13.

12. Led by Gideon, Judges 7, 8.

## 8

1. I Sam. 8.

2. I Sam. 9.

3. The vial of holy oil.

4. I Sam. 10.

5. I Sam. 15.

6. I Sam. 28.

7. King of the Amalekites.

8. I Sam. 24.

9. I Sam. 16-18.

10. Ps. 112 (113):7-8.

11. II Sam. 11.

12. Uriah the Hittite.

13. II Sam. 12.

14. II Sam. 16.

15. I Kings 1:1-4.

16. II Sam. 11:14-15.

17. I Kings 4:33.

18. The daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh; see I Kings 3:1, 9:16, 11:1.

19. I Kings 6-10.

20. I Kings 11.

21. Ahab, king of Samaria, who seized Naboth's vineyard; see I Kings 21.

22. I Kings 16-18.

23. I Kings 19.
24. II Kings 9:33-37.

9

1. I Kings 18:19.
2. II Kings 21.
3. II Kings 25, Jer. 39.
4. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers; see apoc. I Macc. 2 ff.
5. Apoc. Judith 2 ff.
6. Judith 7:19-22.
7. *Recte* Assyrians.
8. Judith 8:32.
9. This sentence echoes almost word for word the one just above, and is presumably an inadvertent repetition.
10. Esther 1 ff.
11. *Recte* cousin; see Esther 2:7.
12. Ahasuerus, probably identical with King Xerxes of Persia who reigned 485-465 B.C.

10

1. Alexander the Great, 356-23 B.C., son of Philip II of Macedon, died 336, and Olympias. In what follows Fulgentius may be using details from Orosius, 3.16, and the 4th-century *Itinerarium Alexandri* attributed to Julius Valerius; the hostility shown to Alexander was traditional, but in view of the previous section there may be an echo specifically of apoc. I Macc. 1:1-7, especially 3, "And he made his way to the ends of the earth and despoiled a multitude of nations." For the career and campaigns of Alexander, see W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1948).
2. The Nectanebus of the pseudo-Callisthenes, whose Egyptian version of the *Romance of Alexander* embodies the legend that Alexander's father was Nectanebo, the last of the Pharaohs, who consorted with Olympias in the guise of Jupiter Ammon. Fulgentius is the first to incorporate this legend into Latin literature; see G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, ed. D. J. A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956; repr., 1967), pp.235-36, 337-39.
3. See Valerius, 1.2-6.
4. A lacuna is assumed. The allusion, as Orosius makes clear (3.16.9), is to Alexander's treatment of Darius the last king of Persia (died 330), who had been bound in golden fetters by his nearest kin; Alexander buried him without honor and held captive both his mother, wife, and young daughters.
5. Latin *Fasiacae*, people of the river Phasis in Colchis which flows into the eastern Black Sea.
6. The list of tribes appears to be largely compiled from Valerius, 3.10, and Orosius, 3.18.5, 7, 11, the latter naming Hyrcani, Mardi, Amazons, Drangae, Euergetae, Parimae, Parapameni, Adaspaii, Chorasmi, Dahae, "and other tribes of the Cau-

casian range." The Bragmones seem to be identical with Brahmins (Brahmins), the priestly caste of the Hindus; possibly Fulgentius knew of a work *De moribus Brachmanorum* (ed. in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 17.1167 ff.) traditionally attributed to St. Ambrose (died 397), in fact a free version of part of a work in Greek on the subject of India by the Galatian monk Palladius (died ca. 430). The *De moribus* and the Ambrosian authorship come up for discussion in a later age in Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* 2. Of the other peoples and regions in Fulgentius's list, for Orientals the original has *Eoas*, for *ews*, "the dawn, the east"; the Passadrae may possibly be the people of Pasargada, one of the royal cities of Persia; the Drangae were people of Arcia in eastern Persia, neighbors of the Parthians; Hyrcania lay on the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea; the Chorasmii were from Sogdiana on the lower Oxus; the Dahae or Dahai were nomadic Scythian peoples living east of the Caspian; the Amazons were traditionally associated with Pontus, and the curious form Oclonitides may represent a corruption of the full name (Pontus) Euxinus, for the Black Sea; Meroë lay in upper Egypt, in a region famed for its strong wine, see *Mythologies* 2.12; Syennesis was a common name for the kings of Cilicia in Asia Minor; and by Atlantic is meant Libyan or Egyptian. Vergetae, if for Orosius's Euergetae, may represent a misunderstanding on Fulgentius's part: Euergetes occurs as a title of honor given by the Greek states to those from whom they had received benefits, and most famously as a cognomen, *εὐεργέτης*, "the benefactor," of the Egyptian King, Ptolemy VIII (died 116 B.C.), the brother-husband of Cleopatra; however, according to Quintus Curtius (Rufus, 1st century A.D.), *Historiae Alexandri magni* 7.3.1 (ed. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classics [1946], 2:142), Evergetae was a new name for the Arimaspi of northern Scythia, mentioned there alongside the Drangae.

7. The Maeotae were Scythian peoples of Lake Maeotis, the modern Sea of Azov. For "eaters of curds" the Latin has *thyrofagos*, for *τυρός*, "cheese," and *φάγος*, "eater"; "cannibals" is *anthropofagos*, for *ἄνθρωπος*, "man," and *φάγος*; "eaters of fish" is *ictiofagos*, for *ἰχθύς*, "fish," and *φάγος*.

8. The most famous occasion for Alexander consulting the oracles was his visit in 331 to the temple and oracle of Juppiter Ammon at Siwa in the Libyan desert. There the priests proclaimed him to be the son of the god; see Orosius, 3.16.

9. Three cubits, somewhat less than six feet. The end of Alexander became a traditional occasion for moralizing: "Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust," as Hamlet says in the churchyard (5.1). The anonymous 12th-century continuation of Lamprecht's *Alexanderlied* in Middle High German verse ends: "Of all that he ever conquered, he retained nothing more than seven feet of earth, like the most wretched man ever to enter the world;" the 14th-century *Gesta Romanorum*, tale 31, has: "At the death of Alexander the philosophers who came and gazed at his golden tomb each uttered a maxim such as, 'Yesterday the whole world did not suffice for Alexander, today three or four yards of cloth suffice for him,'" see E. Bourne, in C. F. Fiske, ed., *Vassar Mediaeval Studies* (New Haven, 1923), pp.373-74; in the medieval *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 33, the Gymnosophists rebuke Alexander for his ambition, and remind him he shares the common lot of mankind; see further Cary (note 2 above) pp.98-99 (Cary reprints this chapter of Fulgentius from Helm's ed., pp.369-70). The same notion was frequently applied to any great hero or conqueror brought by death to a few feet of earth. Compare, e.g., the epitaph on Lichas sometimes found added to Petronius's *Satyricon*, 115: "A house five feet long, in which a noble body has sought a little earth"; that on William the Conqueror in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E), annal 1087: "He who was once a mighty king, and lord of many a land, was left of all the land with noth-

ing save seven feet of ground"; also Hamlet's words on the lawyer and on poor Yorick; Prince Hal's on the dead Hotspur, *Henry IV*, Part 1, 5.4; and Mark Antony's on the fallen Caesar, *Julius Caesar* 3.1.

11

1. The traditional date for the founding of Rome is 753 B.C., well before, not shortly after, the empire of Alexander.

2. Latin *Rea* for Rhea, perhaps following Orosius, 6.1.14, that is, the Rhea Silvia or Rhea Ilia of the Romans, mother of the twins Romulus and Remus by the god Mars, but also taken here as *rea*, "evil, criminal."

3. The slaying of Remus by Romulus.

4. Romulus made the new city a refuge for runaway slaves and murderers.

5. There being no women in the community of Rome, the Sabine maidens were carried off as wives.

6. Lucius Junius Brutus, regarding his country more highly than his children, put to death his two sons for their part in the attempt to restore the Tarquin dynasty, which he had expelled from Rome.

7. Alluding to the usurper and tyrant Tarquinius Superbus, banished from Rome in 510 B.C., and to the death of Lucretia, wife of his cousin Tarquinius Collatinus (seemingly confused with him by Fulgentius), who after being outraged by Superbus's son Sextus stabbed herself to death, Superbus's banishment being engineered by Brutus to avenge her.

8. Latin *ynotete*, for *oinothekē*, "wine chest or cellar"; Pliny, *Natural History* 14.13, dealing with tragedies produced by wine, relates that "the wife of Egnatius Maetennus was clubbed to death by her husband for drinking wine from the vat, and Romulus acquitted him on the charge of murder"—a similar reference is found in Valerius Maximus's collection, *Memorabilia* 6.3.9 (whence Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, 460–63, on "Metellius, the foule cherl"), and in Tertullian's *Apology* 6.4. Pliny then goes on to another anecdote: "Fabius Pictor has written in his *Annals* that a matron was starved to death by her relatives for having broken open the casket containing the keys of the wine-cellar." It looks as if Fulgentius has confused the names in the two stories in making Fabius the husband and Metennia the wife. In his *Explanation of Obsolete Words* 58, he alludes to Mettenia's strong wine, probably with the like confusion.

9. The legend went that in 362 B.C. the earth in the Roman forum opened into a great chasm; the soothsayers having declared that it could be filled only by throwing in Rome's greatest treasure, the noble youth Manlius Curtius mounted his steed in full armor and, saying that Rome possessed no greater treasure than a brave citizen, leaped into the abyss, whereupon the earth closed over him; see Orosius, 3.5.

10. The Roman Gaius Mucius came to Porsena's camp to kill him, and when caught thrust his right hand into the fire, thereafter being known as Scaevola, "left-handed"; see Orosius, 2.5.

11. Cannae in Apulia was the scene of Hannibal's defeat of the Romans in 216 B.C. By the Cremera, a tributary of the Tiber in Etruria, lay the site of the fortress wherein all but one of the three hundred members of the patrician clan of the Fabii were wiped out by the Veientes in 477 B.C. Fulgentius appears to have confused two widely separated events. His "three hundred times" is literally "by a measure of

the fingers taken in threes" (*terno modio digitorum*), that is, 3 times 10 or a multiple.

12. The Roman general Gaius Marius, 157–86 B.C., after the famous incident of his "sitting in the ruins of Carthage," purged Rome of the aristocratic supporters of his enemy Sulla.

13. Pompey the Great cleared the Mediterranean of pirates in 67 B.C., in the next year defeated the long-lived King Mithridates VI of Pontus, celebrated for his acquired immunity from poisons, and received the submission of King Tigranes of Armenia; a Vindomarus "of Pontus" may have been involved in these events, but there may be confusion with the celebrated Vindomarus, chieftain of the Aedui in Gaul, who was favored by Julius Caesar but later joined in the great Gaulish revolt of 52 B.C.

14. Scipio Africanus the elder secured the submission of Carthage in 201 B.C., and Scipio Africanus the younger captured Carthage in 146 B.C.

15. Corinth was destroyed by the Roman Lucius Mummius in 146 B.C., and recolonized by Caesar in 46 B.C.

16. The Celtic race of the Cimbri was decisively defeated by Marius in northern Italy in 101 B.C., and their Germanic allies the Teutoni or Teutones were cut to pieces the year before by Marius near Aix.

17. Viriathus, the bandit-leader of Lusitania, modern Portugal, defeated a succession of Roman armies in 149 B.C., but was assassinated nine years later; see Orosius, 5.4, where the juxtaposition of Viriathus and Mithridates may explain Fulgentius's confused geography.

18. That is, Hannibal.

19. Probably an allusion to the fate of the Roman general Aquilius, captured after the battle of Protomachium in 88 B.C. by King Mithridates VI of Pontus, already alluded to above, who put him to death by pouring molten gold down his throat; the story is briefly given by Pliny, *Natural History*, 33.14.

20. His enemy and erstwhile sharer of the Roman dominions, Pompey, who had married Julius Caesar's daughter Julia.

## 12

1. Luke 19:38.
2. Matth. 2, Luke 1, 2.
3. Luke 1:26–38.
4. Luke 1:28.
5. Luke 1:35.
6. Luke 1:33.
7. John 2:1–11.
8. Matth. 14:25–32.
9. John 9:6.
10. Matth. 9:20–22.
11. John 8:3–11.
12. Matth. 8:2–4, Mark 1:40–45.
13. Matth. 27:38.

14. Mark 2:1-12, John 5:1-15.
15. Matth. 17:27.
16. Luke 7:1-10.
17. Mark 4:35-41.
18. Matth. 27.

13

1. Matth. 28:19, Acts 2.
2. Luke 5:1-11, 24:41-42, John 21:1-14.
3. Rev. 5:6.
4. Matth. 16:18-19.
5. Luke 15:4-5, John 21:15-17.
6. Acts 9:1-22.

7. Eusebius (*Historia ecclesiastica* 2.23.18) takes from Hegesippus this account of the martyrdom of James "the Just," the brother of Jesus, at the hands of the Jews in Jerusalem (transl. K. Lake, *Eusebius: The Eccles. History*, Loeb Classics [1926] 1:175): "And a certain man among them, one of the laundrymen [who used fuller's earth], took the club with which he used to beat out the clothes, and hit the just on the head, and so he suffered martyrdom."

8. Acts 8:26-39.
9. Acts 5:17-25.
10. Acts 9:36-42.
11. Acts 5:19.
12. Acts 5:1-10.
13. Acts 11:5-10.
14. Acts 3, 4.
15. Apparently a confusion of Acts 13:6-11, 18:24-28, and 19:13-16.
16. Acts 23:6-10.

17. Matth. 27:5, Acts 1:15-26; compare also Eusebius *H.E.* 2.1.1, transl. Lake, 1.103: "Matthias was the first to be chosen to the Apostolate instead of the traitor Judas."

18. Eusebius (*H.E.* 1.13.1-22) takes "from the archives at Edessa" an episode devoted to an exchange of letters, between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus, which he quotes as verbatim. Abgar begs for aid against some terrible disease, and Jesus promises to send a disciple after his ascension; when this had taken place, the apostle Thomas despatched Thaddaeus, one of the seventy disciples, who effected a miraculous cure on the king and, among others, on a man called Abdus who was cured of gout. Fulgentius echoes this tradition, additionally confusing Abgar and Abdus. Eusebius, writing in the early 4th century, has clearly incorporated an apocryphal story, one which perhaps anticipates events of the 2d century, during which a later Abgar (IX), ruler of Edessa or Osroene in 179, became the first Christian king. Some indication of the period in which Fulgentius wrote may be seen in the possibility that the Abgar-Jesus letters were condemned as spurious by Pope Gelasius I in 495, and would not have been accepted so uncritically much later than that year.

19. Acts 2.

1. The emperor Augustus, who ruled from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.
2. In 31 B.C.
3. Cleopatra killed herself in 30 B.C.
4. That is, established a general peace; see Orosius, 6.3.
5. See Luke 2:1-3.
6. Emperor from 37 to 41 A.D. Orosius, 7.7, following Suetonius, more accurately assigns to Nero, not Caligula, the habit of fishing with gold nets and purple lines (similarly Chaucer, *Monk's Tale*, 2475-76, associates gold nets with Nero).
7. Emperor from 68 to 79 A.D.
8. Matth. 14:19-21.
9. This allusion echoes, in somewhat fanciful and garbled form, the horrific story of a Jewish mother named Mary, who ate her own child during the famine of the siege of Jerusalem under Vespasian, first related by Josephus later in the 1st century (*Bellum Judaicum* 6.3, 4), and reproduced by Eusebius (*H.E.* 3.6.21-28), in the early 4th. To judge by his previous use of Eusebius, Fulgentius took the episode from him rather than direct from Josephus, as Helm implies (p.177).
10. Herod; see Matth. 2:16.
11. Emperor from 270 to 275, Helm (p.178) referring to the incident in Orosius, 7.7 ff. But this involves a big jump forward in the chronology, and Fulgentius's form *Aureliani*, if modelled on *Αυρήλιον*, may allude rather to Marcus Aurelius, emperor from 161 to 180, and to a famous event recorded by Eusebius (*H.E.* 5.5.1-7), from the earlier persecution of Christians under his rule: while fighting the Germanic tribe of the Quadi, 174 A.D., Aurelius's army was oppressed by thirst, but some legionaries prayed in Christian fashion and miraculously "lightning drove the enemy to flight and destruction, and a shower falling on the army which had prayed to God, refreshed them all when they were on the point of destruction from thirst," trans. Lake, 1.447. Eusebius goes on to say that the story is well known from other accounts, for instance, Dio Cassius's *Roman History* 71.8, and Tertullian's *Apology* 5.6, and *Ad Scapulam* 4; for further references to what is often called the story of the "Thundering Legion," see P. B. Watson, *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (London, 1884), pp.195-98; J. Stevenson, ed., *A New Eusebius* (New York, 1957), pp.43-44.
12. A lacuna is assumed.
13. Emperor from 91 to 98.
14. Emperor from 98 to 117.
15. Philip the Arab, emperor from 244 to 249; the action attributed to him here may seem to go more obviously with Constantine the Great, a rather surprising omission on Fulgentius's part, but the secret Christianity of Philip and his Christianization of the yearly imperial feast are mentioned by Orosius (7.20-21), the most obvious source at this point.
16. Julian the Apostate, emperor from 360 to 363.
17. Latin *Babylae martyris*, presumably meaning Christ.
18. Immediately after Julian came Valentinian I, emperor from 364 to 375, with his reputation for allowing religious freedom, though the brief allusion here would also allow for his son, Valentinian II, emperor to 392, or more likely for the later Valentinian III, emperor from 425 to 455, a negligible ruler but one who per-



haps best suits Fulgentius's comment in that he was seated on the throne of the West by favor of Theodosius II, emperor of the East, and because Orosius alludes to his Christian spirit (7.33).



*ON THE THEBAID*



## Introduction

The *Super Thebaiden*, or exposition of Statius's *Thebaid* as a moral allegory, is included by Helm in his edition of the works of Fulgentius the mythographer, though he accepts the work into the Fulgentius canon only with strong reservations. The version below follows Helm's text (pp. 180–86), the only modern edition, based on a single copy (now Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fonds Latin 3012), in a hand of the thirteenth century. Publius Papinius Statius (ca.40–96 A.D.), the leading heroic poet of the Latin silver age, achieved with his poem a popularity in the Middle Ages second only to Virgil and Ovid. Whoever wrote the exposition was appreciative of what Fulgentius had done with Virgil's *Aeneid*; and Statius's twelve-book epic as an avowed imitation of Virgil provided an obvious choice for the extension of Fulgentian methods. One recalls the meeting of Virgil, Statius, and Dante in *Purgatorio* 22, and the claim of Statius that he owed his position solely to Virgil, "Through thee I was a poet, through thee a Christian."

In this short exposition or commentary on the *Thebaid*, the general approach, details of technique, and not a little of the phrasing are in line with Fulgentius on Virgil, and the work has been commonly ascribed to that writer. But a few features make the attribution suspect, and it seems safer to speak of an imitator or pseudo-Fulgentius as its author. The work is not found among the Carolingian manuscripts of Fulgentius, which keep the mythographer distinct from his namesake and likely contemporary, Fulgentius, the bishop-saint of Ruspe who died in 532–33; our one manuscript of *On the Thebaid* ascribes the work to the bishop. Two references are made in it to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a work only beginning in Carolingian times to achieve its popularity as a mine of mythological lore and allegory. The cognomen *Surculus* by which Statius is identified in the opening paragraph—probably due to confusion with the namesake Statius Ursulus Tolosensis, the first-century rhetorician of Toulouse mentioned by Jerome—is not apparently applied elsewhere to the Statius of the *Thebaid*, as either *Surculus* or *Sursulus*, before the tenth century;<sup>1</sup> Chaucer shows the same confusion

in his reference to Statius in the *House of Fame*, (3) 1460, "The Tholosen that highte Stace," and similarly Dante, *Purgatorio* 21.89. The bits of Greek used for the etymologies of personal names also suggest an age no longer possessing the fairly exact acquaintance with the language which Fulgentius reveals in his *Mythologies* and *Content of Virgil*; his quotations in the original from writers such as Homer and Euripides are not repeated. Helm directs suspicion particularly (p.xv) at the artificial word *anichos* ( $\alpha\text{-}\nu\text{-}\iota\kappa\text{o}\varsigma$ ), "un-conqueror," presumably meaning "invincible," clumsily and parenthetically applied to Caesar.<sup>2</sup> The name of Hypsipyle first appears as Ibsiphile, but is simplified to Isiphile when it needs to be etymologized as Isis and *philos*, "love." Similarly *ayos* and *adrios* seem to be carelessly transliterated from  $\alpha\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\alpha\delta\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ , and an unclear explanation is given of the name Argia. The smattering of Greek reminds us, in fact, more of what is found in the imitation of Fulgentius on Virgil by Bernard Sylvestris in the twelfth century; and, as indicated in the general introduction, above, a twelfth- or thirteenth-century date for *On the Thebaid* has been proposed. The seven kings who march on Thebes are equated with the seven liberal arts: while these are of ancient origin, the view taken of them as under the nominal leadership of philosophy, with the implication that philosophy is no longer a separate systematic discipline, strikes one as more medieval than antique.<sup>3</sup> The Bible allusions are New Testament, where Fulgentius on Virgil and in his *Ages of the World* prefers the Old; and one misses from the exposition his characteristic pose of humility, parade of classical authorities, touches of humor, and the apparatus of invocation and of a dialogue with departed shades.

The interpretation itself conforms closely to the Fulgentian pattern. A high-flown preliminary justification of the search for moral allegory is provided, called an admiring continuation (*non sine grandi ammiratione retracto*) and mentioning the *Aeneid*. The campaign of the Seven against Thebes, first summarized baldly as Fulgentius did with book 1 of the *Aeneid*,<sup>4</sup> is turned into a *psychomachia* or spiritual warfare for the soul of man; only those details and names which permit of such an allegory are extracted (Statius's book 8, the reception of Amphiarauus in the lower world and the death of Tydeus, is left out entirely). Thebes itself is the soul, inhabited by virtues and ruled by Laius who is sacred light, extinguished by his son Oedipus who is licentiousness, with his queen Jocasta as pure joy defiled by Oedipus's birth. The sons of Oedipus are greed and lust, and Creon who supplants them is oppressive pride. The kings, the seven liberal

arts or worldly wisdom, are doomed to extinction. The nurse Hypsipyle is idolatry, abandoning her charge Archemorus or death. The royal widows are human feelings making their appeal to Theseus or God, who liberates Thebes, the soul, by overcoming pride with humility. The opening paragraph or prologue explains that the inner meaning of an author and its moral applications are what count, the rest being only husk.

1. See Helm, p.xv; O. A. W. Dilke, ed., *Statius: Achilleid* (Cambridge, 1954), p.3.

2. But see M. L. W. Laistner, *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1957), pp.205-6, who points out that part of the sentence in which this dubious word *anichos* occurs is found in the ninth-century *Scholastica* (K.5), by Martin of Laon, and claims that the etymologizing is no worse than some in the genuine Fulgentius. Similarly Conrad of Hirsau, *Dialogus super auctores* (12th century), 1089-90, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Collection Latomus (Brussels, 1955), 17:44, relates Boethius's first name Anicius to the Greek *anikos*, "unconquered." The Fulgentian authorship of *On the Thebaid* is denied on internal grounds by B. Bischoff, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 44 (1951): 51, reprinted in his *Mittelalterliche Studien* (Stuttgart, 1967), 2:271; and this view is accepted by Laistner in a subsequent work, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe A.D. 500-900*, 2d ed. (London, 1957), p. 42.

3. See E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. W. R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp.36 ff.

4. Compare Chaucer's use of Latin summaries of the *Thebaid* in *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1485 ff.; see F. P. Magoun, *Traditio* 11 (1955): 409-20; P. M. Clogan, *Studies in Philology* 61 (1964): 599-615, *English Miscellany* 18 (1967): 9-31, and ed., *Medieval Achilleid of Statius* (Leiden, 1967). For the popularity of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Ages, see also C. Landi, "Stazio nel Medio Evo," *Atti dell' Accademia Padovana* 37 (1921): 201-32.





## Translation: On the Thebaid

I take up again, with great respect, that knowledge deserving of scrutiny and that inexhaustible vein of intellect found in those poets who, under the alluring cover of a poetic fiction, have inserted a set of moral precepts for practical use. For when Horace testifies that "poets seek to instruct or delight, or say what is both pleasing and useful in life,"<sup>1</sup> they are found to be no more delightful and entertaining through their literal meaning and narrative skill than they are instructive and serviceable, for the building of habits of life, through the hidden revealing of their allegories. Wherefore, "if little can be matched with great,"<sup>2</sup> the compositions of poets seem not uncommonly to invite comparison with a nut. Just as there are two parts to a nut, the shell and the kernel, so there are two parts to poetic compositions, the literal and the allegorical meaning. As the kernel is hidden under the shell, so the allegorical interpretation is hidden under the literal meaning; as the shell must be cracked to get the kernel, so the literal must be broken for the allegories to be discovered; as the shell is without taste and it is the kernel which provides the tasty flavor, so it is not the literal but the allegorical which is savored on the palate of the understanding. A child is happy to play with the whole nut, but a wise adult breaks it open to get the taste; in the same way, as a child you can be satisfied with the literal meaning not broken or crushed by subtle explanation, but as a man you must break the literal and extract the kernel from it if you are to be refreshed by the taste. By these and many other analogies the poems of those, both Greeks and Romans, whose highest aim was to leave out nothing, simple or elaborate, of practical value, can be proved worthy of study. Among these, Papinius Surculus,<sup>3</sup> a man of admirable activity, has preeminently distinguished himself, for in his composing of the *Thebaid* he is the faithful emulator of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In order to lay bare the covering of this work, the narrative order may first be shown in its true sequence.

The ruler of Thebes was Laius.<sup>4</sup> He had a wife Jocasta. To her was born Oedipus, who, when he grew up, slew his father and married his mother. From this incestuous union are born two daughters and two sons, Eteocles

and Polynices. Their father blinds himself in his grief. The sons dispute the kingdom, and the rule is divided by the year. As the eldest born, Eteocles rules first, and Polynices goes into exile. He comes to the Greeks and<sup>5</sup> marries the daughter of the king of Greece, Adrastus. When the year is ended he tries to regain the kingdom from his brother, who refuses. Seven kings of Greece pledge vengeance.<sup>6</sup> They set out for Thebes,<sup>7</sup> but they grow thirsty on the way<sup>8</sup> and are guided to a stream by Hypsipyle.<sup>9</sup> Archemorus is killed by a serpent; the Greeks console Lycurgus,<sup>10</sup> and bury Archemorus with all due honor. Then<sup>11</sup> they reach Thebes; they fight, and all except Adrastus are slain. Finally,<sup>12</sup> the brothers meet in single combat and destroy each other. Creon<sup>13</sup> rises up as the new ruler. He refuses to allow the kings to be buried. The wives of the kings beseech Theseus<sup>14</sup> for aid. Theseus fights with Creon, and Creon is overcome. The kings are given their burial. Thebes has been left shattered, but is now free.

Now that the narrative order has been run through in sequence, the kernel can be extracted from the husk. Thebes is pronounced in Greek like *theosbe*, that is, the goodness of God.<sup>15</sup> This is the soul of man, which the goodness of God created in its own image and likeness, that is, immortal, invisible, capable of comprehending all knowledge.<sup>16</sup> It is well called a city, for, like the inhabitants of a city, valor, prudence, justice, temperance,<sup>17</sup> and other virtues dwell and abide in it by inherited right. In this city which is the soul of man the ruler is Laius, that is, sacred light, for Laius is *lux ayos*—*ayos* being interpreted in Greek like *sanctus* in Latin.<sup>18</sup> Thus Laius ruled in Thebes, that is, sacred light in the soul of man, which is adorned with the perception of all knowledge to the exclusion of the shadows of ignorance. Furthermore, he had a wife named Jocasta, that is, pure joy.<sup>19</sup> For the mind of man is made joyful by the sacred light which it possesses, but possesses in purity, that is, separate from the defilement of pride. Jocasta as the wife of Laius is well named, for as her husband rules so she like a true wife is subject to him.<sup>20</sup> So Laius was wedded to Jocasta in joyful union. To her Oedipus was born. The union was joyful, but its offspring ill-starred. Oedipus being born is licentiousness. The name Oedipus is taken from *edo*,<sup>21</sup> a truly licentious beast, whence it is said, "More playful than the tender kid."<sup>22</sup> Just as joy, pure and at first undefiled<sup>23</sup> by any vanity of the things of this world, sinks to the defilement of licentiousness, so Jocasta gave birth to Oedipus. When he grows up, that is, the soul of man asserting its strength, he kills his father, that is, puts out the sacred light which in its munificence had provided the very occasion for his birth. For his wife he

takes his own mother in marriage. From this incestuous union are produced what have neither manliness nor yet the appearance of manliness, namely, the two daughters. Other creatures are produced having the appearance of manliness, but not manliness itself, namely, the two sons, one of them called Eteocles and the other Polynices. *Ethos*<sup>24</sup> in Greek is the word for *mos*, "habit, morals," in Latin, whence the moral science of ethics; *ocleos*<sup>25</sup> is destruction, whereby Eteocles is destruction of morals, that is, greed, whereby morals are destroyed, for it is the origin and root of all evils.<sup>26</sup> *Polis*<sup>27</sup> in Greek is called *multum*, "many," in Latin, and *nichos*<sup>28</sup> is *uictor*, "conqueror," whereby Caesar is called *chere anichos*;<sup>29</sup> thus Polynices conquering many in this world is lust, to which many yield. As these sons grow up, that is, greed and lust in the soul of man, their father blinds himself in his grief, that is the licentious mind tortures itself, horror-stricken at its sin. The sons as they dispute about the rule pull the soul two ways, for "there is no loyalty between sharers in tyranny."<sup>30</sup> The rule is divided by the year, and this is agreed to because "every kingdom divided in itself shall be made desolate."<sup>31</sup> The first year, as the eldest born, that is, the root of all evils, Eteocles rules; and Polynices, so long as the greedy easily suppresses the lustful, goes into exile. He makes his way to the Greeks. Very clearly this signifies the habits of those living in lust, who, when their substance is all wasted,<sup>32</sup> flee to worldly wisdom, so that secular knowledge may compensate for the abandoning of lust. It follows why he marries the daughter of Adrastus, king of Greece. This king of Greece is philosophy, to which all worldly wisdom is subject. With this the name Adrastus is perfectly consonant, for *adrios*<sup>33</sup> in Greek is *profunditas*, "depth," in Latin, whereby the Adriatic Sea is so called because it is deep. By this well chosen name, Adrastus, is meant philosophy, whose depth cannot be gauged by any philosopher's plumb-line. His daughter is Argia, that is, foreknowledge. *Argeos*<sup>34</sup> in Greek is *providentia* in Latin, whereby the Greeks are called *Argi*, that is, the foreseeing ones; from this the herdsman of Jove<sup>35</sup> is called Argus, that is, foreseeing, as the poet implied when he declares, "Argus had a head set round with a hundred eyes,"<sup>36</sup> head standing for the mind as the highest part of a man just as the real head does for its body. Thus he marries Argia, the daughter of Adrastus, that is, foreknowledge the daughter of philosophy, and at the end of the year, emboldened by worldly cunning, he seeks to regain the rule from his brother. But the latter refuses, and is very clearly using words of greed when he says, "I hold it and shall go on holding it for a long time."<sup>37</sup>

Seven kings of Greece pledge vengeance. These seven kings are the seven

liberal arts, who are well called kings, for they are the guide and supports for all branches of learning, and they are subject to Adrastus, that is, philosophy. They set out for Thebes, but on the way they grow thirsty. It is no wonder thirst comes to those who lack the wellspring of faith: to drink of worldly knowledge does not lessen thirst, but increase it. So they thirst, but as they do they are led to a stream by Hypsipyle. Isis was once the chief goddess in Egypt, and *philos* is love,<sup>39</sup> whence Hypsipyle is the love of Isis, that is, idolatry, which leads to its stream all who strain after worldly knowledge. But it is fatal to yield to this, for Archemorus is slain by a serpent. In fact, Archemorus can be called the foster child of idolatry, that is, essentially dead:<sup>39</sup> "He that believeth not is condemned already."<sup>40</sup> Nor is it without significance that he is slain by a serpent, for clearly all idolatry is destroyed by our relentless foe.<sup>41</sup> Nor is the fact that the Greeks console Lycurgus to be passed over in silence, for worldly knowledge consoles those who die in their sins. From this it follows why they bury Archemorus with all honor, for the followers of idolatry, who as they sleep in death are enveloped in the praise of men and the vainglory of earth, are at least in the vulgar view buried with pomp and circumstance. Then they reach Thebes ready to fight, and do fight against Eteocles, that is, greed, because, for those who grasp at philosophy as at vanity, their greed on every count becomes worthless. They fight, but have no success as the outcome of the fight, for all are killed. Here is shown the depth of man's blindness, which often picks out from the bad what is even worse, and from the worthless what is even more worthless, as when they esteem the vain knowledge of the arts less than the greater vanity of greed. But there is point to what was appended to this: all died except Adrastus. For philosophy, though it may perish for the greedy, is not in itself destroyed.

Finally the brothers, that is, greed and lust, meet in single combat and destroy each other. The harshness of greed and the riotousness of lust do not suffer in the same way or at the same time; but as these vices are destroyed, so in the mind there uprises pride, well named as Creon, that is, for *cremens*,<sup>42</sup> one who curbs all things. Observe that when each vice comes to an end, so pride harshly usurps power over the spirit (*anima*), as the mind (*animus*) swells with inward arrogance at its awareness of what has ended. Thus in the poem, after the death of Eteocles and Polynices, Creon uprises ready to assume command. He refuses to allow the burial of the kings, that is, keeps from concealment those worldly branches of knowledge which, together with the faithful handmaidens of its error, pride with a remarkable

intensity esteems to be a thirst-quenching spring.<sup>43</sup> These wives of the kings, that is, human feelings, which had formerly been subject to these kings, beseech Theseus, that is, God, for Theseus is for *theos suns*.<sup>44</sup> Theseus fights with Creon, as God teaches that pride is conquered by humility: Creon conquered stands for pride unable to resist humility. The kings are buried, for every occasion for pride is blocked by the arrival of humility. By such a struggle with vice was Thebes, that is, the soul of man, left shattered; but it is freed when the grace of the goodness of God comes to its aid.—The end.

1. *Art poetica* 333–35.
2. Virgil *Georgics* 4.176.
3. For Papinius "Sursulus" Statius, see introduction.
4. *Thebaid*, book 1.
5. In book 2.
6. In book 3.
7. In book 4.
8. In book 5.
9. The nurse of Archemorus, "beginner of doom" (also named Opheltis by Statius, books 4, 5), the infant whom Hypsipyle neglects for this task.
10. The father of Archemorus, in book 6.
11. In books 7, 9, 10.
12. In book 11.
13. The brother of Jocasta.
14. Ruler of Athens, in book 12.
15. For *θεοσέβεια*, "awe of God," with "the goodness" supplied from the next sentence.
16. Compare Gen. 1:26, "man in our image, after our likeness," and I Tim. 1:17, "immortal, invisible, the only wise God."
17. That is, the traditional cardinal virtues, as outlined in Cicero (*De officiis* 3.10), and taken over by Ambrose (*De officiis ministrorum*) and Isidore (*Etymologiae* 2.24.5–6).
18. Latin *lux*, "light," *sanctus*, "sacred," and Greek *ἅγιος*, "sacred."
19. Latin *iocunditatem castam*.
20. Compare Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18, similarly I Pet. 3:3, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands."
21. Latin *haedus*, "young goat."
22. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.790.
23. Compare James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled."
24. For *ἔθος*.
25. Compare *ἐχλέω*, "molest"?

26. I Tim. 6:10 "For greed is the root of all evil."
27. For πολὺς.
28. For νίκος.
29. For ἀ-νίκος, "unconquered," and χεῖρ, "violence"?
30. Latin *nulla fides regni sociis*, from Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.92, but Statius himself (*Thebaid* 1.130) has adapted this for his *sociisque comes discordia regnis*, "discord that attends on partnered rule," in the same context.
31. Matth. 12:25, Luke 11:17.
32. Compare Luke 15:13, of the prodigal son who "wasted his substance with riotous living."
33. For ἀδρός, "fully grown"?
34. Compare ἀργός, "bright, gleaming," or Ἀργεῖος, Latin *Argus*, *Argivus*, "Greek"?
35. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.675–677.
36. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.624.
37. Statius *Thebaid* 2.429.
38. For φίλος.
39. For Greek ἀρχέ, "first, basic," and Latin *mors*, "death."
40. John 3:18.
41. That is, the devil.
42. For Latin *cremans*, "consuming," or *premiens*, "oppressive"?
43. With "quenching" supplied.
44. For Greek θεός, "god," and Latin *suus*, "his own," or possibly for *servus*, "slave, servant"?

## *INDEXES*





## Indexes

Only those authors, persons, places, and terms named or cited by Fulgentius are listed. Order is alphabetical by the spelling in Helm's text, with variants bracketed. The letter codes are as follows:

- A Followed by section number: *On the Ages of the World and of Man*
- C Followed by paragraph number: *The Exposition of the Content of Virgil according to Moral Philosophy*
- E Followed by section number: *The Explanation of Obsolete Words*
- M Followed by book number and section number: *The Mythologies*
- T *On the Thebaid*

## Authors

- Africanus *hiatrosophistes* M.3.7  
Anacreon M.1.prol., *antiquissimus auctor* M.1.20  
Anaximander *in orneoscopicis libris* M.1.13, *Lamsacenus* M.1.15  
Anaximenes *de picturis antiquis libro secundo* M.3.3  
Antidamas *Eracleopolites* E.2, *in moralibus libris* E.51  
Antiphon *de somniorum interpretatione* M.1.14  
Apollophanes *in epico carmine* M.1.2  
Apuleius *in libris metamorfoseon* M.3.6, *in Ermagora* E.3, *in asino aureo* E.17, *in metamorfoseon* E.36, *in asino aureo* E.40, *in libro de re publica* E.44  
Aristofontes *Atheneus in libris qui disarestia nuncupantur* M.3.6  
Aristoteles *sillogismaticum breuiloquium* M.1.prol., *endeleciās* C.3  
Aristoxenus *in lindosecemiarum libro* M.2.6  
Artemon *de somniorum interpretatione* M.1.14  
Ausonius M.1.prol.  
  
Battiades M.3.10, *in paredris* C.3  
Bebius Macer *qui fastalia sacrorum scripsit* E.6  
  
Calimachus *in Thesia* E.39  
Callimorphus *in Pireis* E.41  
Calpurnius *in Fronesi comedia* E.27  
Campester *in catabolicis infernalibusque* C.3

- Capella, Felix, *in libro de nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* E.45  
 Carneades *elleborum* M.1.prol., *in libro telesiaci* C.8  
 Cato, *Catonum rigores* M.1.prol.  
 Chrisippus, *see* Crysippus  
 Cicero *nostrum academicum reiborem, res publica, Tullianas seueras inuentiones* M.1.prol., C.22  
 Cincius Alimentus *in historia de Gorgia Leontino* E.8  
 Cleobulus *philosophus* M.2.14  
 Cornutus, Marcus, *in satyra* E.20  
 Crispinus *in Eraclea* E.28  
 Crysippus *de fato* M.1.prol., Chrisippus C.2, *numeros* C.3
- Dardanus *in dinameris* C.3  
 Demostenes *pro Philippo* E.16  
 Diofonus *Lacedemonius de sacris deorum* E.5  
 Dionisius *in Grecis articulationibus* C.20  
 Diophantus *Lacedemonum auctor libros antiquitatum quattuordecim* M.1.1.  
 Dromocritus *in theogonia* M.2.14, *in fisiologumenon* M.3.7
- Ennius *in Telestide comedia* E.19  
 Epicarmus *comicus in Difolo comedia* M.1.15, *comicus* M.3.1, M.3.5  
 Euripides *in tragoedia Electrae* M.3.5, *in tragoedia Ifigeniae* C.14, *in tragoedia Ifigeniae* C.27  
 Euximenes *in libro teologumenon* M.1.15
- Fenestella *in archaiciis* M.3.2, E.59  
 Filocorus *de somniorum interpretatione* M.1.14  
 Fronto *in oratione pro Nucerinis* E.35  
 Fulgentius *in libro fisiologo, nostrum fisiologicum librum* C.13, *Calliope [= M.1.prol.]* C.2, *iam superius exposuimus* [M.1.6] C.22
- Gauuius Bassus *in satiris* E.33
- Hellanicus (Ellanicus) *in dios politia* M.1.3  
 Heraclitus (Eratritus) M.1.3, *ignas* C.3  
 Hermes (Ermes) *in Opimandrae libro* M.1.15, *Ermes Trismegistus* M.3.9, *astra* C.3  
 Hesiodus (Esiodus) *Ascreus pastor* M.1.prol., *in bucolico carmine* M.3.1, *Ascrei fontis bractamento* C.3  
 Homerus *Meonius ranorum proelio, Meonem senem* M.1.prol., *prima Iliados rhapsodia* M.1.9, M.1.15, M.1.21, M.1.22, M.2.2, *in fabula Bellerofontis, in tertio decimo* M.3.1, M.3.3, M.3.5, C.8, C.12, C.24, C.26
- Horatius T
- Iuba *in fisiologis* M.2.1  
 Iuuenalis M.2.6

- Labeo *qui disciplinas Etruscas Tagetis et Bacitidis quindecim voluminibus explanavit* E.4
- Lucanus M.1.18, *poeta* M.1.21, M.2.12, E.55
- Lucilius E.23
- Lucretius comicus in Nummularia E.62
- Manilius Crestus in libro de deorum binis E.10
- Mariandes M.3.9
- Maro. See Virgilius
- Melistus Euboicus qui omnium physiologorum sententias disputavit M.2.13
- Memos in tragoedia Herculis E.25
- Menander in Disexapaton comedia M.3.1
- Mintanor musicus in crumatopoion libro artis musicae M.1.1
- Mnaseas in primo libro de Europa M.2.16, in Europae libro E.2
- Neuius in Philemporo comedia E.21, in Diobolaria E.43
- Nicagorus in distemistea libro M.2.6
- Numa Pompilius de pontificalibus E.14
- Orfeus M.3.7, in teogonia M.3.9
- Ovidius Eroidarum M.1.prol., *poeta* M.1.21, in quinto metamorphoseon M.2.7
- Pacuvius in Sordone comedia E.12, E.32, in tragoedia Tiestis E.57
- Pammacius E.32
- Papinius Surculus [Statius] Tebaiden T
- Petronius M.1.prol., M.1.1, M.1.13, *Arbiter* M.2.6, M.2.15; *Arbiter* M.3.8; *Arbiter* M.3.9; in Euscion C.22; *Arbiter* E.42,46; *Arbiter* E.52; *Arbiter* E.60; *Arbiter* E.61
- Pindarus M.1.13
- Pisander fuscus M.1.15
- Pitagoras M.3.9, *numeros* C.3, *Pithagoras* M.3.10
- Plato mysticis rationibus, auratum eloquium M.1.prol.; in moralibus M.2.4; *ideas* C.3, C.10, C.20; *Academicum quippiam* C.23
- Plautus M.1.prol.; in comedia Epidici M.1.2; in Trinummo M.2.1; in Cistolaria comedia C.24; in Menecmi comoedia E.3; in mercatoris comedia E.13; in Cacisto E.15; in Cassina E.18; in Cassina E.19; in Cassina E.20; in Cassina E.21, E.22; in Asinaria E.24; in Curculione comedia E.26; in Baccide E.27; in Crisalo E.29; in Baccide E.33, E. 38; in milita glorioso E.46, E.50; in Uidularia E.53
- Porfirius in epigrammate M.2.1; in epigrammate C.21
- Propertius E.22, E.34
- Rabirius in satira E.58
- Rutilius Geminus in Astianactis tragoedia E.7; in libris pontificalibus E.9
- Sallustius M.1.prol., C.10
- Scriptura sacra, *lex diuina* M.1.15; *propheta* M.2.1; *Salomon* M.2.1; *lex diuina* M.2.2, C.1, C.5; *diuina lex* C.7; *diuina sapientia, profeta* C.9; *diuina praeceptio* C.19; *diuina storia* C.21; in suis libris C.24
- Serapion Ascalonites de somniorum interpretatione M.1.14

- Solocrates *Cixicenus in libris historiae* M.2.10, E.5  
 Sosicles *Atticus in libro theologumenon* M.3.5  
 Statius. See Papinius Surculus  
 Stesimbrotus Tasiu*s de morte Policratis regis Samiorum* E.1  
 Sutrius *comedarum scriptor* M.3.8; *in comedia Piscatoria* E.47
- Tacitus, Cornelius, *in libro facetiarum* E.54  
 Tages *in aruspiciis* E.48  
 Tales *Milesius* M.2.11  
 Teofrastus *in moralibus* M.2.1  
 Teopompus *in Cipriaco carmine* M.1.3  
 Terentius M.1.prol., M.2.1, M.2.9  
 Tertullianus *in libro de fato* E.16  
 Theocnidus *antiquitatum historiographus* M.1.21  
 Tiberianus M.1.21, *in Prometheo* M.3.7, E.56; *in libro de [deo] Socratis* C.20  
 Tibullus, Flaccus, *in Melene comedia* E.23
- Uarro *ingenia* M.1.prol., E.5; *in mistagogorum libro* E.11; *in pontificalibus* E.14; *in Corallaria* E.37  
 Uatinus *augur* M.2.14  
 Virgilius Maro M.1.prol., M.1.9, M.2.11; *in georgicis* M.3.1, M.3.2; *in sexto* M.3.9; *Virgilianae continentiae, bucolicam, egloga, georgicam, liber georgicus* C.1; *Mantuanis uatis* C.2; *Ausonum uatum clarissime, in tuis operibus* C.3; *in omnibus nostris opusculis, per duodena librorum uolumina* C.6; *uates clarissime* C.7, C.8; *historiae, haec nostra materia, fabulam, primi nostri libri continentiam, in uno uersu nostro* C.10, C.11–14; *talem uersum in secundo libro* C.15, C.17; *doctor, in bucolica* C.18, C.19; *nos in bucolicis mala aurea decem posuimus scilicet decem eglogarum poliam facundiam* C.20; *Maro doctissime* C.21, C.22; *uatum Latialis autenta* C.23, C.24–29, E.14, E.30; *Virgiliana Eneis* T
- Xenophon *poeta librorum bisbdodenum uolumen in singulis libris singulis litteris diminutis* A.prol.
- Zenopanes *Eracleopolites* M.1.15

## Names

- |                 |            |            |                  |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Abgarus         | A.13       | Ac(h)illes | M.3.7, C.8       |
| Abraham         | A.4        | Aclauro    | M.2.11           |
| Acab            | A.8        | Acteon     | M.1.12; M.3.2, 3 |
| Acca Laurentina | E.9        | Actiacus   | A.14             |
| Ac(h)ates       | C.11, C.14 | Adam       | M.3.6, A.2, A.8  |
| Achemenides     | C.15       | Admetus    | M.1.22           |
| Acheron         | C.22       | Adon       | M.3.2, 8         |

- Adrastus T  
 (A)egipti(a)cus A.4, A.8, A.10, A.14  
 Aegyptius M.1.1, Aegyptus M.1.20, T  
 Aello M.1.9  
 Aeneas C.22  
 Aethiopicus A.10, A.13  
 Afrodís M.2.1. *See also* Uenus  
 Agag A.8  
 Agamemnon M.3.5  
 Agaue M.2.12  
 Albucia M.1.prol.  
 Alcesta M.1.22  
 Alceus M.2.2  
 Alcides. *See* Hercules  
 Alcione M.1.prol.  
 Alexander E.2, A.10  
 Alexandria M.1.prol.  
 Allecto M.1.7  
 Almena M.2.2  
 Alfeus, Alpheus M.3.12  
 Aman A.9  
 Amazones A.10  
 Amphitrite M.1.4  
 Anchises C.22  
 Anna A.7  
 Antedon M.2.9  
 Anteus M.2.4  
 Ancía M.3.1  
 Antichristus M.3.1  
 Antifer M.2.13  
 Apollo M.1.12-17, 22, M.2.10, M.3.6,  
 9, C.18, C.20, E.2, A.13  
 Aquilo M.3.11  
 Archemorus T  
 Aret(h)usa M.1.16, M.3.12, C.20  
 Argi T  
 Argia T  
 Argus M.1.18, T  
 Aricinus M.1.prol.  
 Aristeus M.3.10  
 Armenicus A.11  
 Arpyiae M.1.9, M.3.11  
 Ascalonites M.1.14  
 Ascreus M.1.prol., C.2  
 Astianax E.7  
 Athenae M.2.1, E.5  
 Athenaicus A.10  
 Athene M.2.1. *See also* Minerva  
 Atheneus M.1.prol., M.3.6  
 Athenienses E.5  
 Atlanteus A.10  
 Atlanticus A.10, A.14  
 Atlas M.1.21  
 Atropos M.1.8  
 Atticus M.1.prol., 22; M.3.5  
 Attis M.3.5  
 Augustalis A.14  
 Augustus A.14  
 Aureli(an)us A.14  
 Ausones C.3  
 Ausonia C.24  
 Autonoe M.2.12  
 Babylonia A.14  
 Babylonia A.3, A.10  
 Babylonius A.10  
 Bacc(h)ae M.2.12  
 Bacc(h)is E.27, E.33  
 Bacitides E.4  
 Bellerofons M.3.1  
 Berecint(h)ia M.3.5  
 Beroe C.17  
 Betsabe A.8  
 Betulea A.9  
 Blennos E.5  
 Bragmones A.10  
 Britannicus A.14  
 Brutiani E.49  
 Brutus A.11  
 Cacistus E.15  
 Cacus M.2.3, C.25  
 C(a)esar M.2.11, A.11, A.12, A.14, T  
 Caesareanus A.14  
 Caieta C.24  
 Cain A.2  
 Calais M.3.11  
 Calligula A.14  
 Calliope M.1.prol., 15; C.2  
 Cancer M.1.16  
 Cannensis A.11  
 Carineus C.20

- Carites M.2.1  
 Caron M.1.prol., C.22  
 Cart(h)ago A.11  
 Cassina E.18-21  
 Castor M.2.13  
 Catilina M.1.prol.  
 Caucasius A.10  
 Caunus C.24  
 Celeno M.1.9  
 Centauri M.2.14  
 Cerberus C.22. *See also* Tricerberus  
 Ceres M.1.10, 11; M.2.1  
 C(h)aldeus A.12  
 C(h)ristus M.3.1, C.7, A.2, A.6, A.12,  
 A.13, A.14  
 Christianus A.14  
 Cibebe M.3.5  
 Ciclops C.15  
 Cimbricus A.11  
 Cipriacus M.1.3  
 Circe M.2.7, 9  
 Cizicenus M.2.10  
 Climene M.1.16  
 Clio M.1.15  
 Cloto M.1.8  
 Corasmi A.10  
 Corinthicus A.11  
 Cortiniensis E.5  
 Cremera A.11  
 Creon T  
 Cretensis E.5  
 Crisalus M.3.5  
 Cronos M.2.1  
 Cupido M.3.6, C.14  
 Curculio E.26  
 Curtius A.11  
 Cyllenius M.1.18  
 Cymera M.3.1  
 Cynthia. *See* Quintia
- Daae A.10  
 Dafne M.1.14  
 Dalila A.7  
 Danae M.1.prol., 19  
 Dares C.17  
 David A.8
- Deiopea C.12  
 Deiphobus C.22  
 Demea M.3.1  
 Diana M.2.16, M.3.3  
 Dicranabus A.10  
 Dido C.22  
 Diogenes M.2.4, C.20  
 Dionisius M.2.12  
 Dirce M.2.7, E.32  
 Dorcas A.13  
 Dorius M.3.10  
 Drancae A.10  
 Drepanos C.15
- Edippus T  
 Egle C.20  
 Elamites A.13  
 Electra M.3.5  
 Elias A.8  
 Elisium C.22  
 Elisius C.22  
 Endimion, Endymion M.2.16  
 Eneis T  
 Enoch A.1, A.2  
 Entellus C.17  
 Eoae A.10  
 Eolus C.11, C.12  
 Epicureus M.2.1, C.24  
 Epidicus M.1.2  
 Epona E.11  
 Erato M.1.15  
 Erictonius M.2.11  
 Eridanus M.1.16  
 Eros M.3.4  
 Erytreus M.1.12  
 Et(h)iocles T  
 Etruscus E.4  
 Euandros C.25  
 Euboicus M.2.13  
 Euriale M.1.21  
 Euridice M.3.10  
 Euristeus C.2, A.prol.  
 Europa M.1.20, M.2.16, E.2  
 Euscios C.22  
 Euterpe M.1.15

- Fabius A.11  
 Fabius Fulgentius M.1.prol.  
 Falernus M.2.12, A.10  
 Farao A.8  
 Fariseus (Phariseus) A.12, A.13  
 Fasiacus A.10  
 Fata (Parcae) M.1.8  
 Febus A.14. *See also* Phoebus  
 Fedra M.2.7  
 Fedria M.1.prol.  
 Feton (Phaeton) M.1.16  
 Figenia (Iphigenia) C.14, C.27  
 Filisteicus A.8  
 Filisteus A.7  
 Filogeus M.1.12  
 Finees A.7  
 Fineus M.3.11  
 Flaccus E.20  
 Foebeus A.10  
 Foebiacus M.2.6  
 Forcus M.1.21  
 Frigius M.3.10, E.14  
 Fronesis E.27  
 Fulgentius. *See* Fabius  
 Furiae M.1.7
- Galageticus M.1.prol.  
 Galenus M.1.prol.  
 Ganimedes M.1.20  
 Gezabel. *See* Iezabel  
 Gigas M.2.15, C.22  
 Glaucus M.2.9  
 Glico M.3.8  
 Gnosius C.22  
 Golias A.8  
 Gorgias E.8  
 Gorgo(na) M.1.21, M.2.1, M.3.1  
 Gorgoneus M.1.prol.  
 Grece M.1.2, 4, 5, 8-10, 12, 15, 17,  
 18, 21, 22; M.2.1-4, 6-11, 13, 14;  
 M.3.1, 4-12; C.12; C.14; C.15; C.17;  
 C.18; C.20; C.22; C.25; C.26; C.29;  
 T
- Grecia M.1.prol., 18, 21, 22; M.2.5,  
 14; M.3.5; T  
 Grecus M.1.prol., M.2.14, C.22, E.13,  
 E.16, A.prol., T
- Hebraicus A.6, A.7  
 (H)ebreus A.prol., A.6, A.9, A.14  
 (H)ecate M.1.10  
 (H)elena M.2.13  
 Heli A.7  
 (H)elicon M.1.prol.  
 (H)eliconiades M.1.prol., C.2  
 (H)era M.1.3  
 (H)eraclea E.28  
 (H)eracleopolites E.2  
 (H)eracles M.2.2. *See also* Hercules  
 (H)ercules M.1.22, M.2.2-4, C.20,  
 C.25, E.25  
 Herculeus A.prol.  
 (H)ermagoras E.3  
 (H)ermes M.1.18. *See also* Mercurius  
 (H)ero M.1.prol., M.3.4  
 (H)erodes A.12, A.13  
 (H)eroidae M.1.prol.  
 (H)esper C.20  
 (H)esperides C.2, C.20  
 Hester A.9  
 Hierusalem A.10  
 Hilar C.1  
 Hippocrene M.1.prol.  
 Hippolitus M.3.2  
 (H)olofernes A.9  
 (H)oloferneus A.9  
 Hyrcania A.10
- Jacob A.5  
 Iacobus A.13  
 Ianuarius M.2.5  
 Ianus A.14  
 Ibsiphile (Ipsiphile) T  
 Iesus A.6  
 Iezabel (Gezabel) A.8, A.9  
 Ilias M.1.9  
 Indi M.2.12  
 India M.2.12, M.3.8  
 Indicus A.10, A.14  
 Ino M.2.12  
 Iob A.4, A.5  
 Iocasta T  
 Iopas C.14  
 Iris M.2.1

- Isis M.1.20, T  
 Israel A.7  
 Isra(h)eliticus A.6, A.8, A.10, A.14  
 Iudaicus A.6, A.10, A.11, A.12, A.14  
 Iudas A.13  
 Iudea A.8, A.13, A.14  
 Iudeus A.12, A.13, A.14  
 Iulianus A.14  
 Iulius mensis M.1.16  
 Iunius mensis M.1.16  
 Iuno M.1.2, M.1.3, M.2.1, M.2.5,  
 M.2.14, M.3.7, C.11, C.12, E.6  
 Iunonius T  
 Iuppiter M.1.prol., 3, 18, 20; M.2.1, 2,  
 5, 11, 12, 13; M.3.5, 7, 10; E.2; E.39  
 Iuturna C.29  
 Ixion M.2.14, C.22
- Lacedemonis M.1.1  
 Lacedemonius E.5  
 Lacesis M.1.8  
 Laius T  
 Lampetusa M.1.16  
 Lampus M.1.12  
 Lausus C.27  
 Latialis C.23  
 Latine M.1.1, 4, 15, 18; M.2.1, 6, 7,  
 9, 12, 13; M.3.1, 5, 7, 9; C.15; C.18;  
 C.20; C.25; C.27; T  
 Latinus M.2.14, C.24, E.16, T  
 Latona C.24  
 Lauinia C.24  
 Leander M.3.4  
 Leandricus M.1.prol.  
 Leda M.2.13  
 Leonitius E.8  
 Lethæus C.22  
 Leuita C.1  
 Lia A.5  
 Libanus A.8  
 Liber M.2.1, 12; E.19  
 Libicus C.11; A.prol.  
 Licomedes M.3.7  
 Licurgus T  
 Lieus M.2.12  
 Locrus E.5
- Lucifer M.2.13, E.56  
 Luna M.1.prol.; M.2.7, 16; C.24; A.10
- Macedo E.2, A.10  
 Macedonicus A.11  
 Machabeus A.9  
 Madianiticus A.6  
 Maeotis A.10  
 Manasses A.9  
 Mantua M.1.prol.  
 Mantuanus C.2  
 Manue A.7  
 Mardocheus A.9  
 Marianus A.11  
 Marica C.24  
 Maro(nis) M.2.12  
 Mars M.2.7, M.3.7, E.5, A.11  
 Marsyas M.3.9  
 Martius M.1.prol.  
 Mathias A.13  
 Medea M.2.7  
 Medus A.13  
 Medusa M.1.21, C.20  
 Megera M.1.7  
 Melene E.23  
 Melpomene M.1.15  
 Menecmi E.3  
 Menelaus C.22  
 Meon M.1.prol.  
 Meonius M.1.prol.  
 Mercurius M.1.18, M.3.7, C.16, E.45  
 Meroe M.2.12, A.10  
 Meroitanus M.2.12  
 Messapus C.27, C.28  
 Metiscus C.29  
 Mettenia (Metennia) E.58, A.11  
 Mezentius C.27  
 Mida M.1.prol., M.2.10, M.3.9  
 Milesius M.2.11  
 Minerva M.1.21; M.2.1, 6; M.3.1, 7, 9;  
 C.8; E.10; E.45  
 Mirra M.3.8  
 Misenus C.18  
 Mitridates A.11  
 Moeris C.1  
 Moiseicus A.6



- Moyses (Moises) A.6  
 Mucius A.11  
 Musa M.1.prol., 15, 21; C.2; C.18; C.22  
 Museus C.22  
 Musicus M.1.prol.  
  
 Nabuchodonosor A.9  
 Nabuzardan A.9  
 Nazareus A.7  
 Neptunus M.1.2, 4; M.3.7  
 Nero M.1.prol.  
 Nerua A.14  
 Niliacus M.1.prol., A.6, A.10  
 Ninus A.3  
 Noe A.2  
 Nucérini E.35  
  
 Oceanus A.10  
 Ocionitides A.10  
 Olimpias A.10  
 Olimpus A.10  
 Omfale M.2.2  
 Ophni A.7  
 Ops M.1.2  
 Oquipete M.1.9  
 Orpheus M.3.10  
  
 Pactolus M.1.prol., M.2.10  
 Palinurus C.18  
 Pandora M.2.6, 11  
 Panfílus M.3.1  
 Paris M.2.1  
 P(h)arrasius M.1.prol., C.2  
 Partiacus A.10, 11  
 Pasiphe M.2.7  
 Passadrae A.10  
 Paulus A.13  
 Pegasus M.1.prol., 21; M.3.1  
 Peleus M.3.7  
 Pelleus M.1.prol.  
 Pelops M.2.15  
 Pencus M.1.14  
 Penelopa M.2.9  
 Perdicas M.3.2  
 Persae A.9, 11, 13  
  
 Perseus M.1.21  
 Persicus A.10, 11  
 Petrus A.12, 13  
 Ph. *See* F  
 Phaeton. *See* Feton  
 Philemporos E.21  
 Philippus E.16; A.10, 13, 14  
 Philologia E.45  
 Filosofia M.1.prol., 2  
 Phoebus M.1.prol. *See also* Febus  
 Pierides A.prol.  
 Pisea E.41  
 Pithon M.1.17  
 Pitonicus A.8  
 Pluto M.1.2, 5-10  
 Poenus A.11  
 Policaste M.3.2  
 Policrates E.1  
 Polidegmon C.22. *See also* Pluto  
 Polinices T  
 Poliphemus C.15  
 Polixena M.3.7  
 Polymnia M.1.15  
 Pollus M.1.2  
 Pollux M.2.13  
 Pompeianus A.11  
 Ponticus A.11  
 Porus A.10  
 Posidonia M.1.4. *See also* Neptunus  
 Priapus E.11  
 Pritus M.3.1  
 Prometheus M.2.6, M.3.7  
 Proserpina M.1.10, M.2.16, M.3.6, C.22  
 (P)seudo E.12  
 Psice M.1.prol., M.3.6, E.17  
 Punicus A.11  
 Puteolanus A.3  
  
 Quintia M.1.prol.  
 Quintus C.22  
  
 Radamantus C.22  
 Rea A.11  
 Roma M.2.14, A.11  
 Romanus M.1.prol., 20; M.3.5; C.5;

- C.23; E.5; E.49; A.11  
 Romuleus M.1.prol., A.prol.  
 Romulides A.prol.  
 Romulus E.9  
 Saduceus A.13  
 Salmoneus C.22  
 Salomon M.2.1; A.4, 8  
 Sameramis A.3  
 Samius E.1  
 Samson A.7  
 Samu(h)el A.7, 8  
 Sapphira A.13  
 Sataclisus A.4  
 Saturnius C.23  
 Saturnus M.1.2, 18, 20; M.2.1; M.3.10  
 Satyra M.1.prol.  
 Satyri M.3.1  
 Saul A.8  
 Saurea M.1.prol.  
 Sceparnus E.12  
 Scipio M.1.prol.  
 Scipioneus A.11  
 Scylla M.2.9  
 Scyt(h)icus A.10  
 Semele M.2.12  
 Sempronia M.1.prol.  
 Sieneticus A.10  
 Sinai A.6  
 Sirenae, Sirenes M.2.8  
 Sirophanes M.1.1  
 Sicius Dentanus E.5  
 Socrates C.20  
 Sol M.1.12, 17; M.2.7, 9; M.3.6; A.10  
 Spartanus A.10  
 Squitae A.3  
 Stenno M.1.21  
 Stigius M.3.6, 7  
 Stilbos M.1.18. *See also* Mercurius  
 Stoicus M.2.1, C.1, C.24  
 Sulpicilla M.1.prol.  
 Taddeus A.13  
 Tages E.4, E.48  
 Talia M.1.prol., M.1.15  
 Tantalus M.2.15, M.3.5, C.22  
 Tarquinius A.11  
 Tartarus C.22  
 Tasius E.1  
 Telestides E.19  
 Tempe M.1.prol.  
 Teresias M.2.5  
 Terpsicore M.1.15  
 Teutonicus A.11  
 Thebe, T(h)ebae T  
 T(h)ebais T  
 Theseus T  
 Thesia E.39  
 Thespiades M.1.prol.  
 T(h)etis M.3.7  
 Threicius M.3.9  
 Tiberias A.12  
 Tiestes E.57  
 Tigranes A.11  
 Timnes E.5  
 Tisifone, Tisiphone M.1.7, C.22  
 Titanae M.1.20  
 Titanius C.22  
 Titanus M.1.20  
 Traianus A.14  
 Tricerberus M.1.6, 22; C.22  
 Triptolemicus M.1.prol.  
 Triton C.18  
 Tritona *palus* M.3.9, Tritona *dea* C.18  
 Troades M.1.prol.  
 Troia M.1.21  
 Troiani C.11  
 Turnus C.26, C.29  
 Valentinianus A.14  
 Uenus M.2.1, 7; M.3.6-8; A.14  
 Uergetae A.10  
 Uertumnus E.11  
 Uespasianus A.14  
 Uirianus A.11  
 Uiridomarus A.11  
 Ulixes M.2.8, 9; C.15  
 Urania M.1.prol., 15  
 Vulcanius C.25  
 Vulcanus M.2.11  
 Zephyrus M.3.6  
 Zetus M.3.11  
 Zeus M.1.3. *See also* Juppiter

Latin Words Dealt with in *The Explanation  
of Obsolete Words* (numbers refer to sections)

- abstemius*, cautious 58  
*adfatim*, copiously 43  
*alucinare*, to have hallucinations 52  
*alucitae*, gnats 52  
*ambignae oves*, two-lambd sheep 6  
*antistare*, to excel 28  
*aricinae*, clay pottery 51  
*aruales fratres*, Arval Brothers 9  
*auctio*, sale, auction 26  
*auerruncare*, to remove 51  
*aumacium*, *aumatium*, privy 61
- bamplus*, skiff 44  
*blatterare*, to chatter, stammer 12
- capularis*, senile old man 23  
*catillare*, to walk a dog 22  
*celibatum*, celibacy 45  
*celox*, skiff 44  
*cistella*, small casket 50  
*condus*, steward 24  
*congerra*, *congerro*, idler 49  
*coragium*, virgin's funeral 36  
*crepundia*, child's baubles 50  
*culleus*, leather sack 53
- delenificus*, flattering 62  
*desiduus*, long-lasting 37  
*diobolares*, cheap prostitutes 32  
*diuidiae*, griets 34
- edentulus*, lacking teeth 23  
*edulium*, taste of food 40  
*elogium*, inheritance 54  
*exercitus*, despised 46
- fabre*, skillfully 51  
*ferculum*, meat course 42  
*floccus*, valueless 38  
*friguttire*, to stammer 19
- ganeum*, *ganium*, tavern 47  
*glabrior*, more hairless 17
- iniuges boues*, unyoked oxen 10  
*isculponeae*, lead gauntlets 21  
*istega*, ship's deck 29  
*iustitium*, public mourning 35
- lombus*, fast boat 30  
*lentaculum*, libation 39  
*lixa*, camp-follower 55  
*luscicius*, dim-eyed 13  
*luteus*, gleaming 57
- manales lapides*, spirit stones 4  
*manubies*, royal ornaments 60  
*miropola*, seller of ointment 43  
*mnasiterna*, water jar 27
- naucus*, contemptible 33  
*neferendi sues*, castrated pigs 5  
*nictare*, to make faces 46
- oria*, fishing smack 15
- pecuatus*, foolish, sheeplike 51  
*penum*, store of food 24  
*pollinctor*, undertaker 3  
*praesegetina*, amputated limbs 48  
*problema*, proposition 16  
*promus*, steward 24  
*pumilior*, weaker 17
- ramenta*, sweepings 31
- sandapila*, bier 1  
*sculponeae*. See *isculponeae*  
*semones*, minor gods 11  
*silicernius*, senile old man 6  
*simpolones*, banquet guests 47  
*stega*. See *istega*  
*sudus*, serene 56  
*suggrundaria*, infant's grave 7  
*summates*, men of high rank 47

*supperiae*, assistances 25

*sutelae*, cunning devices 18

*titimilicium*, loose thread 20

*tuccata*, regal foods 41

*tutulus*, priest, priest's cloak 14

*uadatus*, on bail 59

*ualgia*, facial contortions 46

*uenustare*, to adorn oneself 43

*uispillo*, porter of corpses 2

*veruina*, javelin 33















*(Continued from front flap)*

the survival of classical mythology, medieval interpretations of Virgil, and the history of literary criticism, Fulgentius must be consulted and will be found instructive. For all his maddening imperfection, he has clear title to a secure place in literary and intellectual history — and not only for the central theses that inform his writing, but also for those peripheral concepts and commonplaces that he scatters about them.

Mr. Whitbread has made a major contribution to scholarship in making these important pieces available for the first time in English, in translations that do full justice to the original texts but suffer none of their rhetorical shortcomings.

Leslie G. Whitbread is professor of English at Louisiana State University in New Orleans.

**Of related interest . . .**

**Structural Arithmetic Metaphor in the Oxford "Roland,"** by  
Eleanor Webster Bulatkin \$8.00

**A Concordance of the "Chanson de Roland,"** compiled by Joseph  
J. Duggan \$12.50

**Theology and Poetry in the Middle English Lyric,** by Sarah Apple-  
ton Weber \$10.00

**Galen on the Passions and Errors of the Soul,** translated by Paul  
W. Harkins, with an Introduction and Interpretation by Walther  
Riese \$4.75



**Ohio State University Press**  
**2070 Neil Avenue**  
**Columbus, Ohio 43210**