Peruigilium Veneris creating sublimated eroticism out of the blunt eroticism of his source text. The approach is to produce a very brief quasi-cento from a cento, and to turn language that Ausonius had made pornographic into decorous sexual imagery.[11] The obscene is transformed into the elegantly metaphorical and pictorial, and the ravished bride into a pretty flower.

It is tempting to think that the poet of the *Peruigilium Veneris* anticipated or hoped for a segment of readers who would recognize the Ausonian counterstrokes in lines 25–6. Perhaps he sought to entertain them with the contrast between his seemly sexual content and Ausonius' seamy pornography; or perhaps he aimed polemically to 'correct' Ausonius, by sexualizing Virgil in a cleaner way. Yet, whatever his intentions, the evidence offered in this note brings his reliance on the *Cento nuptialis*, and thus his post-Ausonian date, into clearer focus.

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BITS AND BRIDLES: A NOTE ON AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS 19.8.7*

ABSTRACT

Escaping from the sack of Amida in 359, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus encountered a runaway horse pulling behind it the dead body of a groom who had tied himself to the

immodest, *impudentem* (7), by using his poetry to describe wedding-night sex. In that case, the poet would rely not only on Ausonius' *ingressus* and *imminutio* but also on the bridge passage linking them; and *ruborem* and *pudebit* would be examples of double imitation, since they would each respond to two different lines in Ausonius. Yet the primary, if not exclusive, model for *non pudebit soluere* is clearly *soluitque pudorem* in *Cent. nupt.* 100. *noto* in *Peruigilium Veneris* 26, moreover, echoes *notus* (*ludus*), 'well-known fun/festivity', describing Fescennine verses, in Ausonius' parecbasis (4). One could propose imitation and the creation of a kind of intertextual zeugma, *notus* 'well-known' vs *Notus* 'South Wind'. But this would be to push things too far, not least because the reading *unico Noto marita* is very uncertain.

[11] It bears noting that Venus appears in *Cent. nupt.* 102 (*et mentem Venus dedit* = Verg. *G.* 3.267). Just maybe this too led the *Peruigilium* poet to think of the cento passage.

* This note arises from the two authors' collaboration on a new translation for the *Landmark Ammianus Marcellinus*, which is also leading to Kelly's new edition for the Oxford Classical Texts. Earlier stages of the translation project were funded by a Collaborative Research Grant from the American Council of Learned Societies and a Scholarly Editions and Translations Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Collaboration in person in 2024 was supported by the University of Bamberg (for which we thank Peter Riedlberger) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council Standard Grant, *The Last Historians of Rome*, grant number AH/Z505936/1. For the purpose of open access, the authors have applied a 'Creative Commons Attribution' (CC BY) licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

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horse and fallen off (19.8.6–7). The article argues that errors in text and punctuation and a lack of equestrian knowledge have led to an illogical interpretation of the passage. Where most translators describe the groom being tied to the reins, we should understand habena *as a halter used to guide the animal from on foot. Prose rhythm implies that* ne labi possit ex more *should be taken as a single clause, meaning 'in the usual manner to stop [the horse] escaping'. Moreover, attention to prose rhythm and Ammianus' usage also shows that we should further emend* sedens *to* insidens.

Keywords: Ammianus Marcellinus; textual criticism; translation; emendation; prose rhythm; Roman cavalry; horses

In the early autumn of 359, the Persian King Shapur II took by siege the Roman city of Amida in the province of Mesopotamia (modern Diyarbakır, Turkey). By far our most detailed source is the soldier-historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who was trapped in the city and escaped during its sack. An incident in his flight presents seemingly undetected problems in interpretation and text. Ammianus and his two anonymous companions have run ten miles from the city under the cover of night. Ammianus is exhausted—as a gentleman he is unused to travelling on foot (*ut insuetus ingenuus*, 19.8.6)—when he beholds a horrific sight which nevertheless brings him timely relief. Clark's text and punctuation are as follows and other editions differ only in minutiae (19.8.7):

fugaci equo nudo et infreni calonum quidam sedens (ne labi possit) ex more habenam qua ductabatur, sinistra manu artius inligauit, moxque decussus, uinculi nodum abrumpere nequiens, per auia saltusque membratim discerptus, iumentum exhaustum cursu pondere cadaueris detinebat, cuius dorsuali conprensi seruitio usus in tempore, cum isdem sociis ad fontes sulphureos aquarum suapte natura calentium, aegre perueni.

J.C. Rolfe's Loeb translation gives the conventional interpretation of what this means and all other translations, into whichever language, have very much the same sense, although (as we shall see) two of them improve on one crucial element:

A groom, mounted on a runaway horse without saddle or bit, in order not to fall off had tied the rein by which, in the usual manner, the horse was guided, tightly to his left hand; and afterwards, being thrown off and unable to loose the knot, he was torn limb from limb as he was dragged through desert places and woods, while the animal, exhausted by running, was held back by the weight of the dead body; so I caught it and making timely use of the service of its back, with those same companions I with difficulty reached some springs of sulphurous water, naturally hot.

Ammianus' ghoulishness has been noted by readers, as has the entitlement of social privilege by which he, the gentleman officer, gets to ride.[1] What has not been observed is that the implied actions of the dead groom make no sense and that there is something wrong with the conventional understanding of the sentence. A moment's consideration reminds us that a rider controls and directs a horse with a bit to which the reins are attached. Pulling on the reins transfers pressure from the bit to the mouth, tongue and

[1] See G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), 71: 'other people meeting multifarious and gruesome deaths', and J.F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), 78: 'The episode is a telling illustration of distinctions of social rank, revealed with the artless innocence of a man who never questions them.'

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gums, which tells the horse which way to go.[2] But here Ammianus is explicit about the lack of a bit (*infreni*), which means that any 'reins' to which the hapless groom had lashed himself would have been entirely useless.

One must ask what was happening, which leads one to the word *habenam*—if it produces nonsense when translated as 'reins', it makes sense when translated as 'halter': this is the advance made by Seyfarth (*Halfterriemen*, that is, halter straps) and Hamilton (halter), perhaps influenced by the *TLL* entry by Bulhart.[3] Roman grooms were not medieval squires riding behind their knights—they walked, along with the support staff, and their primary experience of horses was from the ground. Though it is no use for directing a horse from its back, a halter rope with correctly placed knots is the commonest and easiest way to direct a horse when on foot, as it pulls forward on the neck and throatlatch (and sometimes nose) and shows the horse the way. A groom would have been familiar with the correct use of a halter. But something is still wrong: the words *(ne labi possit) ex more habenam qua ductabatur … inligauit* clearly imply that the groom has tied the halter by which the horse is guided to his hand in the usual manner, lest he fall off. One may do various things to prevent oneself falling from a horse, but tying reins to one's wrist is not one of them, because if one does fall, it can lead directly to the fate that befalls the groom here. One might indulge in special pleading and say that in the heat of the moment he lashed the halter to his wrist and mounted the horse, forgetting what might go wrong. But that still will not do, because nothing in the language suggests he made a mistake. Whatever the groom did with the halter *ex more* was perfectly normal, and what he did was not what one normally does to stop oneself falling off a horse. So the problem lies elsewhere.

Fundamental in establishing the text of Ammianus is his prose rhythm.[4] Ammianus' accentual prose rhythm expresses itself in two or four unaccented syllables between the last two accented syllables of each clause: it is astonishingly regular—well over 98 per cent of clauses in the unemended text—and the absence of clausulation is as much a guide to modern editors of where corruption may lie as it was a guide for ancient readers as to where the sense-breaks were. The prose rhythm in this passage does indeed imply a problem. In the first sentence (*fugaci equo nudo et infreni calonum quídam sédens (ne lábi póssit) ex more habenam quá ductabátur, sinistra manu ártius inligáuit*) one finds regular clausulae after *ductabatur* and *inligauit*, but not at the clauses with the verbs *sedens* or *possit*, for which one would also expect them. The first of the two is solved by an easy emendation: Ammianus never uses the word *sedeo* for sitting on a horse, for

[2] See A. Hyland, *Equus: The Horse in the Roman World* (New Haven, 1991), 111–18 and R. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army* (New York, 1989), 93–124 for cavalry training. Both curb and snaffle bits survive from Roman contexts, as do metal *psalia* which functioned as a particularly severe hackamore on the muzzle and chin groove of the horse. Roman bits were in general much more severe than modern examples: see Hyland (this note), 136–44; M. Junkelmann, *Die Reiter Roms III: Zubehör, Reitweise, Bewaffnung* (Mainz, 1992), 11–34; K.R. Dixon and P. Southern, *The Roman Cavalry* (London, 1992), 62–7.

[3] W. Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Römische Geschichte. Teil 2: Buch 18–21* (Berlin, 1968), 63; W. Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354–378)* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 174. See *TLL* 6.3.2391.77–2394.84, s.v. *habena*, at 2392.46–9 (Bulhart, 1936), where this passage and Paulinus of Nola *Carm*. 18.385 are cited under 'in infrenatis i. q. capistrum'. Ammianus nowhere uses *capistrum* and this is his only use of *habena*.

[4] A.M. Harmon, *The Clausula in Ammianus Marcellinus* (New Haven, 1910); G. Kelly, 'Why we need a new edition of Ammianus Marcellinus', in M. Hanaghan and D. Woods (edd.), *Ammianus Marcellinus: From Soldier to Author* (Leiden, 2023), 19–58.

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which he uses *insido*.[5] We should read *quídam insídens* and mark a clausula, *in* having been lost after the final *m* of *quidam*.[6]

That leaves the problem of *possit*, which can be solved by reading on until one reaches a clausula: *ne labi póssit ex móre*. On the pattern of previous translations, that would mean 'in the usual manner to stop him [the groom] falling off'—but we have seen that that is not usual at all. Ammianus' usage of the verb *labor* is the key. While the fundamental sense of the verb is something like 'slide' or 'slip', its two main senses in Ammianus are 'to fall' (*OLD* s.v. *lābor*[1], 5) and, almost as frequently, 'to escape' (L&S s.v. *lābor*, I.B.2).[7] Here, it actually means 'in the usual manner to stop it [the horse] escaping': a groom would customarily tie a halter round his wrist in order to stop the horse escaping if it shied or tried to bolt and the groom's grip on the halter failed.

So finally we have sense: a groom has grabbed hold of the halter of a horse not yet tacked up and tied the halter to his wrist as he normally would in the course of his duties. Then, in the desperate hurry of a rout, he had tried to ride it using the halter as one would normally use reins, with the predictably deadly result. The one remaining mystery is how Ammianus was able to jerry-rig a bridle and reins to continue his journey on horseback. Perhaps with the immediate urgency gone, and the horse exhausted, it was more amenable to carrying a rider bareback with improvised reins or with a makeshift hackamore fashioned from cloth or leather. Or perhaps, one of Ammianus' less socially elevated companions played the part of a groom and led the horse by what remained of the halter.

The following is the emended and repunctuated text as it will appear in Kelly's forthcoming Oxford Classical Text:[8]

7. fugaci equo nudo et infreni calonum quidam <in>sidens,| ne labi possit ex more,| habenam qua ductabatur| sinistra manu artius illigauit.| moxque decussus| uinculi nodum abrumpere nequiens| per auia saltusque membratim discerptus| iumentum exhaustum cursu pondere

[5] Ammianus uses *sedeo* ten times to refer to a plan being settled, and twice for sitting without an object: G. Viansino, *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum lexicon* (Hildesheim, 1985), s.v. The phrase *equo . . . sedens* here is the only transmitted example where it would mean to sit on something. *insīdo*, by contrast, is Ammianus' standard word for sitting on a horse: 26.3.5 *equo phaleráto insídens*; 29.5.48 *equo celsióri insídens*. In these cases, the clausula confirms that the verb is *insīdo* not *insīdeo*, as it also does at 30.5.16 (a screech-owl perching on a rooftop). There is no instance in which Ammianus can be shown by form or rhythm to use *insideo* and it seems likely that his favoured form of these closely overlapping verbs is indeed *insido*. This finds support in his occasional use of the idiosyncratic perfect stem *insīd-* for *insēd-*, transmitted at 26.10.19, 28.4.18, 28.6.4, 31.10.16. We can therefore provisionally add as examples of *insido* for riding on horseback 17.12.3, 19.1.3, 29.5.15, 31.2.6; 25.1.15 for riding elephants; 15.7.4, 16.10.4, 21.16.21, 27.3.14 for riding in vehicles.

[6] The loss of *in* might have happened at any stage of the transmission, but it should be noted that the scribe of this part of MS Vat. lat. 1873, who took over at 19.2.6, is notably careless.

[7] For *lābor* as synonym of *effugere*, see *TLL* 7.2.779.73–789.25 s.v. *lābor*, at 788.57–789.2 (Flury, 1970): the absence of this meaning in *OLD* is striking, since there is an unquestioned example in Curt. 3.13.3 *e manibus custodientium lapsus*, which illustrates how the usage arose, and a possible case in Tac. *Ann*. 4.10.2 *lapsum custodiae*, often emended to *elapsum*. By our count Ammianus uses *labor* to mean 'escape, give the slip' on fifteen other occasions, for a literal fall on sixteen occasions, and a metaphorical fall on three: it is also used inter alia for the motion of rivers or for life slipping away. Given the ambiguity, the possibility should be borne in mind that Ammianus wrote *elabi*, a verb more straightforwardly meaning 'escape' and used by him twice in that sense (15.4.11, 16.12.16), and that the *e* was lost by haplography; he might also have written *dilabi*. Readers may wonder whether *possit* should be emended to *posset*, but Ammianus employs the present subjunctive of *possum* and *debeo* where sequence of tenses would expect the imperfect twenty-one and four times respectively. On tenses of the subjunctive in Ammianus' subordinate clauses, the standard reference point is still W. Ehrismann, *De temporum et modorum usu Ammianeo* (Strasbourg, 1886), 17–20.

[8] The use of the elevated bar to mark clausulae is discussed in Kelly (n. 4), 20 n. 1 and 36–41.

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cadaueris detinebat,| cuius dorsuali comprensi seruitio| usus in tempore| cum isdem sociis ad fontes sulphureos aquarum| suapte natura calentium| aegre perueni.|

We translate as follows in our forthcoming *Landmark Ammianus Marcellinus*:

(7) There was an escaped horse, without saddle or bridle; a groom, who had bound the halter with which it was led tightly to his left hand in the usual manner to prevent it escaping, had sat on it. And when he had soon been thrown off, he had been unable to break the knot that bound him and had been torn to pieces over the pathless tracts and upland valleys; he was slowing the animal, exhausted from running, with the weight of his corpse. Once the horse had been taken hold of, I made timely use of his back, and with the same comrades I managed with difficulty to reach some sulphurous springs of naturally warm waters.

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CONTRA MVNDVM, CONTRA METRVM: PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, A VICTIM OF PHILOLOGY (*AD CONIVGEM SVAM* 97)?*

ABSTRACT

The paper examines line 97 of the poem Ad coniugem suam*, traditionally attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine. This line has been misedited in the last two critical editions by Hartel (1894) and Santelia (2009), whose unjustified omission of the words* mundus *and* omnibus *(respectively) resulted in an unmetrical line and distorted the meaning of the text. This paper, therefore, advocates for a restoration of the original line.*

Keywords: Prosper of Aquitaine; Late Antiquity; Latin literature; dactylic metre; critical edition; manuscripts

The polymetric poem *Ad coniugem suam* is a poet's moving exhortation to his wife to cling to her Christian faith in the face of the dramatic events that shook Roman Gaul during the last decades of the empire (fifth century).[1] Although some scholars have

* This study forms part of the Research Project PID2021-124503NB-I00. I thank *CQ*'s referees for their useful suggestions.

[1] On this short piece, see P. Menna, 'Illud carmen quod *Ad coniugem* inscribitur, divi Paulini Nolani sitne an divi Prosperi Aquitani', *Latinitas* 10 (1962), 208–14; M. Cutino, 'Continuità e innovazione nella poesia latina del V sec. in Gallia: il protrettico alla conversione', *Auctores nostri* 4 (2006), 311–50; R. Chiappiniello, 'The *Carmen ad uxorem* and the genre of the epithalamium', in W. Otten and K. Pollmann (edd.), *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity. The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), 115–38; S. Santelia, '*Storie* di donne nella Gallia di età romanobarbarica', in P. Brunel and G. Dotoli (edd.), *La femme en Méditerranée* (Fasano and Paris, 2008), 85–95; S. Santelia, '*Fida comes* o *ianua mortis*? L'*Ad coniugem* di Prospero d'Aquitania e il *Commonitorium* di Orienzio', *BStudLat* 39 (2009)(a), 507–32; S. Santelia, 'Modelli femminili nella tarda antichità', *VetChr* 48 (2011), 335–57. The most recent edition, accompanied by an interesting introduction and a useful commentary, is that of S. Santelia

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