

LUCRETIUS, CICERO, THEODORUS:  
GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND LATIN ELOQUENCE  
IN CLAUDIAN'S ENCOMIASTIC IMAGINATION\*

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*This paper examines how and for what purpose Claudian praised the intellectual prowess of his addressee in the Panegyric in Honour of Mallius Theodorus, the only political poem of the author, in which the literary bilingualism is a main topic. The analysis of the technique deployed by the panegyrist reveals the political significance of this poem unattended so far, locating it properly in Claudian's production during the years 398-399. The verbal echoes and reminiscences in the portrayal of different philosophical schools in lines 61-112 disclose a sophisticated imitation of Lucretian poetical language. This set of allusions, read in the broader context of the poem as a whole, shows Claudian drafting a more wide-ranging framework in which Theodorus surpasses the preceding tradition and, in particular, Cicero as a paradigm of the philosopher-orator and of the intellectual bridge between Greece and Rome. This reading also allows to understand the specific propagandistic message of the poem: Theodorus complements Stilicho's political mission, drawing together the two traditions of the Empire and ensuring the continuity of Theodosius' legacy.*

**Introduction**

Declaimed in Milan in early 399, the *Panegyric in honor of Mallius Theodorus* (hereafter: *Theod.*) is Claudian's only political poem to acknowledge the significance of bilingualism and the intellectual prowess of its addressee. The latter<sup>1</sup>

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\* This study was carried out in the context of the research project entitled "*Alteritas: Alteridad lingüística y alteridad cultural en el Imperio Romano (ss. III-V): historiografía y géneros afines*" (Ref. FFI2010-15402/FILO), funded by the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad de España (HUM 20 0 7-60 515). I am grateful to the participants at the International Workshop "Linguistic and Cultural Alterity in the Late Roman Empire: Historiography and Panegyrics" for their observations, to C. Ware for her constructive criticism and suggestions, and to C. Wiener for her stimulating ideas. Any errors or inaccuracies are my own.

<sup>1</sup> He held the posts of governor in Africa and Macedonia, and *comes sacrarum largitionum* (AD 380). See *PLRE, Flavius Mallius Theodorus*; Simon 1975, 60-71, and Gualandri 2002.

was a local *homo novus* of renowned eloquence who had held a number of different posts until 382, when he chose to retire from political life and devote his energies to philosophical reflection. He returned to the public arena in 397, taking charge of the prefecture of Illyricum, and two years later was elected consul in the West. The political moment in which the *Theod.* emerged was determined by the fact that the post of consul in Rome was not awarded to Stilicho, while Eutropius had been appointed in Constantinople.

From a formal perspective, this panegyric rehearses the life story of Theodorus, combining distinctive features of both the encomiastic with aspects of the epic<sup>2</sup>. The opening lines (1-16a) frame the line of argument that shapes the whole poem: virtue is of such great value that it stands in need of no reward, although it may always be repaid with honours, even though the interested party – in this case, Theodorus – was not motivated by ambition. Having cited the fact that Theodorus' eloquence was acknowledged from an early age<sup>3</sup> (19-20): *dulce loquendi pondus...* ("thy pleasant talk weighty ..."), a lengthy description or *ekphrasis* (61-112) outlines the philosophical concerns favored by the new consul<sup>4</sup>. This is the context in which it is asserted that Theodorus' philosophical reflections succeeded in casting new light on obscure Greek theories through Latin embellishment (84-86): ***Graiorum obscuras Romanis floribus artes | inradias, vicibus gratis formare loquentes | suetus et alterno verum contexere nodo*** ("Thou dost adorn the obscure learning of Greece with Roman flowers, skilled to shape speech in happy interchange and weave truth's garlands with alternate knots" [tr. Platnauer, as all other translations from Claudian]).

This assertion is linked to the Roman practice of producing new versions of Greek philosophical works, a tradition in which Cicero had played a pioneering role<sup>5</sup>; it is also imbricated in the conventions of Neo-Platonist circles in the Latin West at that time<sup>6</sup>. However, there is also an unmistakable allusion to a well-known passage by Lucretius (1.136-139) in the text: ***Nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta | difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse, | multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum | propter egestatem linguae et rerum***

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<sup>2</sup> The critical consensus is that Claudian's poetic rests on sequences of descriptive vignettes rather than narrative passages; see Mehmel 1940, 99-132; Gualandri 1968, 8-9; Balzert 1974, especially 46-47; Fo 1982, 105-119; Gnilka 2007, 142-144 (the revised edition of Gnilka 1973).

<sup>3</sup> The topical sections on *genos* and *anastrophe*, which did not afford Claudian much potential, were replaced with praise of the *studiositas* and *eloquentia* that had marked the life of the dedicatee from his youth; to my mind, whether or not the *Theod.* contains the sections established by rhetorical convention is open to question: a contrary view is expressed, however, by Struthers 1919, above all 60, 86, and Simon 1975, 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> The section vividly turns the listener or reader into a spectator of Theodorus' philosophical achievements; on the ancient notion of *ekphrasis*, see Webb 2009.

<sup>5</sup> This tradition may be traced in a number of passages by Cicero: for example, in the introductions to the *De Officiis*, the *Tusculanae*, and the *De Finibus* (*Off.* 1.1; *Tusc.* 1.1; *Fin.* 1.1.1).

<sup>6</sup> Gualandri 2002, 338-339; for a different point of view, see Cameron 2011, 527-566.

*novitatem* (“Nor do I fail to understand that it is difficult to make clear the dark discoveries of the Greeks in Latin verses, especially since we have often to employ new words because of the poverty of the language and the novelty of the matters” [tr. Rouse/Smith, as all the other translations from Lucretius]).

The idea is further elaborated by Claudian in later verses (91-94) by means of an hyperbolic account wherein the Academy travels to Lazio seeking the counsel of Theodorus the master, so as to gain at last a true understanding of the principles of ethics (95-99) and physics (100-112). Here follow lines 91-96: *uno se pectore cuncta vetustas | condidit et maior collectis viribus exit. | Ornantur veteres et nobiliore magistro | in Latium spretis Academia migrat Athenis, | ut tandem propius discat, quo fine beatum | dirigitur, quae norma boni, qui limes honesti...* (“All the wisdom of the ancients is stored in that one brain whence it issues forth the stronger for its concentration. The ancients gain fresh and luster and, scorning Athens, the Academy migrates to Latium under a nobler master, the more exactly at last to learn by what end happiness guides its path, what is the rule of the good, the goal of the right ...”).

In the subsequent sections<sup>7</sup>, the poet heaps further praise on Theodorus’ intellectual prowess<sup>8</sup>, which comes to a crescendo in the expression of the desire that arts and letters may flower once more in the new age of Rome (261-264): *crecant virtutes fecundaque floreat aetas | ingeniis: patuit campus certusque merenti | stat favor: ornatur propriis industria donis. | Surgite sopitae, quas obruit ambitus, artes* (“Grow, ye virtues; be this an age of prosperity! The path of glory lies open to the wise; merit is sure of its reward; industry dowered with the gifts it deserves”).

Finally, the scene shifts to Mount Helicon, where Fame has told Urania, often Theodorus’ source of inspiration in his studies of astronomy<sup>9</sup>, that her protégé has been named consul of the New Year. The Muse urges her companions to organize the consular games, giving a detailed description of the various spectacles (270-332), which comprises a fifth of the whole poem. As a kind of epilogue, Urania (333-340) expresses the hope that Theodorus’ descendants may continue to sport the robes of the consul for generations to come.

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<sup>7</sup> The poem goes on to describe the visitation of Justice to Theodorus, urging him to return to active life (113-173a). Despite his initial doubts, Theodorus agrees to accept responsibility for the prefecture of Illyricum (173b-216); this passage is followed by a lengthy account of Theodorus’ virtues in the role of prefect (217-255). As Justice had done, the emperor too acknowledges Theodorus’ qualities and rewards his virtue with the post of consul (256-260).

<sup>8</sup> See, in particular, 251-255: *vel quis non sitiens sermonis mella politi | deserat Orpheus blanda testudine cantus? | qualem te legimus teneri primordia mundi | scribentem aut partes animae, per singula talem | cernimus et similes agnoscit pagina mores* (“Who that desires the honied charm of polished eloquence would not desert the lyre-accompanied song of tuneful Orpheus? In every activity we see thee as we see thee in thy books, describing the creation of the newly-fashioned earth or the parts of the soul; we recognize thy character in thy pages”).

<sup>9</sup> 274-275: *qua saepe magistra | Manlius igniferos radio descripserat axes* (“[Urania] whose hand had oft directed Manlius’ compass in marking out the starry spheres”).

In marked contrast, the imaginative world of Claudian's other political poems is peopled by characters who are, in general, monolingual<sup>10</sup>, who have no need to know Greek, nor to stand out from others because of their literary gifts, however much some of them may have been versed in both languages. This scenario is undoubtedly due to the demands of epic convention, which Claudian likewise obeys in portraying Stilicho and Honorius in heroic terms, and their foes Rufinus, Eutropius, and Alaric<sup>11</sup> as anti-heroes. Such forgetfulness of Greek culture, however, overlooks the fact that the poet himself was of Greek origin, and composed literature above all in his second language. Moreover, this paradox is heightened by the fact that Claudian's art is a refined poetic form addressed to readers well-versed in both traditions. Such readers could discern allusions to Latin writers like Ennius, Vergil, Juvenal, and Statius (Ware 2012, 7-8), among others, as well as to Greek authors, including perhaps Callimachus and Pindar (Gualandri 2004). Nevertheless, the characters in Claudian's panegyrics, set in an imaginary time and space, seem to live at a remove from the cultural pluralism of his era.

This paper explores the role played by praise of intellectual prowess in the *Theod.* and, in particular, the import of the philosophical *ekphrasis* presented in lines 61-112 for the encomiastic argument of the poem. Rather than trace in detail the poet's private loyalties to his first culture and the second culture from

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<sup>10</sup> A few exceptions may also be noted in this regard (see Hinds 2013, 171-174). In *IV Cons. Hon.* 396-398: *interea Musis, animus dum mollior, instes | et quae mox imitere legas; nec desinat umquam | te cum Graia loqui, te cum romana vetustas* ("Meanwhile cultivate the Muses whilst thou art yet young; red of deeds thou soon mayest rival; never may Greece's story, never may Rome's, cease to speak with thee"), Theodosius advises Honorius to learn the lessons of Ancient Greece and Rome, although the *exempla* given are Roman; see Gualandri 1998, 118-121. Likewise, in the *Epithalamion for Honorius and Maria*, Venus appears to the bride when she is lost in reading the Greek and Latin classics (vv. 230-233): *divinae fruitur sermone parentis | maternosque bibit mores exemplaue discit | prisca pudicitiae Latios nec voluere libros | desinit aut Graios* ("[Maria] was listening with rapt attention to the discourse of her saintly mother, drinking in that mother's nature and learning to follow the example of old-world chastity; nor does she cease under that mother's guidance to unroll the writers of Rome and Greece"); Claudian alludes to Homer, Orpheus, and Sappho, among others. Of the *carmina miscellanea*, *CM* 23 mentions Homer and Vergil, and in *CM* 41,12-13 Claudian describes the greatness of Probinus' consulship with a *recusatio* concerning his own origins: *Romanos bibimus primum te consule fontes | et Latiae cessit Graia Thalia togae* ("'Twas when thou wert consul that I first drank of the stream of Latin song and that my Muse, deserting Hellas, assumed the Roman toga").

<sup>11</sup> By contrast, Rufinus, a Gaul, and other bilingual characters in the invectives are depicted as uneducated. Thus, according to a section that may be regarded as *anastrophe* (see Levy 1946, 61), Rufinus was breastfed by the Megaera (1.92-95) by whom he was schooled in *dolos artesque nocendi* ("tricks and the arts of offence"). Claudian's attitude to the humble background and limited education of Hosius, a Spaniard, is scornful as well (see *Eutr.* 2.347-364). Praise of biculturalism does not sit well in either the *In Rufinum* or the *In Eutropium*, both of which strike a markedly anti-Greek tone. For Claudian's portrayal of Constantinople, see Kelly 2012.

which he made a living, the goal is to examine the way in which this panegyric relates to Claudian's body of work as whole. To my mind, the extravagant suggestion that, as a philosopher, Theodorus is more Greek than the Greeks themselves is a literary claim to be analyzed in literary terms. Such an approach suggests that the poetic value of lines 61-112 of the *Theod.* is greater than conventional wisdom allows, and enables a clearer understanding of the propaganda intended by Claudian in relation to the inauguration ceremonies for the year 399. First, the established framework of research as regards the encomium is outlined; then the echoes of Lucretius and allusions to Cicero throughout the poem are appraised; and finally, the literary content of the panegyric and the political significance of its being recited in Milan are read in relation to one another.

### **Scholarly neglect of Claudian's *Panegyric on Theodorus***

The *Theod.* has prompted less scholarly interest among researchers than other political poems by Claudian. While the edition and commentary by Simon 1975 is valid on its own terms, the scant attention paid to the panegyric by both Cameron 1970 and Döpp 1980 is striking. What is more, there is a lack of specifically literary readings of the poem<sup>12</sup>. This gap in the research literature is due to at least two reasons.

On the one hand, the poem's references to specific events in public life are much fewer than in other consular panegyrics or invectives; as such, the text is scarcely relevant as a historical source. Indeed, the poem's message is more general: it lauds a man of great talent in oratory and philosophy, whose features are complementary to those of Stilicho. Thus, Cameron comes to the conclusion that rather than being written at the behest of Claudian's patron, the poem was inspired by a – hypothetical – friendship between the poet and the philosopher<sup>13</sup>. Döpp 1980 and Müller 2011, in turn, hold that the poem may be read in a political sense, although such meaning is secondary. Whereas Döpp notes that the panegyric depicts Theodorus as a model of attainable virtue – a true Roman, a just and enlightened man, who acts on his authority without seeking his own glory, and a loyal ally of Stilicho<sup>14</sup> – Müller highlights the allusions in the *Theod.* to the time between the Gildonic crisis and Stilicho's consulship in the year 400<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, that the propagandistic content of this poem (if it exists at all) is to be read between the lines should be acknowledged, with the clear exception of lines 159-173, which

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<sup>12</sup> With the notable exceptions of Gualandri 2002 and Ware 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Cameron 1970, 126-127. The following scholars also reject the notion that the poem has political meaning: Simon 1975, 48-49 (“so ragt der Panegyricus auf Mallius Theodorus in dieser Hinsicht heraus”); Schmidt 1976, 23 (“reduzierte Anbindung an die Zeitgeschichte”); Gnlika 1977, 29; Castillo Bejarano 1993, 41-43; Guipponi-Gineste 2010, 140-145, and Garambois-Vasquez 2009, 316-319.

<sup>14</sup> Döpp 1980, 213-222. Charlet 2002 notes other nuances.

<sup>15</sup> Müller 2011, 213-222, 393-394; although he argues that the function of Urania's speech at the end of the poem is to underscore the artistic sensibility of the new consul in allegorical terms.

pay tribute to the coming of Stilicho's political hour, and of the allusion to Eutropius in 266-267: *non hic violata curulis | turpia non Latios incestant nomina fastos* ("Here is no pollution of the consul's office, no shameful names disgrace the Latin fasti").

On the other hand, the compositional features of the *Theod.* have not been afforded a specifically literary analysis until recently<sup>16</sup>, perhaps because Claudian is presumed to have repeated his established techniques in this regard. In light of the subject-matter at hand, there are no details of war and the epic scenes are presented in more modest terms than in the consular panegyrics dedicated to Honorius and Stilicho. Only section 61-112, which features the hyperbole concerning two cultures, has prompted a certain amount of critical attention, albeit such interest has centered on identifying what Theodorus' writings were and how far Claudian's knowledge of Greek philosophy may have extended. On the basis of these lines, Courcelle 1948 reconstructed the two great themes of Theodorus' Neo-Platonic thought: ethics and physics<sup>17</sup>. Gennaro 1957<sup>18</sup>, in turn, read the echoes of Lucretius sounded in this section in relation to the opening lines of *In Ruf.* 1.14-19, interpreting them as proof that Claudian was a kind of crypto-Epicurean. At the other end of the spectrum, Cameron argued that *Theod.* 61-112 makes no reference to the works of the new consul and focused on the strong sense of superficiality they convey. To his mind, Claudian's philosophical principles are limited and the literary allusions cited would stem from his having used the *De rerum natura* as a reference text for the full range of Greek schools of thought<sup>19</sup>. The reader is, in fact, presented with an impressionistic *ekphrasis* of ideas that do not comprise a coherent sense of Theodorus' philosophical work, beyond the fact that he composed a series of elegant dialogues on cosmology and ethics. Gualandri establishes an enabling middle ground by tracing specific features within the set of general statements recorded by Claudian – in particular, praise of Theodorus' eloquence and the themes he favoured in his work: happiness, the soul, and astronomy (Gualandri 2002, 335-338).

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<sup>16</sup> Ware 2012 interprets the Lucretian and Vergilian references as allusions to the Golden Age, which create a thematic thread for the whole poem. Accordingly, Iustitia had called Theodorus from his apparently golden intellectual retreat to ensure the presence of the goddess in the new Golden Age brought about by Honorius: see esp. 198-207. Her point of view obviously implies that the poem has a political significance.

<sup>17</sup> Courcelle 1948, 122-128; see also Zarini 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Above all 48-49, in which *Lucr.* 1.136-137 ≈ *Claud. Theod.* 84-85 is explicitly cited, and *Theod.* 79-83, 100-104 and 107-110 are referred to in general terms.

<sup>19</sup> Cameron 1970, 328-331, particularly 329: "Claudian used Lucretius merely as a convenient doxographical source". The hypothesis advanced by Harich-Schwarzbauer 2008, 351-355 (Claudian intended to cast Theodorus in an esoteric light, erasing his notes before the visitation of Justice) lacks textual support in the poem itself.

### Lucretian echoes in *Theod.* 61-112

However, a reading of *Theod.* 61-122 may be enriched by exploring the poetic echoes cited above from the perspective of Claudian's typical approach to literary allusion. Given the presence of the addressee being praised and the illustrious audience attending the great event of the poem's recitation, it should come as no surprise that these lines do not comprise a systematic account of Neo-Platonic thinking as formulated by Theodorus. Indeed, the new consul himself would have expected little more than a few kind words, heightened in style to match the emotion of the occasion. Due to his education and intellectual experience, Theodorus would have been far more familiar than Claudian with the various schools of thought involved, and both would have been aware of this disparity in expertise. In short, the expectations of the audience, of the poem's addressee, and of Claudian himself would have precluded any thorough *disputatio de doctrinis*.

Moreover, Lucretian language is a hallmark of philosophical texts in Latin from the end of the third century AD onwards. Prose texts and works in verse by both Christian and pagan writers dealing with such themes as astronomy, natural philosophy, and apologetics<sup>20</sup> often drew on the enigmatic solemnity of Lucretius' epicurean style. A comprehensive *Quellenforschung* of *Theod.* 61-112 does not fall within the scope of this paper, nor is it intended to map the full range of Lucretian echoes in fourth-century literature<sup>21</sup>. For the purposes of the argument presented here, a number of examples illustrating the particular ways in which the model is evoked may suffice<sup>22</sup>. *Theod.* 79-83, for instance, comprises a succinct account of the key ideas of atomistic thought: *ille ferox unoque tegi non passus Olympo | immensum per inane volat finemque perosus | parturit innu-*

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<sup>20</sup> Arnobius, Lactancius, and Augustine drew on Lucretius' archaisms, despite engaging critically with his atheism: see, among others, Hagendahl 1958, 12-47, 81-88; 1983, 35-37, 44-46; Heck 1988. The following expression from August. *De vita beata* 1.1 *res enim multum obscura est, sed tamen a te iam illustranda suscepta* ("the matter is very difficult, although you have already made a beginning to unravel the problems" [tr. editors]), cited by Gualandri 2002, 330 note 9, should also be borne in mind. Agozzino 1972, especially 196-200, likewise attributes the archaisms used in *Carmen* 4 by Tiberianus to imitation of Lucretius. More recently still, see Turcan-Verkerk 2003, 72-73 on echoes of Lucretius in the poem *De cereo Paschali* that she ascribes to Pacatus Drepanius, above all in vv. 3 (*machina mundi* ["the mechanism of the world"]) and 6-7 (*verrentes venti... lucis noctisque vices* ["the sweeping winds ... the alternating lights of day and of night"]).

<sup>21</sup> As far as may be ascertained, no detailed study of the influence of Lucretius on the literature of Late Antiquity has yet been carried out; however, the effort may not be worth it, given that Epicureanism is not a living doctrine at that time. The existence of a written codex dating to the fourth or fifth century AD, as concluded by Lachmann, is now generally accepted; however, this sheds little light on the reception of Lucretius in literary circles in Western cities during the preceding century.

<sup>22</sup> Claudian does not quote literally, but implies that such allusions are significant by changing the order of the original texts: Gualandri 2004, 78-95; Keudel 1970, 157-159. For the different types of intertextuality in Claudian, see Ware 2012, 10-16.

*meros angusto pectore mundos. | Hi vaga collidunt caecis **primordia** **plagis**; | numina constituunt alii casusque relegant* (“That fearless spirit, not content with the covering of but one sky, flies through the limitless void and, scorning a limit, conceives in one small brain a thousand worlds. Others make wandering atoms clash with blind blows, while others again set up deities and banish chance”).

These lines cite at least two expressions that are used repeatedly in *De rerum natura*: *per inane*, which denotes how the atoms or particles float in the void<sup>23</sup>; and *primordia rerum*. See, for instance, Lucr. 2.83-85<sup>24</sup>: *nam quoniam **per inane** vagantur, cuncta necessent | aut **gravitate** sua ferri **primordia** rerum | aut **ictu** forte alterius* (“For since the first-beginnings of things wander through the void, they must all be carried on either by their own weight or by a chance blow from another atom”), and Lucr. 5.187-188: *namque ita multa modis multis **primordia** rerum | ex infinito iam tempore percita **plagis*** (“For so many first-beginnings of things in so many ways, smitten with blows... from infinite time up to the present”).

The description of Theodorus’ work on astronomy in *Theod.* 100-112 likewise sounds significant echoes of *De rerum natura*, especially books V and VI, with which it shares a marked thematic affinity; the meaning of some of these echoes is general (*materiae causas*), but others are more specific *iuncturae* – above all, *machina (mundi)*<sup>25</sup>, *varii meatus*, and *flamma velox...excutiat*. So *Theod.* 100-112: *at quotiens elementa doces semperque fluentis | materiae **causas**: quae vis animaverit astra | inpuleritque choros; quo vivat **machina** motu; | sidera cur septem retro nitantur in ortus | oblutata polo; **variis** ne **meatibus** idem | arbiter an geminae convertant aethera mentes; | sit ne color proprius rerum, lucis ne repulsu | eludant aciem; tumidos quae luna recursus | nutriat Oceani; quo fracta **tonitrua** vento, | quis trahat imbriferas **nubes**, quo **saxa** creentur | **grandinis**; unde rigor nivibus<sup>26</sup>; quae **flamma** per auras | **excutiat** rutilos tractus aut fulmina **velox** | torqueat aut tristem fingat crinita cometen* (“How often hast thou taught us the nature of the elements and the causes of matter’s ceaseless change; what influence has given life to the stars, moving them in their courses; what quickens with movement the universal frame. Thou tellest why the seven planets strive backward towards the East, doing battle with the firmament; whether there is one lawgiver to different movements or two minds govern heaven’s revolution; whether colour is a property of matter or whether objects deceive our sight and owe their colours to reflected light; how the moon causes the ebb and

<sup>23</sup> See 1.108; 1103; 1108; 2.65; 97; 109; 116; 151; 158; 222; 226...

<sup>24</sup> See also, however, Lucr. 1.55; 210; 268; 483; 485; 501; 548; 570; 593; 609; 712; 753; 765; 778; 815; 817; 828; 847; 848; 908; 918; 1021; 1110; 2.80; 84; 121; 133; 157; 378; 479; 522; 567; 653; 696; 796; 854; 883; 916; 1007; 5.187 ≈ 419; 195.

<sup>25</sup> See Lucr. 5.96; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 2.8, *Epit.* 37.2; Chalcid. *In Tim.* 2.147, 299; Prudent. *Ham.* 247; *De cereo Paschali* 3-14: *Voluitur immensi socialis machina mundi, | Te caelum et quicquid caeli tegit aureus umbo |... pro se quisque tremunt* (“The unifying mechanism of the immense world turns around, the sky and whatever the Golden shield [of heaven] touches ... all tremble for you” [tr. editors]).

<sup>26</sup> See Lucr. 5.746, 5.637.



flow of the tide; which wind brings about the thunder's crash, which collects the rain clouds and by which the hailstones are formed; what causes the coldness of snow and what is that flame that ploughs its shining furrow through the sky, hurls the swift thunderbolt, or sets in heaven's dome the tail of the baleful comet") has to be compared with Lucr. 5.550-551: *Praeterea grandi tonitru concussa repente | terra supra quae se sunt concutit omnia motu*<sup>27</sup> ("Besides, the earth shaken suddenly with a mighty thunderclap, shakes all that is above itself with its motion"), and Lucr. 6.686-689: *hic ubi percaluit calefecitque omnia circum | saxa furens, qua contingit, terramque et ab ollis | excussit calidum flammis velocibus ignem, | tollit se ac rectis ita faucibus eicit alte*<sup>28</sup> ("When this wind has grown hot, and has heated all the surrounding rocks by its fury wherever it touches, and also the earth, and from these has struck out hot fire with quick flames, it rises and throws itself upwards straight through the mountain's throat").

Thus, it is clear that *Theod.* 61-112 evinces significant parallels to verses in Lucretius' *De rerum natura* dealing with similar topics. However, such echoes are also diverse, at times even encompassing opposing points of view, such as the theories of both atomists (*Lucr.* 5.550-551 and 6.686-689) and Neo-Platonists (*Theod.* 100-112). In this regard, it is remarkable that a number of the most 'Lucretian' *iuncturae* cited in this section are also to be found in the work of other contemporary writers, who draw on the model in similar ways, albeit for different ends. Paulinus of Nola, for instance, echoed Lucretius' *primordia rerum*<sup>29</sup> in *Carmen* 22, a *protrepsis* addressed by the poet to his relative Jovius, whom he seeks to persuade of the superiority of the Sacred Scriptures over Epicureanism, in which he draws on language used in *De rerum natura* to outline atomist thought (Paulin. 22.35-38) and to frame a Christian counterargument (Paulin. 22.148-151): *nosse moves causas rerum et primordia mundi: | ne vagus innumeros, Epicuri somnia, mundos, | quos atomis demens per inane parentibus edit, | inritus in vacuum spatiato pectore quaeras* ("You seek to discover the causes of creation and the beginnings of the universe: Do not search aimlessly for the innumerable words of which Epicurus idly dreamt, which that

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<sup>27</sup> See also Lucr. 5.772-775: *Quod superest, quoniam magni per caerula mundi | qua fieri quicquid posset ratione resolui, | solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus | noscere possemus quae vis et causa cieret...* ("And now to proceed: since I have explained in what way everything might come to pass through the blue spaces of the great firmament, so that we might be able to understand what force and what cause set in motion the sun's varied courses and the moon's travels...").

<sup>28</sup> See also Lucr. 6.96-98: *Principio tonitru quatiuntur caerula caeli | propterea quia concurrunt sublime volantes | aetheriae nubes contra pugnantibus ventis* ("In the first place, the blue sky is shaken with thunder, because flying clouds rush together high in the ether, when winds fight against each other").

<sup>29</sup> The literal coincidence in Ov. *Met.* 15.67-69: *primordia mundi | et rerum causas et, quid natura, docebat, | quid deus, unde niues, quae fulminis esset origo...* ("the beginnings of the great universe, the causes of things and what their nature is: what God is, whence come the snows, what is the origin of lightning...") is also an imitation of Lucretius.

lunatic posits as originating from parent-atoms in the void; your heart would be fruitlessly journeying into vacuity”) (35-38) and ... *his, precor, his potius studiumque operamque legendis | scribendisque vove; cane grandia coepta tonantibus, | scribe creatarum verbo primordia rerum | et chaos ante diem primaeque crepuscula lucis...* (“I beg you, devote your studies and efforts rather to reading and writing about these events. Sing of the mighty projects of the Thunderer, write of the beginnings of the universe created by the Word, of the chaos before there was day and the dawn of the first light...” [tr. Walsh]) (148-151).

Returning to the work of Claudian, the opening verses of *In Rufinum* also reference Lucretius for a different purpose, thus confirming that the evocation of *De rerum natura* in the *Theod.* is not content-centered. In the *In Ruf.* 1.1-19 Claudian calls into question the existence of the gods and the punishment of criminals so as to shape his invective against Rufinus, whose ending would contradict Epicurean thought. To this end, he combines allusions to *De rerum natura* – above all 5-6: *annique meatus | et lucis noctisque vices* (“the year’s fixed cycle and the alternation of light and darkness”) and 16-17: *vacuo quae currere semina motu | adfirmat magnumque novas per inane figuras | fortuna non arte regi* (“which teaches us that atoms drift in purposeless motion and that new forms throughout the vast void are shaped by chance and not in design”) – with references to Juvenal’s Satire XIII, thus reinforcing the mocking tone of the composition as a whole<sup>30</sup>.

These parallels prompt the conclusion that the Lucretian intertextuality in *Theod.* 61-112 is based on the language, rather than the message, of the texts: in other words, this section imitates the solemn *obscuritas* of the Lucretian tradition so as to splice Theodorus’ work into the most distinguished tradition of Latin philosophical poetry. Whatever the case may be, the echoes of *De rerum natura* do not mimic a model that is foreign both to Claudian’s poetic worldview and to the theme of the verses in this section, which articulate an eclectic overview of the *diversae sectae*, not only of Epicureanism and atomism.

### **Theodorus, greater than a new Cicero**

The full meaning of the philosophical *ekphrasis* in *Theod.* 61-112 is disclosed by reading the passage in the context of other inspirations that shape the poem as a whole. In this regard, Ware’s interpretation of the poem as an organic allusion to the Golden Age through Lucretian and Vergilian echoes (Ware 2012, 198-207) unquestionably enriches our understanding, but it does not necessarily exclude, to my mind, other references in the poem. In fact, Claudian’s purpose in these lines was not to compare Theodorus to the epicurean Lucretius; as a thinker and poet, the latter could hardly serve as a model for a Neo-Platonist author of prose dialogues like the former. Throughout the poem, however,

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<sup>30</sup> Gennaro 1957, 7-38; Cameron 1968; Funke 1986, 358; Schmitz 2009, 211-213; Garambois-Vasquez 2007, 151-152; Charlet 2000, 186-187.

Claudian alludes to Cicero in his account of the new consul, an aspect of the text that calls for further elucidation.

In the fourth century, Cicero still set the ideal standard of the philosophically-educated orator<sup>31</sup>, the emblematic paradigm of a politician who was likewise expert in rhetoric and well-schooled in the theories of Greek philosophers. The immediate similarities with Theodorus are striking: both are *homines novi*, eloquent lawyers, expert translators of Greek thought, and both combine scholarly reflection with political action. However, significant differences are also evident in this regard: as depicted in the panegyric, Theodorus outstrips Cicero as both a philosopher and a statesman.

As regards Theodorus' prowess as a thinker, Claudian does not limit his remarks to the Cicero-derived idea that philosophy may provide the individual with a safe haven from the storms of life (61-63: *Postquam parta quies et summum nacta cacumen | iam secura petit privatum gloria portum, | ingenii redeunt fructus aliique labores...* ["When repose was earned and now, after reaching the highest praise, glory, laying care aside, seeks refuge in a private life, genius again wins reward from other tasks"])<sup>32</sup>. The hyperbole articulated in *Theod.* 93-99 asserts that Theodorus' dialogues, which translate Greek thought into the Latin language, improve on the achievement of the pioneer of this genre in Rome, thus prompting the Academy to seek out new inspiration in Latium. This view is especially significant given the fact that philosophy in the Latin West was regarded as the crowning intellectual enterprise of the elite<sup>33</sup>, which contemplated itself in the mirror of Cicero, translator and epitomist. Although knowledge of the Greek language had fallen into general decline in the West during the fourth century, philosophy continued to draw on the Greek tradition<sup>34</sup>: the philosophical works of the time are, above all, versions of well-known Greek texts (Cameron 2011, 527-535) or summaries of *tritissimae doctrinae* taken from compendiums then in use<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, the influence of Cicero as a model on the work of the Neo-Platonist Marius Victorinus: Hadot 1971, 79-88.

<sup>32</sup> Gualandri 2002, 329-345. It is striking that Augustine also uses the images of voyage and philosophy as port in the stormy waters of life, when he dedicates his *De beata vita* to Theodorus (cf. 1.2) in 386; this suggests that both Claudian and Augustine were alluding to a favorite metaphor of Theodorus', although they may have been referring to two different periods in his life.

<sup>33</sup> It was not, however, an exclusive activity; in fact, there are no records of professional philosophers in the Latin West in the fourth century, nor is there any evidence that there were schools of philosophy as such, set up under either imperial or municipal authority, see Hadot 2005, 247-261.

<sup>34</sup> Hadot 2005, 414-415. I am not sure whether tradition then still required that philosophical dialogues be composed in Greek: see, however, August. *Ep.* 118.2.9: *...si forte iam recolunt non Romanorum fororum sed Graecorum gymnasiorum ista solere esse certamina* ("they have not forgotten that the scene of these contests was wont to be, not the Roman forum, but the Greek gymnasium" [tr. Cunningham]).

<sup>35</sup> Neo-Platonist views were also spread via means other than the normal modes of transmission, a process in which compendiums, epitomes, and anthologies must have played a very important part, see Szidat 1982 on the evidence provided by Ammianus.

Moreover, such literary production emerged against the background of rhetorical education; it was an advanced development of the exercises practiced in the early stages of schooling<sup>36</sup>, in which Cicero also figured as a significant model.

At the same time, Theodorus is also said to eclipse Cicero as a politician. The recurring motifs of steering a course through life and of the ship of state explicitly frame Theodorus' political career in terms of the tradition of Cicero<sup>37</sup>. Theodorus may have started out as a humble sailor, but he ended up becoming the helmsman of the ship (*Theod.* 42-46, esp. 46: *...iam clavum totamque subit torquere carinam* ["he has charge of the helm and is entrusted with the direction of the entire ship"]), a position that Cicero regarded as the pinnacle of political success. However, unlike the latter, Theodorus never aspired to honour and glory. Needless to say, it might be argued that alluding to Cicero in a description of an individual famed for his eloquence is a commonplace of the *encomium* as such, just as the use of seafaring metaphors to figure the workings of government in a country are a recurring motif in classical literature generally. In other words, such allusions or cross-references might be read as generic coincidences or, at best, unconscious borrowings that shed no new light on an interpretation of the text as a whole. Indeed, Cicero is not referred to by name at any point in the poem, unlike Plato, Themistocles, Lysurgus, Brutus, Fabricius, and Cato (both the Elder and the Younger) in lines 149-165. If Claudian had wanted to allude to Cicero as a model, could he not also have cited him by name as he did in line 149: *tuus Plato?*

However, the fact that the *exempla* mentioned above were presented by the goddess Justice in her speech before Theodorus is significant. In other words, the argument here is that if Claudian's purpose was to present an allusion that encompassed the structure of the poem as a whole, he would be likely to reject explicit citation in a list of names in favor of a more typological approach (Gualandri 1998, 135-136). Indeed, other allusions in the panegyric likewise imply that Claudian's goal was to effect an overall comparison between the new consul and Cicero. Some of these echoes are subtle intertextual references, like the discussion of the value of virtue untainted by personal ambition, as in the poem's opening verses (*Theod.* 1-3): *Ipsa quidem Virtus pretium sibi, solaque late | Fortunae secura nitet nec fascibus ullis | erigitur plausu peti clarescere vulgi* ("Virtue is its own reward; alone with its far-flung splendor it mocks at Fortune; no honours raise it higher nor does it seek glory from the mob's applause").

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<sup>36</sup> Philosophy played a real, albeit discreet, part in the work of professional poets in the Greek East: Cameron 1965, 491-497 argues that Olympiodorus, Christodorus, Andronicus, and Harpocration, at least, showed some interest in philosophical issues. Zoticus, a friend of Plotinus, must have written a paraphrased version of Plato's *Crito* entitled *Atlantikos* (Porph. *Plot.* 7), and Marinus a paraphrase in hexameters of his biography of Proclus, see Hose 2004, 9-11.

<sup>37</sup> Seafaring motifs to denote human life and political activity are everywhere in Cicero's work: see, among other passages, *Sen.* 17; *Div.* 2.3; *Off.* 1.25, 87; *Phil.* 2.113; *Pis.* 20; *Rep.* 1.11,51; 2.3; *S.Rosc.* 51; *Sest.* 20, 27, 46, 99.

Given its parallel to Sen. *Ep.* 81.19: *Virtutum omnium pretium in ipsis est* (“The reward for all the virtues lies in the virtues themselves”)<sup>38</sup>, this idea is usually attributed to the Senecan tradition. However, the notion is of general currency and is not confined to Seneca’s school of Stoic thought. In fact, *Theod.* 7-9 (*hanc tamen invitam blande vestigat et ultro | ambit Honos* [“yet in its own despite importunate honours pursue it, and offer themselves unsought”]) notes the nuance that *honos* stems as a matter of course from *virtus*, a note that might be read in relation to the definition of *honos* in Cic. *Brut.* 281<sup>39</sup>: *cum honos sit praemium virtutis* (“since honour is a reward of merit”). That is to say, the opening verses of the panegyric for Theodorus may allude to Cicero in general, and this connection need not be read as especially relevant.

However, the significance of this link is bolstered by the fact that Urania appears in the final section of the *Theod.*<sup>40</sup>, inviting the other muses to help prepare the consular games in honour of Theodorus. The goddess takes this initiative on foot of a lengthy speech, precisely because she had often been Theodorus’ inspiration in his studies of astronomy (*Theod.* 274-276: see, in particular, *Uranie redimita comas, qua saepe magistra | Manlius igniferos radio descripserat axes* [“Then Urania, her hair wreath-crowned, whose hand had oft directed Manlius’ compass in marking out the starry spheres”]). Informed readers will undoubtedly be aware that Urania declaimed an equally lengthy speech (78 lines) in the second book of the epic poem *De consulatu suo* (2.6-8), which Cicero wrote in the year 60, about his own life and works three years before, a text that is also quoted in *De divinatione* (*Div.* 1.17-22): *et, si stellarum motus cursusque vagantis | nosse velis, quae sint signorum in sede locatae | quae verbo et falsis Graiorum vocibus errant...* (“When one has learned the motions and variant paths of the planets, | stars that abide in the seat of the signs, in the Zodiac’s girdle, spoken of falsely as vagrants or rovers in Greek nomenclature...”) [tr. Falconer]<sup>41</sup>. The Muse appeared to Cicero to persuade him of the portents for the year that marked his consulship (Jocelyn 1984, 44-47; in contrast to Koch 1922, 19). In Claudian’s poem, conversely, the goddess is preparing the inauguration games for the New

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<sup>38</sup> In his apparatus of sources, Birt 1892 also cites *Sil.* 13.663: *Ipsa quidem virtus sibimet pulcherrima merces* (“Virtue is indeed its own noblest reward”), and *Ov. Pont.* 2.3.11-12: *nec facile invenias...unum | Virtutem pretium qui putet esse sui* (“nor can one easily find ... a single man who considers virtue its own reward”). Simon 1975, *ad loc.* adds Cic. *Rep.* 6.8; Sen. *Ben.* 4.1; *Cl.* 1.1; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 3.12.13.

<sup>39</sup> See also Cic. *Fam.* 10.10.2: *is autem qui vere appellari potest honos non invitamentum ad tempus sed perpetuae virtutis est praemium* (“But an honour truly so called is not an allurement offered at a crisis, but the reward of constant merit”).

<sup>40</sup> *Theod.* 270-273: *Nuntia votorum celeri iam Fama volatu | moverat Aonios audito consule lucos. | Concinuit felix Helicon fluxitque Aganippe | largior et docti riserunt floribus amnes* (“Now had Fame, announcing our good fortune, winged her way to Aonia whose groves she stirred with the tidings of the new consul. Helicon raised a hymn of praise, Aganippe flowed with waters more abundant, the streams of song laughed with flowers”).

<sup>41</sup> This idea was noted by Balzert 1974, 46-47, note 204.

Year. What is more, Cicero's text recalls the solemnity of Lucretius, above all in the opening verses, *Principio aetherio* (Koch 1922, 20-24; Jocelyn 1984, 48-50), as well as the reference to *claras artes* in line 74<sup>42</sup>, and deals with questions of astronomy (*si stellarum motus cursusque vagantis | nosse velis...*); in other words, Cicero's work is part of the poetic tradition that Claudian sought to invoke in *Theod.* 61-112<sup>43</sup>; there are thematic parallels between the former and the latter. Such similarities imply that the reason why the Muse appears (i.e., her general command of astronomy, see *Theod.* 274-275) comprises another allusion to *De consulatu*<sup>44</sup>.

A final intertextual echo sounded by Claudian in the closing words of Urania's speech precludes the possibility that the similarities to Cicero's work discussed here amount to an over-interpretation of the text. In her last invocation, which articulates her wish that Theodorus' descendants too may prove worthy of the consulship, the Muse makes explicit reference to the two fields that frame the comparison, philosophy and politics, thus expressing her desire that Theodorus be read and chosen both for his works and his successes, as both literary master and consul (333-335): *consul per populos idemque gravissimus auctor | eloquii, duplici vita subnixus in aevum, | procedat pariter libris fastisque legendus* ("As consul at once and stateliest master, upborne by a twofold fame, let Manlius go forth among the peoples, read in his own books and in our calendars").

The expression *auctor eloquii* unquestionably connotes the *iunctura* Lucan used in relation to Cicero (Lucan. 7.62-63: *Romani maximus auctor | Tullius eloquii* ["Cicero, the chief model of Roman eloquence"]), and which Augustine likewise cited in referring to the latter<sup>45</sup>, before Claudian cited the same term in this passage of the *Theod.*

To sum up, Claudian maps an implicit comparison between Theodorus and Cicero that encompasses the poem as a whole. The comparison is based on similarities between both individuals; it is implied by the initial notion of honor as the reward of virtue; it is expanded through the parallels drawn between Theodorus, the new

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<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Cons.* 72-74: *otia qui studiis lati tenere decoris, | inque Academia umbrifera nidoque Lyceo | fuderunt claras fecundi pectoris artis* ("[they, who] gladly devoted their leisure to study of all that was noble, who, in Academy's shade and Lyceum's dazzling effulgence, uttered the brilliant reflections of minds abounding in culture" [tr. Falconer]).

<sup>43</sup> Whether or not Claudian regarded this point as a common ground of continuity from Ennius to the work of Lucretius and the poetry of Cicero (the *Aratea* and the *De consulatu*, in particular) requires more detailed analysis (see Volk 2013, 98-99); on the imitation of Ennius in the *Aratea* and the idea of the passing of the Greek into the Roman world in that work, however, see Morford 1967 and Gee 2001, 526, 535-536.

<sup>44</sup> It is likely that in Claudian's day the text of the poem was known only via indirect quotations, of which Urania's speech in *Div.* 1.17-22 is the most substantial: see, for instance, Lactant. *Div. inst.* 3.17.14, which paraphrases lines 36-38. The traces of the *De consulatu suo* in the fourth century were compiled in Felgentreu 2001, who held that Claudian imitated Cicero's poem in the three books of the *Cons. Stil.*; the argument is provocative, but the evidence is tenuous; see also Soubiran 1972, 84-85.

<sup>45</sup> August. *Ep.* 143.3; 258.1; *De doct. Christ.* 4.17; *C.D.* 14.18.

consul, and Cicero, philosopher and translator; and it is crowned by Urania's performance. However, any lingering doubt as to who has been set up as the poem's model and standard is removed by a final twist in the tail, underscored by the use of enjambment, wherein the panegyric's subject is referred to as *gravissimus auctor | eloquii* ("stateliest master of eloquence"). This hyperbolic expression, which is quite at home in the imaginary world of the panegyric, highlights the striking assertion that Theodorus is more than a new Cicero: he epitomizes the translation of Greece into Rome. By using this expression, Claudian inspires a special form of collective pride among his audience – pride in a new generation worthy of comparison with the Greeks, an association that was particularly meaningful in the political moment marked by the poem's recitation.

### **The political message of Claudian's *Panegyric on Theodorus***

The sequence in which Claudian presented his works in 398-399 suggests that the *Theodorus* was intended not only to convince the poem's listeners of Theodorus' suitability as the new consul, but also to unite the audience emotionally. The listenership is invited to identify with the encomiastic imagination that Claudian had been articulating over the course of years, and which shaped the grand narrative of a new Golden Age that Theodosius had inaugurated in a united Empire.

Indeed, in the first texts composed following the *Panegyric for Olybrius and Probinus*<sup>46</sup> – in particular, *Panegyricus de III Consulatu Honorii, In Rufinum*, and *Panegyricus de IV Consulatu Honorii*, which were recited between January 396 and January 398 – Claudian emphasized that the harmony between Theodosius' two successors would ensure continuity, although he noted that Stilicho was the legitimate guardian because he brought together both parts of the Empire. Nevertheless, the hostility that broke out in the political situation between East and West by 397, compelled Claudian to register such enmity in his work. *In Gildonem* (April 398), *Theod.* (January 399), and *In Ruf.* 1 and 2 (spring and August 399) expressly convey the view that Eutropius' actions and the denunciation of Stilicho as *hostis publicus* in the Eastern half of the Empire (Summer 397) amounted to a betrayal of Theodosius' legacy and of the authentically Roman tradition as such (Müller 2011, 417-424). The West, by contrast, was held to have remained true to that legacy, thus earning divine favour. The underlying purpose of this version of events was to legitimize the position of Stilicho, who had acted on Theodosius' behalf for the preceding two years without ever laying claim to usurp the latter's power (Cameron 1970, 124-126; Döpp 1980, 133-149). Hence, as early as April 398, the *In Gildonem* makes vague references to unknown forces that threaten the *concordia fratrum* (*Gild.* 4-5) and seek to stir up trouble between Arcadius and Stilicho. However, the text contains no refer-

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<sup>46</sup> The only one of his poems written during Theodosius' lifetime.

ence to the fact that Stilicho had been described as *hostis publicus* in the East, and avoids any suggestion that Eutropius was responsible for the problems caused by the disruption in the supply of grain from Africa. In fact, when the spirit of Theodosius appears to Arcadius, he does not berate him because of Gildon's rebellion; he merely reminds him that the latter had already betrayed the Romans in the past (*Gild.* 246-255). Later, during Honorius' stirring speech before battle, the omen of an eagle (*Gild.* 467-471) shows that the gods – above all, Jupiter – are on Rome's side.

Pursuing a similar line of argument, albeit from a slightly different perspective, the panegyric to Theodorus presents him as a model of personal progress to match the ideals figured by Stilicho and Honorius: a virtuous and erudite nobleman, whom the goddess of Justice called out of a life of leisure into political activity in the new age. Not only does the poem depict Theodorus as the polar opposite to Eutropius, the eunuch who had been appointed consul in Constantinople that same year; rather, Theodorus is also portrayed as encompassing within himself the authentic traditions of Greece and Rome in a way that is true to Theodosius' legacy, and thus likewise true to the divine protectors of the *Urbs*<sup>47</sup>.

This line is further pursued in the first book of the *In Eutropium*, 1.391-513 (spring 399), in which the goddess Roma herself announces that the gods have turned against the East, because Eutropius had defiled the tradition of the consulship. However, given that the *Theod.* contains no explicit reference to the consul of the East except for the remark in verses 266-267 (*non hic violata curulis | turpia non Latios incestant nomina fastos* ["Here is no pollution of the consul's office, no shameful names disgrace Latin fasti"]), it is difficult to say whether Claudian's sharp contrast between Theodorus and Eutropius anticipates the two books of the *In Eutropium*.

It is more likely that developments during that same year prompted the poet to take a different tack in *Eutr.* 2 (September 399) and in *On the Consulship of Stilicho* (January 400), and to set aside the line of argument he had first formulated in the encomium to Theodorus<sup>48</sup>. Claudian's overarching narrative is open

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<sup>47</sup> This view enables a reading of the cryptic *praefatio* in *Theod.* (*Carm.* 16) as a statement that Theodorus is to preserve Greek culture in the West. Recent interpretations proposed by Felgentreu 1999, 94-100, Charlet 2002, and Guipponi-Gineste 2010, 294-296 follow an interesting line in this regard, although they give rise to some hazy conclusions. Ware 2012, 63-66, in turn, points out intertextual links in the preface to the Vergilian Eclogues. This issue requires further analysis, which falls outside the scope of this paper.

<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, in *Eutr.* 1.271-274 (*Quid te, turpissima, bellis | inseris aut saevius pertemp-  
tas Pallada campis? | tu potes alterius studii haerere Mineruae, | tu telas, non tela, pati, tu  
stamina nosse...* ["Why busy thy foul self with wars? Why attempt battle on the bloody field?  
'Tis to the arts of that other Minerva thou shouldst apply thyself. The distaff, not the dart  
should be thine; thine to spin the thread..."]), the poet includes a satirical reference to the limited intellectual powers of Eutropius the consul, protected by the 'other Minerva', who endeavors to feign experience of war – a remark that is rendered fully meaningful in the context of the praise of arts and letters offered in the *Theod.*



to ongoing revision, as new events contradict what came before and call for reinterpretation of the past (Müller 2011, 423-424). In this instance, the idea of the philosopher who was “more Greek than the Greeks themselves”, the anti-Eutropius, was clearly overtaken by subsequent events, following the recitation of the two books of the *In Eutropium* which insist on the notion that Stilicho was the only possible salvation for the East. At the end of summer 399, once Gainas and Tribigild had reached an agreement that spelt the end of Eutropius’ political career, Stilicho’s ambitions in Greece were rendered untenable<sup>49</sup>. Decrying the situation in the East unexpectedly lost its meaning, so Claudian changed the subject and trained his artistic eye on a panegyric that would address Stilicho’s coming consulship, the first two books of which were to be presented in January 400.

## 6. Conclusions

In summary, the detailed analysis of the *ekphrasis* of philosophical themes and schools of thought in *Theod.* 61-112 disclosed an intricate imitation of Latin philosophical literature as part of the encomium to the new consul. At the same time, read in the context of the poem as a whole, this section shows Claudian drafting a more wide-ranging framework in which Theodorus surpasses the preceding tradition and, in particular, Cicero, the unquestioned paradigm of philosophical orator and the intellectual bridge between Greece and Rome. What is more, this reading shows that the poem has a specific propagandistic function: Theodorus complements Stilicho’s mission, drawing together the two traditions of the Empire and ensuring the continuity of Theodosius’ legacy. In a broader context, and in spite of the fact that this is the only poem to offer explicit praise of its subject’s literary prowess, the *Panegyric in honor of Mallius Theodorus* is congruent with Claudian’s political poetry in general, in terms of both content and technique: its content is closely related to other poems composed in 398-399, and the allusions to philosophical poetry situates Claudian’s text in a literary-cultural trend of the time which he drew on to initiate a dialogue with the listener.

Thus, the Greek philosophy and Latin literature praised in the figure of Theodorus take center stage in Claudian’s encomiastic imagination, although their meaning may have been put to use for the purposes of a specific political need at that time. Indeed, such praise of the union between the two traditions marked a daring and ambitious line of argument that Claudian was not to pursue further, be it because changed circumstances forced a change in perspective, or because such a bold hyperbole would prove unsustainable over time. Had Claudian drawn on the figure of Theodorus to offer a comprehensive reflection on bilingualism or the value of literary education, he might have given us “a mirror in the mirror”, a shortcut to the poet’s understanding of his own multicultural-

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<sup>49</sup> Cameron 1970, 143-155; Döpp 1980, 173-177; Long 1996, 167-177; Müller 2011, 277-278.

alism. However, this theory may be anachronistic – a projection onto the panegyric and its author of our own interpretative needs.

Nonetheless, the reception of the poem involved a clear awareness of Cultural Otherness that should not be overlooked. Casting our mind back to the moment in which the panegyric was recited, the qualities of a lawyer, orator, politician, and sage are presented in a vivid way to the audience, in a description that comes to a climax with the account of the consular games to be inaugurated by the Muses. Moreover, Claudian's poetic mode also acknowledges that the poem's listeners comprise a distinguished audience. Such flattery would undoubtedly have reinforced the bond between both parts: in the fever pitch of the moment of recitation, in a fit of wild enthusiasm for the coming consular games, when the listeners heard that the intellectual pursuit on offer was a draught of literary nectar available only to the cognoscenti, they would have felt privileged to belong to *una civitas Romana utriusque sermonis* ("one Roman state with both languages").

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