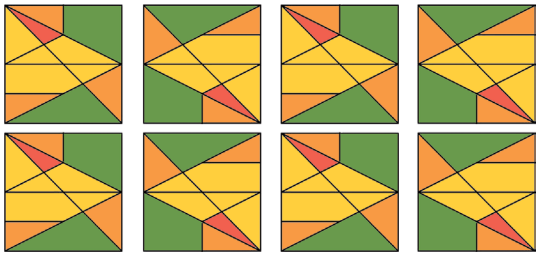
# DE INCONEXIS CONTINUUM

*A Study of the Late Antique Latin Wedding Centos*



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GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

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INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SPRÅK OCH LITTERATURER

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# Abstract

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Key words: cento, cento poetry, *Cento Nuptialis, Epithalamium Fridi*, wedding poetry, late antique Latin poetry, Ausonius, Luxorius, Open works.

The kind of literature that is called cento is studied in this thesis with a special focus on two late antique Latin wedding poems, *Cento Nuptialis* written by Ausonius in the late 4th century A.D., and *Epithalamium Fridi* probably written in Carthage some hundred years later. These two poems are the only late antique Latin centos which belong to the same genre; they are therefore investigated with the aim of showing how centos belonging to the same genre may relate in different ways to both their text of origin and their genre.

The method used is based on the belief that centos are best described as 'open works,' with a wide 'field of possibilities.' In the analyses a hermeneutical approach is applied, and the Model Reader's interpretations are in focus.

The two wedding centos relate in different ways to text of origin and genre. Associations which forecast the events of the part of the poem called *Imminutio,* a 'notion of combat', and the double circumstances lying behind the composition of the poem are found crucial for the interpretation of *Cento Nuptialis*. The humour of the *Imminutio* part is explained as a result of incongruity between cento, text of origin and genre-expectations. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* it is shown that the text of origin is subordinated to the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion.*

Some general conclusions are cautiously suggested. These concern: various kinds of reinterpretation of the text of origin through the lens of a cento; different kinds of guidance for the interpretation of a cento; and different functions for which centos may be particularly apt, e.g. subversive and humorous poems.

# Contents

## PART THREE: WEDDING CENTOS



## PART FOUR: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

## Aim of study

The cento is a complex form of literature, and one which has often been neglected for anachronistic reasons. Twentieth-century classicists have often regarded centos as decadent products of a late antique Roman culture in decline. Shackleton Bailey is not alone in his condemnations of them, but his refusal to include the Virgilian centos in his edition from 1982 of *Anthologia Latina* (the collection which contains most Latin centos) is unusually frank:[1]

> *Centones Vergiliani* (Riese 7–18), *opprobia litterarum, neque ope critica multum indigent neque is sum qui vati reverendo denuo haec edendo contumeliam imponere sustineam.*
>
> "The Virgilian centos (Riese 7–18), disgrace of literature, do not much call for scholarly labour, nor am I one who suffers to insult, by editing those poems again, the Poet who ought to be worshiped." (My translation)

Despite the negative attitudes of Shackleton Bailey and others, during the last decades the cento's repute has to some degree been restored. Monographs on single centos have appeared, as well as one monograph on all mythological and secular Virgilian centos extant from antiquity; an increasing number of articles on centos have also been published.[2] But, so far no extensive studies have been written on the relationship between centos, their text of orgin and their genre.[3] Given the increasing general interest in centos, I would like to contribute to the understanding of the cento as a literary work, and for this purpose I have chosen to study the only two centos which belong to the same genre: *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi.*

The renowned poet, teacher and rhetorician Decimus Magnus Ausonius (c. 310–395) wrote *Cento Nuptialis* in 374/375. Some time later, Ausonius sent the cento in a letter to his friend Paulus; this letter also contains the only detailed description extant from antiquity of what cento poetry is, a description which will be thoroughly treated in Chapter 1b.[4] *Epithalamium Fridi* was written some 100–150 years later, by an author named Luxorius (or something similar). Luxorius wrote other poems too, and with all probability he lived in Carthage during the late 5th or early 6th century; cf. Chapter 10b. We know from Ausonius' letter to Paulus that *Cento Nuptialis* was written in response to a similar poem by the Emperor Valentinian I (321–375); at the emperor's request, Ausonius had to compete with him in a literary competition. The subject-matter of *Cento Nuptialis* is the wedding between the emperor's son – and Ausonius' former pupil – Gratian (359–383) and his wife Constantia (361/362–383). *Cento Nuptialis* is written in the form of a wedding poem for a special occasion, a kind of poem which will

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[1] Shackleton Bailey 1982 *Anthologia Latina* I. 1, p. iii.

[2] Cariddi 1971; Clark & Hatch 1981:1; Carbone 2002; McGill 2005. For articles, see Bibliography.

[3] McGill repeatedly touches upon this issue in all his works, as do Lamacchia 1958: 1, Desbordes 1979, Hardie 2007 *et al*. However, so far no scholar has thoroughly investigated the relationship between centos, their text of origin and their genre.

[4] It seems likely that Ausonius revised *Cento Nuptialis* before he sent it to Paulus; the *terminus ante quem* for this revision is app. 395, when Ausonius died.

be called *epithalamium of occasion* in this work; cf. Chapter 8. *Epithalamium Fridi* commemorates the wedding between a certain Fridus and his bride. This cento too is written as an *epithalamium of occasion.* Beside their generic similarities, the two centos also have in common that they are composed exclusively of quotations from the Virgilian works.

The aim of the present study is to show how *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* relate in different ways to both their text of origin and their genre. Despite the fact that they are composed of scraps from Virgil, both centos are coherent literary works. My aim is to prove that they are coherent patchworks between text of origin and genre – or, to quote Ausonius' introductory letter to his cento:

*De inconexis continuum*

Unless otherwise stated, the translations into English of Latin quotations in this work come from the sources which are listed in the Bibliography. The most important exceptions are the translations of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi;* they are my own.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

# 1. What do ancient Latin authors say about centos?

The aim of this chapter is to present what ancient Latin authors say about centos, i.e. the kind of poems which is in focus in this work. In the first section of the chapter, the original meaning of cento will be presented and all extant ancient Latin discussions on cento poetry will be briefly treated in chronological order. The second part of the chapter deals more thoroughly with Ausonius' description of cento.

## a. Latin discussions on cento

### *The original meaning of cento*

The original meaning of the Latin word *cento* is a patchwork, a plain cover mainly used by simple peasants and slaves. The *cento* could also be used in place of a door in foul cottages. The word *cento* is always connected with poverty and lack of material resources. Cato uses the word *cento* for plain covers, used as clothing: *agr.* 2: 3 (On what ought to have been done during rainy days): ... *centones, cuculiones familia<m> oportuisse sibi sarcire,* "… and that the hands ought to have mended their smocks and hoods;" *agr.* 10: 5 (On how to equip an olive-farm covering 240 *iugera*): ... *centones pueris VI,* "6 servants' hoods;" *agr.* 11: 5 (On how to equip an olive-farm covering 100 *iugera*): ... *centones pueris VI,* "6 servants' hoods;" *agr.* 135: 1: <*Tunicae et ceterae res ubicumque emantur.*> *Romae: tunicas, togas, saga, centones, sculponeas.* "<Tunics and other things may be bought anywhere (my translation).> Tunics, togas, blankets, smocks, and shoes should be bought in Rome." Petronius uses the word *cento* for a plain cover which is used in place of a door: Petron. 7: *subinde ut in locum secretiorem venimus, centonem anus urbana reiecit et 'hic' inquit 'debes habitare.'* "… and when we had got into an obscure quarter the obliging old lady pushed back a patchwork curtain and said, 'This should be your house.'""

### *Cento in a literary context*

#### Tertullian

Tertullian (150/170–c. 230) is the first author who uses the word *cento* in a literary context, and he does so in negative terms. His reluctance towards cento writing is due to the parallel which he sees between cento writing and how heretics misread the Bible.[5]

[5] So also McGill 2005, intro. p. xvi.

Tertullian *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 39. 3–7:

> *Vides hodie ex Vergilio fabulam in totum aliam componi, materia secundum versus et versibus secundum materiam concinnatis. Denique Hosidius Geta Medeam tragoediam ex Virgilio plenissime exsuxit. Meus quidam propinquus ex eodem poëta inter cetera stili sui otia Pinacem Cebetis explicuit. Homerocentones etiam vocari solent qui de carminibus Homeri propria opera more centonario ex multis hinc inde compositis in unum sarciunt corpus. Et utique fecundior divina litteratura ad facultatem cuiusque materiae. Nec periclitor dicere, ipsas quoque scripturas sic esse ex Dei voluntate dispositas, ut haereticis materias subministrarent cum legam oportere haereses esse quae sine scripturis esse non possunt.*

> "You see today, composed out of Vergil, a totally different story – the subject-matter being arranged according to the verse and the verse according to the subject-matter. Hosidius Geta has even, most lavishly, extracted his tragedy *Medea* out of Vergil. A person closely related to myself has – during other free moments for own writing – explained Cebes' Table[6] from the same poet. Those are commonly called *homerocentones,* those who stitch into one piece, patchwork fashion, works of their own from many [lines] put together from this passage and from that in Homer's songs. Now, unquestionably, the divine scriptures are more abundant [in that they give] an opportunity for any subject-matter. Nor do I take a risk in saying that the very scriptures are even arranged by the will of God in such a manner as to provide the heretics with subject-matters, inasmuch as I read that there must be heresies – and this cannot be without the scriptures." (My translation)

**Ausonius**

Ausonius (310–393/394) is the only ancient author who describes cento in more detail. He does so in the letter containing *Cento Nuptialis* and his discussion on cento is highly relevant also for modern discussions. What Ausonius says about centos will therefore be thoroughly discussed in the second section of this chapter.

**Augustine**

Augustine (354–430) is the next author to mention centos. His attitude, like Tertullian's, is negative for religious reasons.[7]

[6] Cebes' table (*Pinax*) is an allegory on the life of man. This allegory was wrongly attributed to the Pythagorean philosopher Cebes (a contemporary of Socrates). Howatson 1989 *Cebes.*

[7] Augustine's refusal to use centos for a Christian purpose (in the following passage he will treat King David's prophecies about Christ and the Church) may perhaps also be understood in its historical context: His dislike may be concerned with a cento treating the life of Christ which was probably written some fifty years before by a certain Faltonia Betitia Proba (*Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*). This cento contains many parallels with the *Aeneid* and the portrait of Christ is clearly influenced by classical heroic ideals.

Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei* 17. 15:

*...ne more centonum ad rem, quam volumus tamquam versiculos decerpere videamur, velut de grandi carmine, quod non de re illa, sed de alia longeque diversa reperiatur esse conscriptum,*

"Otherwise I fear that I might seem to be gathering individual verses on the topic in hand, in the technique used in centos, when one makes selections from a long poem not written on the same subject, but on another and very different one."

**Jerome**

Jerome (c. 347–420), like Augustine, warns against the practice of using non-Christian sources, such as Homer or Virgil, when composing centos with a Christian message. This is often done, he claims, by people who have been familiar with secular literature before they have come to the study of the Holy Scriptures.[8] Jerome's reluctance against centos is, just like Tertullian's and Augustine's, more than anything else due to religious scruples.[9]

Jerome, *Epistula* 53. 7

*... Taceo de meis similibus, qui si orte ad scripturas sanctas post saeculares litteras venerint et sermone conposito aurem populi mulserint, quicquid dixerint, hoc legem Dei putant, nec scire dignantur quid prophetae, quid apostoli senserint, sed ad sensum suum incongrua aptant testimonia, quasi grande sit et non vitiosissimum dicendi genus depravere sententias, et ad voluntatem suam scripturam trahere repugnantem. Quasi non legerimus Homerocentonas et Vergiliocentonas, ac non sic etiam Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere Christianum, quia scripserit:*

*"iam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,*
*iam nova progenies caelo dimittitur alto",*

*et Patrem loquentem ad Filium:*

*"nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia solus",*

*et post verba Salutatoris in cruce:*

*"talia peratsbat memorans fixusque manebat."*

*Puerilia sunt haec et circulatorum ludo similia, docere quod ignores, immo, ut cum stomacho loquar, nec hoc quidem scire quod nescias.*

"… I say nothing of persons who, like myself, have been familiar with secular literature before they have come to the study of the holy scriptures. Such men when they charm the popular ear by the finish of their style suppose every word they say to be the law of God. They do not deign to notice what Prophets and apostles have intended but they adapt conflicting passages to suit their own meaning, as if it were a grand way of teaching – and not rather the faultiest of all – to misrepresent a writer's views and to

[8] It seems likely that he intends a particular poem, Proba's cento. Cf. above and Chapter 16d.

[9] Cf. Polara 1981 p. 56: "… ma quello che interessa a Girolamo non è valutare da critico letterario l'operazione poetica, bensí schierarsi con fermezza contro qualsiasi possible mediazione fra cultura pagana e cultura cristiana."

force the scriptures reluctantly to do their will. They forget that we have read centos from Homer and Virgil; but we never think of calling the Christless Maro a Christian because of these lines:

'Now comes the Virgin back and Saturn's reign,
Now from high heaven comes a Child newborn.'

Another line might be addressed by the Father to the Son:

'Hail, only Son, my Might and Majesty.'

And yet another might follow the Saviour's words on the cross:

'Such words he spoke and there transfixed remained'

But all this is puerile, and resembles the sleight-of-hand of a mountebank. It is idle to try to teach what you do not know, and – if I may speak with some warmth – it is worse still to be ignorant of your ignorance."

**Isidorus**

Isidorus (560–636) is the last extant ancient Latin author who mentions centos. Although Isidorus gives no harsh judgement about centos, the influence from Tertullian on the passage is obvious.

*Origines* 1. 39. 25:
*Centones apud grammaticos vocari solent, qui de carminibus Homeri vel Vergilii ad propria opera more centonario ex multis hinc inde conpositis in unum sarciunt corpus ad facultatem cuiusque materiae*,

"Among grammarians they are usually called 'centones' who stitch together into own works from Homer's or Vergil's poems – patchwork fashion – from many [verses] combined from here and there into one single piece with an opportunity [to express] any subject-matter." (My translation)

## *Summary*

The original meaning of cento is patchwork. Beside Ausonius, only Church fathers mention centos in a literary context in our extant sources from antiquity. Because of religious scruples, three of the Church fathers reveal suspicion towards centos. One of them (Tertullian) warns against using the Holy Scriptures as a source for centos; the two others (Augustine and Jerome) warn against using non-Christian authors as source for Christian centos. None of the quoted passages gives any extensive description of cento. For a thorough discussion, we must return to what Ausonius has to say.

# b. Ausonius' discussion on cento

Ausonius' discussion on cento is found in a letter to his friend Paulus; this letter includes also *Cento Nuptialis* and it must have been sent between 374 (approx. date for the wedding between Gratian and Faustina, which is the theme of *Cento Nuptialis*) and 393/394 (Ausonius' app. year of death).[10] Ausonius' discussion includes the only de-

[10] The letter containing *Cento Nuptialis* shows clear similarities with letters containing others of Ausonius' literary *nugae; cf. Griphus Ternarii Numeri* and *Technopaegnion.* (I am grateful to Prof. R. P. H.

tailed description of cento extant from antiquity.[11] Ausonius' detailed description of the technical rules for composing a cento agrees as a whole remarkably well with the practice not only in *Cento Nuptialis,* but also in all other extant ancient Latin centos.[12] Therefore, it seems very likely that they also shared his opinions about how centos should be evaluated; this makes Ausonius' discussion essential for our understanding of the ancient cento from a literary viewpoint.

Lines 24–50 in Ausonius' letter (Green ed. 1991) are most relevant with regard to Ausonius' general view on cento.[13] Ausonius actually says that he will discuss the nature of centos in this part of the letter as he starts off: *et si pateris ut doceam docendus ipse, cento quid sit absolvam… "*And if you suffer me, who need instruction myself, to instruct you, I will expound what a cento is…" In the following, I will therefore primarily discuss lines 24–50, but also the most relevant passages from the preceding lines in the letter (1–3; 10–11; 4; 20–23).[14]

## *Technical rules*

Ausonius first writes about the length of the quotations which may be used in a cento, lines 24–28.[15] The exact reading of these lines has been much discussed. Nonetheless, most scholars agree that the general meaning must be that half verses, whole verses and one-and-a-half verses may be used in the cento.[16] This is also in accordance with the general practice in *Cento Nuptialis* as well as in other Latin centos. Hereafter, Ausonius deals with the possible breaking points of the verses used in a cento, lines 28–33.[17] The

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Green for pointing this out to me during my studies under his supervision at Glasgow University in autumn 1996.) Cf. Chapter 16c.

[11] There is no evidence that other cento writers wrote down their definitions, although this possibility cannot of course be excluded.

[12] Palla 1983; Bright 1984. Palla 1983 p. 290 also comes back to Lamacchia's observation (1958: 1) that a single word used in both verses from the text of origin often occurs at the break-point of the cento verse. This trait is not mentioned by Ausonius, but occurs once in *Cento Nuptialis,* v. 48. It seems that Ausonius gives the general rules for writing a cento, but that these rules may be applied in individual ways. Cf. Chapters 2b and 2c.

[13] As will be further discussed below, lines 1–23 deal primarily with the circumstances under which Ausonius claims that he composed his own cento. In his discussion about Ausonius' cento poetics, McGill 2005, Chapter 1 quotes the entire part of the letter which precedes *Cento Nuptialis*.

[14] The Latin text follows Green (ed.) 1991 and the English translations are from McGill 2005 pp. 2–3. McGill's translations for the most part follow White 1919, London (Loeb Classical Library), except where the Latin text given by Green differs from the text given by Loeb; cf. McGill footnote 4. Unfortunately, the text in Ausonius' letter is partly heavily corrupt. The alternative readings given in Green's *apparatus criticus* will be related together with the text and when necessary discussed in the footnotes.

[15] Lines 24–28: *et si pateris ut doceam docendus ipse, cento quid sit absolvam. Variis de locis sensibusque diversis quaedam carminis structura solidatur, in unum versum ut coeant aut caesi duo aut unus <et unus> sequenti cum medio. nam duos iunctim locare ineptum est et tres una serie merae nugae*, "And if you will suffer me, who need instruction myself, to instruct you, I will expound what a cento is. It is a poem compactly built out of a variety of passages and different meanings, in such a way that either two half-lines are joined together to form one, or one line and one accompanied by the following half-line. For to place two (whole) lines side by side is weak, and three in succession is mere trifling." Lines 24–28: structura LT, strictura CK; unum versum CLT, buum versum K, unum L Mueller; et unus add Green; sequenti Green, sequens CT, sesque K, sexque L; medius post sequens add. Mommsen; tres ed. Med. 1490, res codd.

[16] White 1919 p. 373; Pastorino 1971 p. 655; Bright 1984 p. 84; Horstmann 2004 p. 291 *et al.*

[17] Lines 28–33: *diffunduntur autem per caesuras omnes, quas recipit versus heroicus, convenire ut possit aut penthemimeres cum reliquo anapestico aut trochaice cum posteriore segmento aut septem semipedes cum anapestico chorico aut ** post dactylum atque semipedem quicquid restat hexametro,*

text in these lines is partly corrupt, and different emendations have been made to fill a *lacuna* of uncertain length.[18] In the beginning of the section, Ausonius proposes that the verses may be divided at any of the *caesurae* which appear in the hexameter; and, no unreasonable emendations are needed to make Ausonius mention all such *caesurae*. This is also in accordance with the practice in the Latin centos.[19]

## *Comparison with stomachion-game*

Ausonius compares the cento with the Greek stomachion-game.[20] He also describes this game in some detail, lines 33–43:

> Lines 33–43 (stomachion-game):
> *ossicula ea sunt: ad summam quattordecim figuras geometricas habent. sunt enim quadrilatera vel triquetra extentis lineis aut <eiusdem > frontis, <vel aequilatera, vel rectis> angulis vel obliquis: isocele ipsi vel isopleura vocant, orthogonia quoque et scalena. harum verticularum variis coagmentis simulantur species mille formarum: elephantus belua aut aper bestia, anser volans et mirmillo in armis, subsidens venator et latrans canis, quin et turris et cantharus et alia eiusmodi innumerabilium figurarum, quae alius alio scientius variegant. sed peritorum concinnatio miraculum est, imperitorum iunctura ridiculum, quo praedicto scies quod ego posteriorem imitatus sum.*[21]
>
> "There you have little pieces of bone, fourteen in number and representing geometrical figures. For they are quadrilateral or triangular, some with sides

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*simile ut dicas ludicro, quod Graeci stomacion vocavere*, "But the lines are divided at any of the caesurae which heroic verse admits, so that either a penthemimeris can be linked with an anapestic continuation, or a third-foot trochaic break with a complementary section, or at the seventh half-foot with a choric anapest, or [...] after a dactyl and a half-foot is placed whatever is needed to complete the hexameter: so that you may say that it is like the puzzle which the Greeks have called stomachion." Lines 28–33: diffinduntur CLT, difunduntur K; penthemimeres KL, penthimemeres CT; lac.post aut Birt; ostomachion K, estomachion L, ostomacian Lugd., stomation Scal.; vocavere KT, vocaverunt CL.

[18] Peiper added *ponatur* ("is placed"), Prete added *sequatur* ("follows") to fill the *lacuna* marked in the text quoted above. Both these emendations give the same meaning to the text. This meaning also finds support from the practice in *Cento Nuptialis* as well as in other centos. (Since many of the centos are not available in modern critical editions, it is however in some cases difficult to determine the exact break-points of the verses.) However, Ausonius also a few times uses the *bucolic diaresis* as break-point for a verse in *Cento Nuptialis* (i.e. the hexameter verses from the Virgilian texts are split after the fourth foot). This break-point also seems to appear in other centos. This may support Koster's emendation to fill the *lacuna* in the text: *post bucolicon ponatur aut,* "after the bucolic diaresis is placed or." If we accept Koster's emendation of the text, Ausonius defines all kinds of *caesura* appearing in hexameters.

[19] Although his practice in *Cento Nuptialis* generally agrees very well with the theory presented in the letter, Ausonius does not in every single instance follow the directives about which no doubts may be held; it is therefore worth underlining that emendations of the text describing the cento technique should not be based exclusively upon Ausonius' practice in *Cento Nuptialis.*

[20] White 1919 gives a detailed description as well as a visual illustration of the stomachion-game. Pastorino too gives an illustration of it. McGill 2005 pp. 8–9 particularly stresses the playful side of the stomachion-game and of the cento in his discussion about this section; cf. below.

[21] Lines 33–43: quadrilatera vel *Green*, aequilatera vel *codd*., aequaliter *Peip*.; eiusdem *add Peip*.; frontis *codd.,* rectis *Avant.;* vel aequicruria vel aequilatera vel rectis *add. Green*; isocele *ed. pr*., i soscele *C,* id est sostele (-cele *L*) *KL*, isochele *T*; ipsi *del. Scal*. Isopleura *Ug*., sopleura *codd.,* vocant *del. Scal*.; orthogonia *CKL,* orthogona *T*; et *codd.,* vel *Scal.;* turris *CTL*, turturis *K*; eiusmodi *CK*, huiusmodi *LT ut vid*. posteriorem *codd*., posteriores *Toll*.,

> of various lengths, some symmetrical, either of equal legs or equilateral, with either right or oblique angles: the same people call them isosceles or equal-sided triangles, and also right-angled and scalene. By fitting these pieces together in various ways, pictures of countless objects are produced: a monstrous elephant, a brutal boar, a goose in flight, and a gladiator in armour, a huntsman crouching down, and a dog barking – even a tower and a tankard and numberless other things of this sort, whose variety depends upon the skill of the player. But while the harmonious arrangement of the skilful is marvellous, the jumble made by the unskilled is grotesque. This prefaced, you will know that I am like the second kind of player."

The stomachion-game is a square built up by fourteen different geometrical figures. The square may be taken apart and the geometrical figures rearranged to form new figures, for instance those mentioned by Ausonius. There is an obvious similarity between the stomachion-game and the cento; when the new image is created, the pieces put together in the stomachion-game should not give the impression of being part of the original quadrangle, nor should the half-lines in the cento give the impression of being part of other poems. Both the games (here, it seems quite clear that Ausonius looks upon cento writing as a game) create new independent meanings. The qualities of the text, or of the image, all depend on the skill of player.

## *Unity as the core of Ausonius' discussion on cento*

In the following passage, Ausonius presents what I consider to be the core of his discussion on cento.[22] He does so by explaining the similarities which he sees between the stomachion-game and the cento.

> Lines 43–46 (parallel between stomachion-game and cento):
> *hoc ergo centonis opusculum ut ille ludus tractatur, pari modo sensus diversi ut congruant, adoptiva quae sunt ut cognata videantur, aliena ne interluceant, arcessita ne vim redarguant, densa ne supra modum protuberent, hiulca ne pateant,*[23]

> "And so this little work, the *Cento*, is handled in the same way as that game, so as to harmonize different meanings, to make pieces arbitrarily connected seem naturally related, to let foreign elements show no chink of light between, to prevent the far-fetched from proclaiming the force which united them, the closely packed from bulging unduly, the loosely knit from gaping."

In this passage, Ausonius particularly stresses the importance of unity within the cento although it is made up from different parts. The cento must be regarded as an independent and homogeneous work of art from both a metrical, syntactical and thematic point of view. Smoothness and harmony must thus be apparent as regards all dimensions of the cento. This means that the former context of the verses must be

[22] McGill 2005 pp. 20–21 discusses the same passage.
[23] Lines 43–46: aliena *Avant*., alienum *codd*.; interluceant *CL*, interluceat *KT;* ne (supra) *CLT*, nec *K*.

neutralised.[24] Apparently, the understanding of the cento as one unit, although made up from different parts, is the most central concept in Ausonius' discussion on cento. This suggestion is strengthened by the circumstance that Ausonius expresses essentially the same idea also in two other passages of his letter (line 4 and lines 20–23); more on this below.

First, however, a few words about the playful side of cento writing and about my reasons for concluding that playfulness is less vital than unity for Ausonius' general view on centos.

**Playfulness**

I suggest that Ausonius' emphasis on playfulness refers primarily to the circumstances around the composition and publication of his own poem, *Cento Nuptialis*.[25] I will give two examples from lines 1–23 which strengthen my suggestion.

Ausonius calls his work "a trifling and worthless little book, which no pains have shaped nor care polished, without a spark of wit and that ripeness which deliberation gives."[26] He belittles the kind of poetic composition he has produced, probably with the intention to win the sympathy of the audience. It thus seems that Ausonius' focus on playing can be partly explained as *captatio benevolentiae*.[27] A few lines later, Ausonius describes the circumstances around the original composition of *Cento Nuptialis* (lines

[24] Herzog 1975 p. 7: "Denn der Cento stellt sich nach dieser Theorie poetologisch als ein integrales Rezeptionsmodell formaler natur dar, das eine totale inhaltliche Lizenz ermöglicht. Anders ausgedrückt: das sich als rein formal deklarierende Nachdichten (Cento als Vergil) wird, wie die Erörterungen des Ausonius zeigen, perfektionistischen Regels unterworfen, die die vollkommene Neutraliserung des ursprünglichen Sinnes sichern sollen. Angestrebt wird nicht eine Neuformung des vergilischen Inhalts, der Motive und der epischen Technik des Klassikers (Vergil als Cento), die eine extreme Spielart in den verschiedensten Gattungen der Spätantike gepflegten Imitation darstellen würde, sondern eine Freisetzung der vergilischen Ausdruckswelt zur Paraphrase neuer Themen, die beliebig gewählt werden können." I believe that a neutralisation of the former context of the verses does not imply an annihilation of it; cf. below.

[25] In this, I differ from McGill who stresses the emphasis Ausonius gives to playing a game more than the emphasis he gives to unity in the cento, McGill 2005 Chapter 1. It must be noticed that McGill in the following chapters of his study focuses on the mythological and secular centos in antiquity. In these centos the playful side is more relevant than in centos dealing with Christian themes, such as Proba's cento.

[26] Lines 1–3: *frivolum et nullius pretii opusculum, quod nec labor excudit nec cura limavit, sine ingenii acumine et morae maturitate*. So also McGill 2005 p. 7. Ausonius continues, it must be admitted, with some rather disparaging remarks on cento poetry in general, lines 3–8: *centonem vocant qui primi hac concinnatione luserunt. Solae memoriae negotium sparsa colligere et integrare lacerata, quod ridere magis quam laudare possis. Pro quo, si per Sigillaria in auctione veniret, neque Afranius naucum daret neque ciccum suum Plautus offeret. Piget equidem Vergiliani carminis dignitatem tam ioculari dehonestasse materia*. "They who first trifled with this form of compilation call it a 'cento'. 'Tis a task for the memory only, which has to gather up scattered tags and fit these mangled scraps together into a whole, and so is more likely to provoke your laughter than your praise. If it were put up for auction at a fair, Afranius would not give his straw, nor Plautus bid his husk. For it is vexing to have Virgil's majestic verse degraded with such a comic theme." These remarks are however stuck between the negative presentation of his own poem quoted above and a rather long description of why he wrote his poem; see below. I believe that this setting between two passages dealing with Ausonius' own poem, which he repeatedly disparages, explains why these general remarks on cento poetry too tend towards the negative and immature/playful side of things.

[27] *Captatio benevolentiae* was a rhetorical practice with the purpose of securing the sympathy of the audience. It was often found in the prefaces of literary works. So also McGill 2005 pp. 7–8. Cf. also Polara 1981 pp. 53–54. Polara claims that Ausonius values cento writing in general positively ("La valutazione che Ausonio dà del centone come genere letterario è complessivamente positiva…"). Polara suggests that Ausonius belittles his own work because of the demands of the *topos* of modesty.

8–17). He claims to have written his cento by command and in competition with the Emperor Valentinian, who had "once described a wedding in a *jeu d'esprit* of this kind, wherein the verses were to the point and their connections amusing."[28] The situation described by Ausonius is that of a literary game in which he reluctantly had to take part. This too underlines the playful side of things, but refers to nothing else than the circumstances under which Ausonius claims to have written *Cento Nuptialis*.

From the preceding discussion, it may be concluded that the idea of playing a game when writing a cento is very present in Ausonius' text, particularly in the first part of his prefatory letter, lines 1–23. In these lines, however, Ausonius primarily treats his own cento; apparently, Ausonius' emphasis on playfulness is for the most part due to how he wants to introduce *Cento Nuptialis*.

**Further arguments for unity as the core of Ausonius' discussion**

As repeatedly suggested above, unity within the cento, rather than the notion of playing a game, must be considered as most crucial in Ausonius' discussion. This view is strengthened by the circumstance that Ausonius two other times than in lines 43–46 underlines the importance of unity in the cento, although it is made up from different parts. The first time Ausonius stresses the importance of unity is in line 4, where he says that it is only a task of memory "to gather up scattered tags and fit these mangled scraps together into a whole."[29]

The next instance where Ausonius focuses on unity is in lines 20–23:

> *Accipe igitur opusculum de inconexis continuum de diversis unum, de seriis ludicrum, de alieno nostrum, ne in sacris et fabulis aut Thyonianum mireris aut Virbium, illum de Dionyso, hunc de Hippolyto reformatum.*
>
> "So take this little work, continuous, though made of disjointed tags; one, though of various scraps; a playful piece,[30] though of grave materials; mine, though the elements are another's; lest you should wonder at the accounts given by priests or poets of the Son of Thyone or of Virbius – the first re-shaped out of Dionysus, the second out of Hippolytus."

In this passage, the cento is described in four different ways: (1) *de inconexis continuum,* "continuous, though made of disjointed tags;" (2) *de diversis unum*, "one, though of various scraps;" (3) *de seriis ludicrum,* "a playful piece, though of grave materials;" (4) *de alieno nostrum*, "mine, though the elements are another's." The cento is also likened to two mythological figures. Both these figures have been reshaped out of two other mythological figures. Three of the four descriptions of the cento clearly underline the importance of unity: (1) *de inconexis continuum,* "continuous, though made of disjointed tags;" (2) *de diversis unum*, "one, though of various scraps;" (4) *de alieno nostrum*, "mine, though the elements are another's". Only one of the descriptions underlines the playful side of the cento: (3) *de seriis ludicrum,* "a playful piece, though

[28] Lines 10–11: *nuptias quondam eiusmodi ludo descripserat, aptis equidem versibus et compositione festiva.*

[29] *… sparsa colligere et integrare lacerata*.

[30] White 1919 translates *ludicrum* "absurd". I have chosen to follow the translation proposed (although not adopted in his translation) by McGill 2005 p. 8 giving "a playful piece." I believe that this translation better reflects the sense in Ausonius' text.

of grave materials". These proportions too strengthen the conclusion that unity within the cento is what Ausonius values most.[31]

Although it is not explicitly mentioned by Ausonius, it must be assumed that the idea of unity made up from different pieces does not mean that the associations to the original context must, or even should, be annihilated. Like every other ancient text, the cento must be read and understood as an independent and homogeneous work of art. Like every other ancient text, the cento also contains numerous allusions to earlier literature; this may have been so clear to Ausonius and his contemporaries that it was superfluous to mention it at all.[32]

## *Importance of accordance with directives*

Ausonius ends the section about centos by underlining how important it is for a cento writer to follow the directives which he has just given:

> Lines 46–50 (importance of accordance with directives):
> *quae si omnia ita tibi videbuntur ut praeceptum est, dices me composuisse centonem et quia sub imperatore tum merui, procedere mihi inter frequentes stipendium iubebis; sin aliter, aere dirutum facies, ut cumulo carminis in fiscum suum redacto redeant versus unde venerunt*, [33]
>
> "If you find all these conditions duly fulfilled according to rule, you will say that I have compiled a cento. And because I served at the time under my commanding officer, you will direct 'that pay be issued to me as for regular service'; but if otherwise, you will sentence me 'to forfeit pay,' so that this 'lump sum' of verse may be 'returned to its proper pay-chest,' and the verses go back to the source from which they came."

In this passage, the most central issue for Ausonius' general discussion on cento poetry is the idea that the cento is not worth keeping, unless the reader finds that it meets the standards given by the rules.[34] If not, the verses must go back to their original context,

[31] McGill 2005 p. 8 argues differently and claims that the clause *de seriis ludicrum,* "absurd (/a playful piece), though of grave materials" is what really matters in this passage. Although I cannot agree with him on this point, I agree, although with some reservations, with his conclusion that a playful text like the cento "cannot belong in any simple way to a high genre." He continues (now about the cento tragedy Medea): "... the intercession of Virgil causes the patchwork text to be something other than merely a representative of that particular genre [i.e. tragedy]. While an individual patchwork poem may take the form of a tragedy, it is first a cento, a text derived from the manipulation of another author's poetry." I will come back to this discussion in Chapter 5 'Detachment from the genre'.

[32] As regards the cento, the allusions to the original context of the quotations are of course of special interest, but they are not the only allusions present in the text; this will be further examined throughout this work, from Chapter 5 onwards.

[33] Lines 46–50: imperatore tum *Reeve,* imperatore meo tum *ed. Lugd. 1548*, imperat metum *codd*. (mecum *K*); iubebis *CLT*, videbis *K*; aliter *LT*, autem *CK*.

[34] In this passage, Ausonius also uses an advanced wordplay, employing many metaphors from a military context. He thereby associates his poetic labour with the toil of a soldier. He also indirectly likens his own relationship to the emperor to that of a soldier to his commanding officer. Some scholars have therefore taken this passage as evidence that *Cento Nuptialis* was written while Ausonius was on active military service under the emperor Valentinian I and his son Gratian, i.e. in 368–369. (White 1919 p. 377 and Horstmann 2004 p. 292.) Ausonius' relationship to his emperor was in fact characterised by loyalty on Ausonius' part and recompense from the emperor in a way similar to that of a soldier and his commanding officer. Moreover, Ausonius in other cases as well recurs to military metaphors to describe

i.e. to the Virgilian poems, before any further publication of the cento has been made.[35] Ausonius' harsh judgement on centos not meeting the standards is well worth noticing. It seems that he is not merely describing the technique to his friend (*Cento quid sit absolvam*), but also laying down the rules to be followed by any writer who wants to compose a cento.

### *Summary*

Ausonius' formal rules for composing a cento may be summed up in the following way.[36]

(1) No sections longer than one and a half lines may be taken over to the cento.
(2) Lines in the cento may be composed of parts from no more than two different lines in the text of origin.
(3) The breaking-point of the verse must fall at one of the *caesurae* that may occur in the hexameter.
(4) The quotation may not be changed, but the meaning of it may change in its new context.

As will be shown in Chapter 2, a few minor modifications can be made to these rules based on the practice in the extant ancient Latin centos. From a literary viewpoint, Ausonius certainly emphasises the playful side of cento-writing; nonetheless, his main focus lies on the importance of unity within the cento, although it is made up from different parts.

## 2. What ancient Latin cento poetry remains today?

The aim of this chapter is to present the extant Latin cento poetry from antiquity. The chapter deals with: cento-like passages from works that cannot altogether be defined as centos; the 17 Latin centos which are extant from antiquity; and the formal rules for ancient Latin centos.

### a. Cento-like passages

The selection of cento-like passages presented in this part of the chapter is not exhaustive. It serves the purpose of exemplification and the examples which will be given are standard.[37] Although the examples are standard, it has not been thoroughly discussed how, or whether, they differ from other passages in Latin literature which

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his relationship to the emperor; cf. *Mosella* 452. It is also well known that military metaphors for poetical activity are commonplace from the elegists onwards; cf. Prop. 4.1. 135–136; Ov. *Ars* 3. 342; 577–578; 667–672 and later Ennod. *dict.* 13. 1 *et al.* For a more complete account of the use of military metaphors in love poetry, see Spies 1930.

[35] Ausonius' purpose in sending the poem to Paulus was apparently to have it published. This may partly explain his vivid interest in the reader's reception of the poem. His interest in the reception may however also be connected with the reader's active role in the making of meaning in a cento; cf. Chapters 5, 6, 14 and 15.

[36] So also Bright 1984.

[37] E.g. all examples below have also been discussed by McGill 2005 in his introduction.

contain quotations. These are urgent questions, because quotations and other kinds of allusions are fundamental features of all ancient literature; I believe that it can sometimes be a crucial task to determine what is a 'normal quotation' and what is a 'cento-like passage.'

The boundaries between 'normal quotations' and 'cento-like passages' need further examination. Nonetheless, I suggest that cento-like passages must relate a narrative that differs from the narrative in the text of origin; I further suggest that the quotation(s) may not be changed, but their meaning may change in the new context; cf. Ausonius' formal rules as presented above. All the examples discussed below meet these criteria.

## *Satyrica*

Most notable among the cento-like passages found in Latin literature is the short poem in *Satyrica* 132: 11 where Encolpius says the following about his *mentula languida*:[38]

> *illa solo fixos oculos aversa tenebat*
> *nec magis incepto vultum sermone movetur*
> *quam lentae salices lassove papavera collo*
>
> "it stayed there turned away with its eyes fixed on the ground and at this unfinished speech its looks were no more stirred than pliant willows are or poppies on their tired stalky necks."

The first part of this section comes from *Aen.* 6. 469–70. In their original context, the lines treat the deceased Dido as she turns away from Aeneas when she meets him at the gates of Hades. The last part of the section comes from *Aen.* 9. 436, where Aeneas' dying friend Euralys is likened to poppies on their tired stalky necks. Between the first and second parts of the section there is a half-line (*quam lentae salices*) reminiscent of *Ecl.* 5. 16 (*lenta salix quantum*). This half-line describes in its original context how far Menalcas means that the singing Amyntas yields for Mopsus, his rival.[39]

Verses from Virgil appear also in other short poems in *Satyrica*. Many of these verses are, as in the example above, given a frivolous meaning. Generally this undertone is not found, or is much weaker, in the Virgilian text. This is so, for example, in the following quotation, which comes from a passage in *Satyrica* that deals with the lady of Ephesus. This lady has a high repute for chastity; she mourns exceedingly over the death of her husband; she sits at his tomb day and night refusing to eat or drink. Her nurse is her only company, until a handsome soldier turns up. The soldier offers the lady and her nurse something to eat and drink. The nurse is easily persuaded and she also convinces the lady to try some food and wine. Next, the soldier tries to overcome the lady's virtue. The nurse is eager to help him when she quotes two lines from what Anna says to Dido in the *Aeneid* in order to persuade her to fall for Aeneas (*Aen.* 4. 38[40] and *Aen.* 4. 39):

[38] Cf. Herzog 1975 p. 13.

[39] *Ecl.* 5. 16–19: *Lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit olivae,/ puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis,/ iudicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas*. "As far as lithe willow yields to the pale olive, as far as the lowly Celtic reed yields to crimson rose beds, so far, to my mind, does Amyntas yield to you."

[40] This line is used also in *Cento Nuptialis* 90.

*Sat*. 112:
*Placitone etiam pugnabis amori?*
*Nec venit in mentem, quorum consederis arvis?*

"Wilt thou fight love even when it pleases thee?
Or dost thou never remember in whose lands thou art resting?"

The chaste lady falls for the soldier just as Dido falls for Aeneas. The situations in the *Satyrica* and in the *Aeneid* are pictured as analogous. This analogy is particularly stressed through the cento-like quotations from the *Aeneid.* The whole way of portraying things with a comic clash between the ribald situation in the *Satyricon* and the canonical episode from the *Aeneid* obviously has a comic aim, which is particularly stressed through the cento-like adaptation of the verses.[41]

## *Other works*

Single lines from the Virgilian works are quoted also by Seneca the Younger (*Apocol.* 1. 1, *Aen.* 2. 724), Suetonius (*Div. Aug*. 40. 5 *Aen.* 1. 282 and *Ner.* 47, *Aen.* 12. 646) and the anonymous author of *Historia Augusta* (*HA Ael. Spart. Ael.* 4. 1–3 *Aen.* 6. 869–870; 870–871; 883–886 and *HA Flav. Vop., Num.* 13. 3 *Aen.* 10. 830). In these cases, as in the examples from *Satyricon*, the quotations lie in the mouths of characters in the stories.[42] All these quotations also have a comic or sarcastic aim. Quintilian (Inst. Orat. 10. 1. 92 Ecl. 8. 13), Dio Cassius (76.10.1 Aen. 11.371–372) and Sidonius Apollinaris (Ep. 4. 24.1 Aen. 9. 6–7 and Ep. 5. 17.7 Aen. 5. 499 and Ep. 7. 18. 1 Ecl. 8. 11) are other authors who quote lines from Virgil in a cento-like way.[43] Virgil was also often

[41] Cf. Plaza 2000 pp. 41–44 treating the opposition between literary allusions and low-life situations in Satyricon. See also Sullivan 1968 pp. 214–219, treating this kind of humour in *Satyricon,* with the examples *Sat.* 132: 11 and *Sat.* 112. Cf. also the analysis of *Imminutio* in Chapter 12 and Chapters 14b and 16e.

[42] In Sen. *Apocol.* 1. 1, the storyteller delivers the quotation *non passibus aequis,* "with not matching steps" (*Aen.* 2. 724) to describe how Claudius stumbled towards heaven. In its original context, the line describes young Iulus, whose steps cannot match his father's as they leave Troy. In Suet. *Div. Aug*. 40. 5, Augustus delivers the quotation *Romanos rerum dominos, gentemque togatam*, "Romans, lords of the world, and the nation of the toga" (*Aen.* 1. 282) when he sees a throng of men in dark cloaks in the Forum. He thereafter decides that only men dressed in the toga shall be allowed to enter the Forum. In its original context, the line lies in Jupiter's mouth. Jupiter describes the Romans as lords of the world and nation of the toga. In Suet. *Ner.* 47, one of the tribunes or centurions delivers the quotation *usque adeone mori miserum est?*, "Is death so terrible?" (*Aen.* 12. 646) in response to Nero's attempt to prepare his escape. In its original context, the line lies in Turnus' mouth. He has decided to dare a final duel with Aeneas. In *HA Ael. Spart.* 4.1., the quotation *ostendent terris hunc tantum fata neque ultra/ esse sinent,* "only a glimpse of him will fate give earth nor suffer him to stay long" (Aen. 6. 869–870) lies in Hadrian's mouth. He is said to have quoted these words often about his adoptive son, Verus, since he expected him to die young. Once, a literate man accompanying the emperor is said to have added the following quotation (*HA Ael. Spart.* 4. 2): *... nimium vobis Romana propago/ visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent,* "too powerful, O gods above, you deemed the Roman people, had these gifts of yours been lasting" (*Aen.* 6. 870–871), whereupon Hadrian answered that the life of Verus would not admit of these lines (*HA Ael. Spart.* 4. 3) and he added the following quotation: *... manibus date lilia plenis;/ purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis/ his saltim accumulem donis et fungar inani/ munere,* "grant me to scatter in handfuls lilies of purple blossom, to heap at least these gifts on my descendant's shade and perform unavailing duty" (*Aen.* 6. 883–886). All these quotations originally lie in Anchises' mouth and describe the ghost of Marcellus, who will die young.

[43] Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 10. 1. 92 quotes the line *inter victrices hederam tibi serpere laurus,* "amid the conqueror's laurels" (*Ecl.* 8.13) to describe how with his poetry he adorns the victorious Domitian. Virgil

quoted, and the meaning of the quotations slightly changed, in epitaphs and inscriptions.[44]

## *Concluding discussion*

The cento-like quotations found in other works than fully developed centos may reflect a true-life practice among learned persons of quoting Virgil, and perhaps also other authors. This may have been done with a comic end or with the intention to show one's witty capacity.[45] Cento-like quotations in other works than fully developed centos further indicate that the compilation of whole centos was not an isolated phenomenon; it seems that fully developed centos were preceded by and have parallels with cento-like passages in contemporary literature.

# b. Extant Latin centos

There are 17 ancient Latin centos extant today. Sixteen of these are compiled from Virgilian quotations.[46] One is compiled from Ovidian quotations.

## *Chronological framework*

The oldest extant Latin cento is the tragedy *Medea* by Hosidius Geta. This cento was written approximately 200 A.D., and an advanced Latin cento-technique had probably developed only shortly before this time.[47] *Medea* is found in a manuscript commonly called *Codex Salmasianus;* cf. below. Also the latest extant ancient Latin centos are found in this same manuscript. This implies that all extant ancient Latin centos were written between c. 200 A.D. (*Medea*) and c. 534 A.D. (*terminus ante quem* for all poems found in *Codex Salmasianus*).

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wrote the line to describe how with his poetry he adorned his patron Pollio. Through the use of this quotation, these situations are portrayed as analogous. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 4. 24. 1 quotes the lines *Turne, quod optanti divum promittere nemo/ auderet, volenda dies en attulit ultro,* "Turnus, what no god dared to promise to your prayers, see – the circling hour has brought unasked" (*Aen.* 9. 6–7) to introduce a letter to his friend Turnus. In the letter he tells Turnus about the happy event that his sick father's creditor will content himself with the simple return of the loan, without interest, and that he will give Turnus (or his father, if he survives) a whole year's respite. Virgil had put his lines in Iris' mouth. She urged Turnus to catch the opportunity to fight against the Trojans, while they would be easy to defeat. The analogy between these situations is not so well found, given the fact that Turnus was killed in his fight against the Trojans. But Sidonius' friend had his name in common with Turnus in the *Aeneid.* Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 5. 17. 7 quotes the line *ausus et ipse manu iuvenum temptare laborem,* "daring to lay hand to the task of youth" (*Aen.* 5. 499) about an elderly man playing a ball game. Virgil wrote the line about the Acestes, who successfully participated in an archery contest among younger men. The analogy is not so well found, since the elderly man in Sidonius' letter soon had to interrupt the ball game, because he was not fit enough for it. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 7. 18. 1 quotes the line *a te principium, tibi desinet,* "From you is the beginning, in your honour shall it end" (*Ecl.* 8. 11) in the beginning of the last letter in his seventh book. The letter informs us that he had compiled his book of letters because the recipient of the letter (Constantius) had asked him to do so. Virgil used his line about his patron Pollio. The situations are portrayed as analogous.

[44] Cf. McGill 2005 p. xxiii.

[45] Cf. Chapter 16a.

[46] A presentation of the Virgilian centos can be found also in Ziolkowski & Putnam (eds.) 2008, Chapter 3A pp. 471–485 "Virgil's texts and their uses. Virgilian cento".

[47] Cf. Tertullian chapter 1a.

## *The centos which are found in* Codex Salmasianus

The Ovidian cento and 12 of the Virgilian centos are found in *Codex Salmasianus*.[48] *Codex Salmasianus* contains a collection of literature, mainly poetry, from different periods. The collection was probably compiled in northern Africa between 523 and 534, and it seems to have reached Europe in one single manuscript soon after its compilation.[49] It is furthermore likely that all centos preserved in *Codex Salmasianus* are of African origin.[50]

The Ovidian cento is called *De Aetate* and is only four lines long (*AL* 269R). It has been compiled out of two quotations from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria, AA* 3. 65–66 and 73–74.[51] It has an anonymous author and an uncertain date of composition.

### Centos dealing with classical myths

Eight of the Virgilian centos found in *Codex Salmasianus* deal with well-known classical myths (AL 9–15; 17R):

| Title | Length | Date of composition/ Author | Subject-matter |
|---|---|---|---|
| Narcissus | 16 v. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | The myth about the young Narcissus who falls in love with himself. |
| Iudicium Paridis | 42 v., partly corrupt. | Possibly late 5th or early 6th cent./ Mavortius? [52] | The myth about the shepherd Paris who judges in a beauty contest between the three goddesses Athena, Juno and Venus. He lets Venus win, and is rewarded with the beautiful Helen. |

[48] The manuscript is named *Salmasianus* after Claude de Saumaise (1588–1653), who discovered it. *Codex Salmasianus* is now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, MS lat. 10318.

[49] Riese 1894.

[50] Bright 1984 pp. 82–83 and McGill 2005 p. 57 about the Virgilian centos. I belive that their arguments are valid also for the Ovidian cento. Bright's reasons for this conclusion are based upon his opinion that the poems are so bad that they are not likely to have travelled far. He also believes that a common geographical origin would help explain why the dates of composition vary so much. McGill presents somewhat stronger reasons supporting the conclusion: (1) A common geographical origin gives a cohesion to these texts that subject matter and chronology fail to provide. (2) Luxorius, the only unquestionably identifiable cento writer whose work is preserved in this collection, was African. (3) The only other two unquestionably identifiable writers of centos, Ausonius and Proba, are not African and their centos are not found in *Codex Salmasianus*.

[51] *Utendum est aetate; cito pede labitur aetas,/ Nec bona tam sequitur, quam bona prima fuit./Heu me nunc miserum! Laxantur corpora rugis/ Et perit, in nitido qui fuit ore, color*. "You must employ your time: time glides on with speedy foot, nor is that which follows as good as that which went before. Ah, unhappy me nowadays! The body is furrowed with wrinkles, and the colour fled that once was in that lovely face." I have chosen to call this compilation a 'cento', but e.g. Sat. 132. 11 a 'cento-like passage' because there is no evidence that this compilation was originally part of a longer work, whereas e.g. Sat. 132. 11 evidently was.

[52] Ziolkowski & Putnam (eds.) 2008 pp. 480–481 claim that the author of *Iudicium Paridis* and *De ecclesia* is probably to be identified with a Vettius Agorius Basilius, consul in 527. This would give the late fifth-early sixth century as the time of composition for the poems. This attribution is however far from sure. McGill 2005 pp. 72–73 strongly doubts this attribution. His reason for doing so is the lack of evidence that Mavortius, the consul, had a connection with Africa, where the centos were collected. It seems hard to believe that the poem would have travelled far before being collected. It should also be

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hippodamia | 162 v. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | The myth about the princess Hippodamia and her suitors. |
| Hercules and Antaeus | 16 v. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | The myth about when Hercules meets and kills the hostile giant Antaeus. |
| Progne et Philomela | 24 v. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | The myth about Procne and Philomela. |
| Europa | 34 v., containing a lacuna. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | The myth about how Jupiter disguised as a bull carried away the beautiful young girl Europa from Crete. |
| Alcesta | 162 v., containing a lacuna. | Uncertain/ Anonymous/ Mavortius?[53] | The myth about the heroic wife Alcesta who sacrifices her life for her husband, since his old father refuses to die for his son. |
| Medea | 461 v. | 3rd cent./ Hosidius Geta (or a similar name)[54] | This cento is written in the form of a tragedy. It consists of 11 scenes. It is probably best understood as a reading drama; some parts seem difficult to realise on stage. The cento tragedy tells the myth of Medea and begins in Corinth shortly before the planned wedding between Jason and Creusa. Medea is the only cento not written only in hexameters. In Medea, the chorus parts are written in paroemiacs, i.e. the parts of hexameter verses following after the caesura seminquinaria/ penthemimeres. |

**A cento with a Christian theme**

One of the Virgilian centos found in *Codex Salmasianus* has a Christian theme (*AL* 16R):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| De Ecclesia | 110 v., three lacunae | Uncertain/ Mavortius?[55] | This cento tells about a priest admonishing the congregation of his church. Thereafter, they celebrate the Holy Communion and return to their homes. |

noted that the author of *Iudicium Paridis* is probably not to be identified with the author of *De ecclesia*; see Bright 1984 p. 88 and Fassina 2007. Cf. also below.

[53] So Fassina 2007.

[54] The manuscripts of Tertullian's text give *Vosidius Geta, Offidius citra, Ovidius citra or Osidius Geta* (Lamacchia 1981 Introduction p. 5). Salanitro in his edition of *Medea* from 1981 calls the author *Osidius Geta.* Lamacchia in her edition from the same year calls him *Hosidius Geta.* Hardie 2007 p. 176 temptingly argues for the name *Ovidius Geta*.

[55] Immediately after *De Ecclesia* follows a short note saying that the audience exclaimed *"Maro Iunior.*" Hereafter follow five more cento lines. The poet is said to have recited these lines *ad hoc.* The author of *De ecclesia may* have been called Mavortius, but this guess is based only on a conjecture of a corrupt passage giving *abortio* immediately after the poem (ed. Riese 1894, *De ecclesia* 16a). Even *if* he was called Mavortius, he was probably not the same Mavortius as the author of *Iudicium Paridis.* This can be deduced from the different practices in these poems (Bright 1984 p. 88; Fassina 2007 p. 372).

**Trifles on trivial matters**

Two of the Virgilian centos found in *Codex Salmasianus* can be labelled trifles on trivial matters (*AL* 7–8R):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| De Panificio | 11 v., probably corrupt. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | This cento tells about a baker and his work. |
| De Alea | 112 v., partly corrupt. | Uncertain/ Anonymous | This cento probably tells about a dicing game and about the hostility displayed during the game.[56] |

**A wedding cento**

The last of the centos found in *Codex Salmasianus* is one of the two wedding-poems in focus of our investigation (*AL* 18R)*:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Epithalamium Fridi | 68 v. | Late 5th or early 6th cent./ Luxorius (or a similar name)[57] | The subject-matter of this cento is the wedding between a Fridus and his bride; cf. Chapter 10b. |

## *The centos which are not found in* Codex Salmasianus

**A wedding cento**

The other wedding-poem in focus of our investigation is Ausonius' cento. This cento is not preserved in *Codex Salmasianus*, but together with Ausonius' other works:

| Title | Length | Date of composition/ author | Subject-matter |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cento Nuptialis | 131 v. | End of 4th cent./ Ausonius | The subject-matter of this cento is the wedding between Gratian and Constantia; cf. Chapter 10a. |

**Centos with Christian themes**

The other three centos which are not preserved in the *Codex Salmasianus* all deal with Christian themes:

[56] So Carbone 2002. Ermini 1909 p. 42 claims that the cento tells about a lethal combat between young athletes, the excitement of the spectators and the celebrations of the winner. The scholars' different opinions illustrate the complexity and corrupt status of the text.

[57] For evidence about Luxorius' life, see Rosenblum 1961 pp. 36–48. Cf. also Chapter 10b in this work.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cento Vergilianus de Laudibus Christi | 694 v. | 4th cent./ Proba[58] | Different episodes from the Bible, both from the Old and the New Testament.<br>(Modern scholars generally refer to this cento as 'Proba's cento.') |
| Versus ad Gratiam Domini | 132 v., possibly corrupt. | A.D. 322–370.[59]/ A certain Pomponius | This cento is written in the form of a dialogue between Tityrus and Meliboeus. Tityrus is old and has a good knowledge of Chistianity. He teaches Meliboeus and gives advice about the right way of living. He also retells episodes from the Bible. |
| De Verbi Incarnatione | 111 v., one long lacuna. | Uncertain/ Anonymous[60] | This cento tells about how God is reborn as a human. It tells about Mary's faith and devotion, Christ's admonitions to his people and his Ascension. |

## *Modern critical editions and reprints of earlier editions*

As regards modern critical editions of centos, there is much to wish for.[61] The Ovidian cento *De Aetate* is included in Shackleton Bailey's edition of *Anthologia Latina* from 1982, AL 263 SB. But Shackleton Bailey refuses (*sic*) to include the Virgilian centos in his edition. The reason for this is that he considers these centos a "disgrace of literature," they "do not much call for scholarly labour", nor is he "one who suffers to insult, by editing these poems again, the Poet who ought to be worshiped."[62]

Shackleton Bailey's refusal leaves us with Riese's edition *Anthologia Latina I. 1* from 1894 as the most modern critical edition of a majority of the centos: *Narcissus* (*AL* 9R), *Iudicium Paridis* (*AL* 10R), *Hippodamia* (*AL* 11R), *Hercules et Antaeus* (*AL* 12R), *Progne et Philomela* (*AL* 13R)*, Europa* (*AL* 14R), *Alcesta* (*AL* 15R), *De Ecclesia* (*AL* 16R)*, De panificio* (*AL* 7R)*.* As to the other centos preserved in *Codex Salmasianus,* there are two fairly recent critical editions of *Medea*. One (the most comprehensive) is by Lamacchia and the other (including an Italian translation of the text) by Salanitro. Both these editions were published in 1981. Happ last edited *Epithalamium Fridi* in 1986. Also Rosenblum's study of Luxorius' poems (including English translations) from 1961 is still worth mentioning, although it gives Riese's texts. The first separate

[58] For a discussion about Proba's identity, see Green 1995.

[59] So Ziolkowski & Putnam (eds.) 2008 p. 480.

[60] *De verbi incarnatione* was long wrongly attributed to a Coelius or Caelius or to the 5th century poet Sedulius. This cento has therefore been published more often than the other short centos with Christian themes.

[61] Sineri 2007 shows how modern critical editions of centos could contribute to editions of the Virgilian works. Sineri further underlines that emendations of the text in centos must be based on what makes sense in the cento rather than on the textual tradition of the Virgilian works. Cf. also Lamacchia 1958: 5.

[62] My translations. Shackleton Bailey 1982 *Anthologia Latina* I.1, p. iii: *Centones Vergiliani* (Riese 7–18), *opprobia litterarum, neque ope critica multum indigent neque is sum qui vati reverendo denuo haec edendo contumeliam imponere sustineam*.

study about *De Alea* was written by Carbone in 2002. This study contains Riese's Latin text of *De Alea* with some alterations.[63]

Among the centos which are not found in *Codex Salmasianus*, *Cento Nuptialis* has been edited most often, generally together with Ausonius' other works. The latest editor is Green, 1991 and 1999. Schenkl 1888 made the latest critical edition of the three centos with Christian themes which are not found in *Codex Salmasianus* (Proba's cento, *Versus ad gratiam Domini* and *De verbi incarnatione*.) Also worth mentioning are the reprint of Riese's text and the translation of Proba's cento into English by Clark and Hatch from 1981.

The texts of all secular centos are also found in McGill's study from 2005. His texts agree with Riese's, Lamacchia's, Carbone's, Happ's and Green's respectively.

## *General observations on the extant Latin centos*

Six general observations regarding traits which are not mentioned by Ausonius can be made from the extant Latin centos:

1. All ancient Latin centos seem to be stand-alone poems; they do not seem to have been part of longer works. We cannot, of course, be sure that none of the centos was originally part of a longer work; however, they *can* stand on their own, without giving the impression of being part of a longer work. In this they differ from the short cento-like passages found in other works.
2. They are all built up by quotations from only one author, Virgil or Ovid.[64]
3. They fit in different literary genres (e.g. Medea, tragedy; Proba's cento, epic; the Ovidian cento, epigram).[65]
4. They all relate other narratives than the text of origin.[66]
5. In a few cases (*Cento Nuptialis, De Ecclesia* and Proba's cento) the cento is interrupted, introduced or closed with a couple of more independent lines written by the cento writer.
6. The breaking point of the verses sometimes occurs at a place where the two verses building up the verse in the cento have a word in common.[67]

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[63] Cf. Chapter 4.

[64] It is of course possible that Latin centos based on texts by other authors than Vergil and Ovid existed in antiquity. In fact, there is some evidence for a cento written by Ovid based on the works of an otherwise unknown poet named Macer. This work is unfortunately lost today. From the evidence we have, it seems that it was compiled only from quotations from Macer. Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 6. 3. 96: *Adiuvant urbanitatem et versus commode positi, seu toti ut sunt (quod adeo facile est ut Ovidius ex tetrastichon Macri carmine librum in malos poetas composuerit*). Quintilian's main theme in this chapter (6. 3) is how important it is that the orator is able to entertain his audience. Cf. also Chapter 16c.

[65] There is good reason to assume that centos may essentially fit in any genre; it is well worth noticing that the quotation may move between various genres when it is used in a cento.

[66] Cf. McGill 2005 p. 20.

[67] Lamacchia 1958:1 p. 212 is the first scholar who calls attention to this practice in *Medea*. Palla 1983 p. 290 comes back to Lamacchia's observation. This trait is not mentioned by Ausonius (cf. Chapter 1b), but occurs once in *Cento Nuptialis,* v. 48, where the word *chlamydem* is found at the break-point of both Aen. 9. 582 and 5. 250. The phenomenon seems to occur twice in *Epithalamium Fridi,* in v. 40 (*qualis*) and v. 58 – i.e. if we understand this verse as composed from *Aen.* 4. 122 and 4. 125, both having *et* at the break-point of the cento verse. (*Epithalamium Fridi* 58 may also be understood as composed from *Aen*. 4. 122 and 7. 548. The latter of these verses does not have *et* at the break-point of the cento verse.) In *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi,* as well as in the other centos where this trait occurs, the break-point seems always to be at a *caesura* in the hexameter verse.

## c. Formal rules for ancient Latin centos

This part of the chapter includes no new discussions about centos; it summarizes instead some of the most important discussions about the formal rules for centos which have been held in the previous chapters, particularly 1b and 2b. The purpose of making a distinct summary of the formal rules for ancient Latin centos is not to change the selection of ancient Latin texts called centos, and the summary does not change this selection. The aims of a distinct summary are instead to improve the accuracy of discussions about centos in general and to set up a standard against which to measure the wedding centos.

I have chosen to follow Ausonius' definition, although with some minor modifications based on the practice in the extant ancient Latin centos, as well as on the six general observations which can be made about these centos and which concern traits that Ausonius does not mention; cf. above. In this work, I have three main reasons for choosing Ausonius' definition as a starting point for the definition of the formal rules of cento: (1) Ausonius' definition is more contemporary with the two wedding centos in focus of this study than any other definition known today. (2) The practice in most extant ancient Latin centos agrees as a whole remarkably well with the rules described by Ausonius. Since most other ancient cento writers followed the rules described by Ausonius, it seems very likely that they also shared his opinions about how centos should be regarded in relation to other texts. (3) Ausonius is the author of one of the poems in focus of this study, *Cento Nuptialis.* My reason for choosing the practice in the extant ancient Latin centos as a point of reference is that these poems date from roughly the same period as Ausonius' definition and the two wedding centos.

Some readers may find this standard for centos too narrow because of the limitation to consider only the practice in the 17 extant ancient Latin centos when revising Ausonius' definition. And it is admittedly a narrow standard that I intend for this work. The reason for this is again connected with the period. For the works investigated in this study, *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi,* it is the practice in the extant ancient Latin centos rather than any other practice that matters. Yet, my choice to use a narrow standard for centos does not imply that considerations about works called centos from other periods are altogether excluded from this study. But when I consider works called centos from other periods, I will explicitly draw the reader's attention to it. It must also be underlined that my considerations about works which have been called centos from other periods – even when such considerations occasionally appear – are in no way exhaustive.

### *Formal definition of cento*

1. A cento is or looks like a stand-alone poem.
2. A cento is a text based on quotations from only one author.
3. Centos may fit in different literary genres.
4. A cento must relate a narrative that differs from the narrative in the text of origin.
5. A cento may be interrupted, introduced or closed with a couple of more independent lines written by the cento writer.

6. It is desired that a cento does not contain quotations from the text of origin that are longer than one and a half lines.[68]
7. It is desired that a cento does not contain lines composed from more than two different lines in the text of origin.[69]
8. The breaking point of the cento-verse must fall at one of the *caesurae* occurring in the hexameter. A breaking point with a common word in both verses can be attractive.
9. The quotation may not be changed, but the meaning of it may change in its new context.[70]

# 3. Why did ancient Latin cento poetry develop?

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss three factors which may help explain why Latin cento poetry developed in the late Roman Empire: Roman education, allegorical readings of Virgil, and the idea of Virgil as a Roman equal to Homer. Although the discussions are selective, they may shed some light on the cultural context from which the Latin centos could grow.

[68] In the centos based on Virgil, most lines are composed from two half lines from the Virgilian works. In the cento based on Ovid, the sections quoted are two lines long. In the Virgilian centos, the half lines are generally taken over to the cento alone, i.e. without any adjacent line or half line from the Virgilian work. Three quotations in *Cento Nuptialis* and three quotations in *Epithalamium Fridi* are longer than the recommended one-and-a-half lines; cf. Chapter 11. These are very small proportions of the total text amounts (*CN* 131 lines, *EF* 68 lines), but the proportions are bigger than in most other centos: *Iudicium Paridis* (tot. 42 lines), *Alesta* (tot. 162 lines) and *Medea* (tot. 461 lines or 364 lines, excluding the choral passages, which consist of paroemiachs, *i.e.* only part of the hexameter) have one quotation each longer than the recommended one-and-a-half lines (*Iudicium Paridis* v. 27–28, *Alcesta* v. 63–64, *Medea* v. 379–380). Bright 1984 p. 85 claims that *Iudicium Paridis* and *Alcesta* have one quotation each, *De Ecclesia* two, *Ad gratiam Domini* five, *De verbi incarnatione* three, *Medea* two and Proba's cento seven quotations longer than 1.5 lines.

[69] I believe that quotations shorter than a half line are hard to identify. Such short quotations often consist of only one or two words. How can one know that the cento writer quoted Virgil rather than finding his own words in such short quotations? How can one trust the copyists as regards such short quotations? Two lines in *Epithalamium Fridi* seem to be composed from more than two lines in the *Aeneid* (10; 30). No such line is found in *Cento Nuptialis*. Some other centos show a slightly larger number of such lines, but they are always relatively few. I doubt the precision in the following numbers given by Bright 1984, but relate them as some indication of how small the amount of short quotations is in the centos. According to Bright *De Alea* has 10 lines out of 112, *Hippodamia* 1 out of 164, *Progne et Philomela* 3 out of 24, *EF* 3 out of 68, *De ecclesia* 11 out of 111, *Ad gratiam Domini* 4 out of 132, *de verbi incarnatione* 7 out of 111, *Medea* 2 out of 364 and Proba's cento 15 out of 666 lines composed from more than 2 lines from the Virgilian works.

[70] Cento writers occasionally change the quotations, but this must be considered a miss. When it happens, the moderations of the Virgilian text are generally small, e.g. a change of person of a verb etc. (Lamacchia 1958: 1 p. 211 about the practice in *Medea,* but it is true of other centos too: "Le variazioni dal modello si riducano perciò nelle mani de centonario a minuzie vere e proprie che non intaccano la veste virgiliana dei versi: singolare invece del plurale e viceversa, impercettibili mutamenti di modo o tempo o persona nel verbo (...), variazione di un caso, di una concordanza, di una parola al più, sostituzione di un nome proprio.") The changes can only rarely be motivated on poetic or rhetorical grounds. In *Epithalamium Fridi*, there are a few examples both of minor changes and of changes best motivated on poetic or rhetorical grounds. Nonetheless, the idea that the quotation must remain the same although its meaning may change is so fundamental in Ausonius' definition, as well as in the poetic practice, that I cannot see how it could be moderated in any definition of cento.

## a. Roman education

It has been said that the grammar schools were the educational plant school from which the Latin centos could grow.[71] It was mainly boys from the upper classes who attended the Latin grammar schools, although some schools were mixed as regards gender at elementary and grammar level.[72] Since at least one extant cento has a female author, Proba, and since we cannot unreservedly assume that she attended grammar school, it is necessary to keep in mind the general traits of both boys' and girls' education during the late Roman empire in a discussion about which role schools may have played as cradles for centos.[73] It is also necessary to shed some light on how the Virgilian and Ovidian texts were studied.

### *General traits of Roman education in the late Empire*

#### Education of boys and girls

Roman education is usually divided into three stages. The elementary education was given by a *magister ludi* or *litterator* and comprised reading, writing and some arithmetic. The second stage of education was given by a *grammaticus.* The *grammaticus* above all taught his pupils literature, especially poetry, which was read, explained and evaluated. During the reign of Augustus, the new Latin poetry (Virgil, Horace and the elegiac poets) had been introduced into the curriculum of the *grammaticus.* This new Latin poetry had partly replaced the older Latin writers. The third stage of education was given by a *rhetor,* who for the most part taught his pupils prose composition and rhetoric.[74]

This traditional division of Roman education into three stages is less relevant for the education of girls. The girls' education is better divided into a pre-marital and a post-marital stage.[75] Generally, Roman girls did not reach the most advanced stage of education, the rhetorical training.[76] Towards the middle or end of grammar level, they

[71] Cf. Lamacchia 1958: 1; Markus 1974 pp. 2–3 *et al.*

[72] Hemelrijk 1999 p. 21.

[73] It may also be worth keeping in mind that a woman, Eudocia Athenaïs, wife of the emperor Theodosius II, may have written Greek centos in the early fifth century; at any rate, she seems to have written introductions to *homerocentones*. For further reading, see for instance Schembra (ed.) 2007, Usher 1997, Salanitro 1994, Smolak 1979.

[74] At the rhetorical level of education, boys had some freedom of choice as regards what to study. Some boys spent time in Greece, to study with a Greek rhetorician or philosopher. In the late empire, fluency in both Latin and Greek and knowledge of both Latin and Greek literature were marks of distinction among the upper classes: Hemelrijk 1999 p. 19.

[75] Hemelrijk 1999 chapter 2. In early days, the girl's mother seems to have been responsible for her education. Even in those early days acquaintance with central authors and texts as well as ability to speak and write was desired.

[76] The girls' education was much more uncertain than the boys' education. Girls' education depended much on individual circumstances such as the social class they belonged to, the period and town they lived in, the wealth and inclination of their families, their age at marriage and their own interests and capacities. One reason why the girls' education could vary so much was that it lacked the unity and coherence provided by a common aim. Girls were excluded from public careers. The only prospect for upper-class girls was marriage and motherhood. Yet many of them received education up to grammar level, an education not necessary to fulfil their tasks as wives and mothers. The reasons to educate daughters probably varied between families. Writings from the imperial period, mainly by philosophers

had reached the age for marriage (approx. 12–15 years) and their studies were in most cases interrupted. In some cases, women continued their studies later in life, often after the death of their husbands.

**The study of Virgilian and Ovidian texts**

As regards Virgil and Ovid, the authors whose works have been re-used in extant centos, both were mainly studied at grammar level. Both were read by boys as well as by upper-class girls. There were an increasing number of schools and other educational facilities during the principate.[77] As a consequence of this, basic and intermediate education was spread among larger groups in society, although the level of literacy, particularly among the middle classes, remains uncertain. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that acquaintance with Virgil and Ovid was fairly widespread also outside the wealthiest classes.

In the *curriculum* at grammar level, Virgil played a central role.[78] He was considered to be the most important Roman poet and an equal of the Greek Homer. Partly because of lack of written copies of the texts, the pupils often learned his works entirely by heart.[79] The students therefore often developed a very good memory. Many school exercises were also designed to train the students' capacity to memorise and to imitate the literary models of famous authors.[80] The Virgilian works were used for the compilation of so-called *exempla locutionum*.[81] *Exempla locutionum* were short passages excerpted from Virgil to demonstrate grammatical rules. Other school exercises based on the Virgilian texts were the so-called *themata vergiliana.* In these exercises, the students should rewrite episodes similar to those in the Virgilian works. There were also *declamationes vergilianae.* In these exercises, the students should elaborate stories only touched upon briefly by Virgil. Students also held public recitations or lectures on Virgilian themes and they wrote *etiopoeae,* i.e. they composed speeches for literary or mythological characters.[82]

## *The cento's possible connections with Roman education*

Centos too could have been excellent school-exercises, since they could both test and develop the student's ability to remember the Virgilian verses. The circumstance that *Codex Salmasianus,* the manuscript containing most centos, also contains other poems deriving from Virgilian school exercises[83] could perhaps indicate that the composing of

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and senators, hold up beneficial effects of education on women's morals and on their traditional role as wives and mothers. It has been argued that social motives, and particularly reasons of social prestige, were often more important underlying reasons to educate daughters; it has further been argued that the ideals of women's education expressed in literary sources from imperial times served to defend women's education in the face of criticism rather than giving the initial reasons for it. So Hemelrijk 1999 chapter 3.

[77] Hemelrijk 1999 pp. 19–20.

[78] Cf. Ermini 1909 pp. 37–41.

[79] Comparetti 1895 p. 53.

[80] Lamacchia 1958: 1 pp. 193–194.

[81] Ermini 1909 pp. 39–40.

[82] Whether these exercises were for the most part used in grammar schools or in rhetorical schools remains unsure. Exactly how they were carried out and whether they trained the students in composing verse or prose may have varied. Cf. McGill 2005 p. xix.

[83] *Locus Vergilianus* (*AL* 214 SB), *Themata Vergiliana* (*AL* 237, 249 SB). Cf. McGill 2005 p. xix.

centos was trained in schools. Although some scholars have taken it for granted,[84] there is however no explicit evidence that the composing of centos was trained in schools.[85] Whatever the role of centos was at schools, it is evident that centos could not have been written unless Virgil (and Ovid) had been thoroughly learned by heart by the pupils. Both men and women came across the Virgilian texts also after having finished their studies, since these texts were often recited in private as well as in public. This continuous exposure to the Virgilian texts probably also contributed to the readiness to compose and appreciate centos.[86]

## b. Deciphering Virgil

All ancient Latin centos extant today, except one, are composed from Virgilian verses and pieces of verses. This seems to reflect Virgil's popularity. Beside the influence from education, another important reason for his reputation was the belief that he was a divinely inspired poet and that his works contained a hidden message; it was the reader's task to decode the true, but hidden, meaning of the text.[87]

### *Veneration of Virgil in antiquity*

The belief that Virgil was, literally speaking, a divinely inspired poet had its roots already in the first century, when other poets started venerating Virgil's tomb and celebrated his birthday.[88] Such veneration had been paid before to Greek authors in the eastern part of the empire; but Virgil was the first and only Roman poet to receive this kind of worship during antiquity. Soon reverence was paid also to the Virgilian texts. We are told that the emperor Hadrian consulted so-called *sortes Vergilianae.*[89] This means that in a crucial situation he opened the Virgilian works at random, arbitrarily pointed at a line, and read it as a divinely inspired prediction about the future.

### *Christian allegorical interpretation*

For an educated late antique reader, the literal and historical meanings of a text were often of less interest than the search for the philosophical or spiritual meaning which was supposed to lie beneath the surface of the text. Christians too preferred an

[84] Comparetti 1895 p. 53, Amatucci 1955 p. 130.

[85] Possibly the composition of centos is too difficult to have been a regular school exercise. But we know that teachers wrote centos. Both Ausonius and Luxorius were grammarians.

[86] Because the quotations remain unchanged in centos, they offer us a better opportunity than most other texts, where allusions are often more subtle, when we want to find out which works were more thoroughly studied. The frequency with which Virgil's different works are quoted in ancient centos indicates that the *Eclogues* and the first six books of the *Aeneid* were more thoroughly studied than Virgil's other works. The first book of the *Aeneid* is quoted more frequently than any of the other books. (Green ed. 1991 notices this as regards *Cento Nuptialis*.) Rosenblum 1961 p. 252 suggests that the frequency with which quotations from the 1st, 4th and 6th book of the *Aeneid* occur in *Epithalamium Fridi* may indicate the popularity of these books in Luxorius' time, i.e. during the late 5th or early 6th century. The popularity of these books in comparison with the other books of the *Aeneid* persists.

[87] Wiesen 1971 *et al.*

[88] Wiesen 1971 p. 73.

[89] *HA* Spart. Hadr. 2.8

allegorical reading of the Virgilian texts;[90] they inherited the use of such interpretation from both the Graeco-Roman and the Jewish traditions.[91] The existence of Christian centos is perhaps best understood in relation to the allegorical exegesis, trying to decipher a hidden Christian message in the Virgilian texts.[92] From this viewpoint, the Christian cento could be used to expose the true, but hidden, religious meaning in the Virgilian works.

## c. Virgil – a Roman Homer

It is also commonly agreed that Roman culture as a whole depends much on the Greek one. This is equally true with regard to literature; most Latin literature connects with Greek predecessors. Virgil, for instance, communicates in many different ways with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the *Aeneid.*[93] Virgil's *Aeneid* is an epic which not only legitimizes Augustean claims of power; it is furthermore an epic which provides the Romans with a mythologically grounded national identity. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* did the same for the Greek. Moreover, both Homer and Virgil were important epic poets who held a high repute; they both composed national epics; they both received much the same kinds of other reverence.[94]

From this viewpoint, it seems logical that centos were based primarily on Homer's and Virgil's works. Latin centos based on works of other, less central poets than Virgil seem to have been rare (e.g. Ovid and Macer); Greek centos were for the most part based on Homer's works.[95] Possibly, Virgil's repute as Homer's equal provided other poets with the strongest motivations to compose centos based on his works.

# 4. What research has been done about centos?

Comparatively little academic research has been done about single centos. It is hardly surprising to find that *Medea,* with its important literary predecessors (Euripides, Ovid and Seneca), its early date of composition (3rd cent.) and its dramatic form (unique for

[90] Wiesen 1971 pp. 75–78. The interpretation of the fourth *Eclogue* as a prediction about the birth of Christ is probably the most well-known example of Christian allegorical interpretation of a Virgilian text. (For further reading, see Courcelle 1957. Cf. also Chapter 1a, Jerome *ep*. 53.7.) The fourth *Eclogue* celebrates in its historical context the expected birth of a child, and it speaks about how the Golden Age will return with this child. To Virgil's contemporaries, the identity of the child must have been clear. But already in the fourth and fifth centuries, the identification of the child with the coming Messiah was widespread. This Messianic interpretation prevailed for many centuries and was not seriously threatened until during the 19th century. The Messianic interpretation of the fourth Eclogue supported the view that Virgil was not only a divinely inspired poet, but also a pre-Christian. Dante, who let Virgil lead the way through the Underworld, also spread the idea that Virgil was a pre-Christian seer with extraordinary gifts.

[91] In the ancient world, the use of allegory was widespread. Allegory had e.g. been used to uncover more recently developed philosophical doctrines in the Homeric works; in the New Testament, allegory was used to find predictions of the coming Christ in the texts of the Old Testament.

[92] Cf. Wiesen 1971 pp. 85–91.

[93] Cf. Conte 1986 pp. 141–184; Hinds 1998 *passim*. See also Conte 1999 pp. 276–278; 283–284.

[94] During the Renaissance, Virgil was even set above Homer as the most perfect ancient epic author; his works were also translated "back" into Homeric Greek hexameters, a work which was begun already during antiquity. Conte 1999 pp. 288–289.

[95] Cf. Chapter 1a, Tert. *Praescr.* 39. 3–7 and Jerome *ep*. 53.7. On Greek cento poetry in general, see for instance Polara 1990 and Salanitro G. 1994. See also Schembra (ed.) 2007.

an ancient Latin cento), and Proba's cento have been most thoroughly examined by scholars. *Medea* and Proba's cento are also the longest extant centos (461 and 694 verses respectively). McGill's study from 2005 includes rather thorough analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi.*

## *Christian centos*

### Proba's cento

The first modern academic work dedicated exclusively to centos, Ermini 1909, treats in the first place Proba's cento. This work has played an important role by drawing scholars' attention to centos. In an article from 1964, Opelt shows that Jesus' anger is more emphasised in Proba's cento than in the Bible.[96] Clark and Hatch have translated the cento into English and they have also made interesting observations concerning its religious and cultural aspects by showing how Jesus in the cento is largely portrayed as a classical hero.[97] Cariddi has commented on the text from an historical point of view and translated it into Italian.[98] Other studies concern semantic and syntactic changes in the text[99] as well as the cento's relation to various manuscripts of the Virgilian works.[100] There have also been some controversies about the identity of the author.[101]

Many general works about early Christian literature dedicate some space to this cento. Scholars like Amatucci, Markus, Herzog and Kirsch have made valuable contributions to our understanding not only of Proba's cento, but also of cento-poetry in general.[102] McGill 2007 is worth mentioning too.

### The other centos with Christian themes

The other centos with Christian themes have been much less studied than Proba's cento. Ricci's articles about these centos and their relation to the Biblical message are worth mentioning, as well as Courcelle's brief account of them.[103] The relation between *Versus ad gratiam Domini,* written in the form of a dialogue between Tityrus and Meliboeus, and the *Eclogues* has been discussed by Vidal.[104]

## *Secular centos*

McGill 2005 has investigated all secular centos from a literary point of view. Before him, no modern scholar had studied any of these centos closely, apart from *Medea* and *De Alea.* McGill's broad study contains an introduction where the literary background of the Latin secular centos is presented, a theoretical chapter titled "Playing with poetry: Writing and reading the Virgilian centos", and four chapters where the secular centos are analysed: "Tragic Virgil: The *Medea*"; "Virgil and the everyday: The *De Panificio* and *De Alea"*; "*Omnia iam Vulgata?* Approaches to the Mythological Centos";

[96] Opelt 1964.
[97] Clark & Hatch 1981: 1–2.
[98] Cariddi 1971.
[99] Cacioli 1969; Buchheit 1988.
[100] Cataldo 1979.
[101] Shanzer 1986; Green 1995.
[102] Amatucci 1955; Markus 1974; Herzog 1975; Herzog & Schmidt (eds.) 1989; Kirsch 1989.
[103] Ricci 1963; 1974–76; 1977; Courcelle 1957. Also Schmid 1953 may be of interest.
[104] Vidal 1973.

"Weddings, Sex, and 'Virgil the maiden': The *Cento Nuptialis* and the *Epithalamium Fridi*." The study includes an appendix with the texts of all secular centos. McGill is also the author of several articles about centos.

### *De Alea*

The first separate study about *De Alea* was published in 2002 (Carbone 2002). This is also the latest extensive study on a single cento. Beside the survey of cento poetry in general, the book contains Riese's Latin text of *De Alea*, a commentary, an Italian translation and a chapter about dice games during antiquity.

### *Medea*

Among scholars who have made important contributions to our understanding of *Medea* and of centos in general, Lamacchia, Desbordes, McGill and Hardie are particularly worth mentioning.[105] Also Dane, Consolino and Salanitro have made important contributions.[106] The works by these scholars concern a wide range of topics, such as the literary tradition of *Medea*, semantic changes in the cento as compared to Vergil, metrical aspects and textual criticism of the Virgilian texts based on evidence in *Medea.* McGill's studies are the most recent literary studies of *Medea.*[107]

### The wedding centos

No more extensive academic works have been dedicated to any of the wedding centos which are in focus of this work. Only a few separate articles have been written about *Cento Nuptialis:* Bonaria 1971 treats the issue of which Virgilian manuscripts have been consulted by Ausonius; Adams 1981 treats the sexual vocabulary of the poem; Gioseffi 1994 makes some short notes about the comparisons between the *imminutio* part of the cento and war-scenes and the account of Aeneas' visit to the underworld in the *Aeneid.* No separate articles have been written about *Epithalamium Fridi.* Both wedding centos have, however, been analysed by McGill in his study from 2005; cf. above. In the following, McGill's most central suggestions will be related.[108]

As regards the general nature of centos, McGill suggests that the reader may conclude from both *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* that the boundaries between genres are permeable. He also suggests that both wedding centos were primarily written with the purpose of demonstrating authorial skill. The double circumstances lying behind its composition (the wedding between Gratian and Constantia; Ausonius' literary competition with the emperor) are crucial for McGill's interpretation of *Cento Nuptialis*. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* he identifies the epithalamic tradition from Statius' *Silv.* 1. 2 as particularly important. As regards the praising of the spouses, McGill suggests that the genre expectations of the epithalamium must guide the reader's understanding. Even though the reader may see obscene allusive messages beneath the surface of the text in *Cento Nuptialis*, such messages must be neglected because of the genre expectations; thus, according to McGill, both groom and bride are generously praised in *Cento Nuptialis*.

The concluding sex scenes of both centos differ from the genre expectations on the epithalamium. McGill further suggests that they show different intents and authorial

[105] Lamacchia 1958: 1–5; 1981; Desbordes 1979; McGill 2002; 2005; Hardie 2007.
[106] Dane 1950; Consolino 1983; Salanitro 1979–1980; 1984.
[107] McGill 2002; 2005.
[108] McGill 2005 pp. 92–114.

skills in comparison with the other parts of the centos. Because of their unusual character, he analyses the sex scenes separately from the other parts of the centos. McGill believes that Ausonius' choice to include a sex scene in *Cento Nuptialis* is connected with the omniscient authorial voice earlier in the poem; without such omniscience, the inclusion of the last two sections of the cento would not have been possible. He further describes the result of the sex scene in *Cento Nuptialis* as a "parodic degradation" of the Virgilian language. He suggests that the audience may have appreciated the obscene passage as "a distinct display of literary competence on part of the centonist." This may, argues McGill, excuse Ausonius for including the obscene passage, although *Cento Nuptialis* is an epithalamium which aims at socially very superior spouses. Luxorius' choice to include a sex scene in *Epithalamium Fridi* is explained as a result of a wish to imitate Ausonius.[109] The audience may have excused his sex scene too because it was not seen as part of the epithalamium proper, but as a "self-contained demonstration of skill." The different characters of the sex scenes in comparison with the other parts of the wedding centos seem to strengthen two earlier suggestions by McGill: "that the cento form is not inherently parodic, and that only those passages or texts that apply Virgil's language to low subject matter function as parodies." McGill sees no such tendencies earlier in the centos.

The humour of the sex scenes is described as a result of the situations in the centos and in the Virgilian texts being entirely different; Virgil's language has been applied to an altogether alien topic. Yet, unlike some earlier scholars, McGill believes that this implies no hostility towards the Virgilian texts.[110] Although the situations in the centos and in the Virgilian texts are different, the audience may, argues McGill, suspect that there is a hidden obscene message also in the Virgilian texts. Ausonius indirectly hints at this possibility in the letter wherein *Cento Nuptialis* is enclosed, and there also seems to be a fascination by the search for hidden indecency, so-called *cacemphata,* in the Virgilian works among some ancient scholars. If this is how the audience interprets the Virgilian text, the sex scenes in the centos will not function as parodies, but as revelations of the true, but hidden, meaning of the Virgilian text.

McGill concludes that the pornographic scenes "offer hermeneutic choices that differ from the rest of the poems. These emerge out of the different approaches that Ausonius and Luxorius take, from composing occasional poems and investing them with conventional laudatory functions to parodying Virgil by applying his verses to sexual subject matter. By exhibiting a wide range of writing strategies and allowing for a wide range of reading strategies, the *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* show that there is much room in cento composition for creativity on part of author and audience."

[109] So also Schenkl 1888 p. 553; Ermini 1909 p. 49 and Pavlovskis 1965 pp. 173–174.

[110] Cf. the discussion about the different stances that a cento may take in relation to its text of origin, Chapter 5 in this work.

# 5. Theoretical models for the understanding of centos

In this chapter, I will present and discuss some theory which may contribute to the understanding of centos.

## *Ausonius and modern linguistics*

Ausonius' emphasis on the importance of unity in a cento was highlighted in Chapter 1b. The cento must, he argues, be regarded as a new piece of art, where the quotations employed fit in a natural way. The quotations, though, do not necessarily bear their original meaning; they can be given a new meaning in their new context. Their form, however, remains unchanged.

Desbordes (1979) develops Ausonius' idea by applying modern linguistic theories originating from Saussure on the cento. Desbordes argues: "The examination of a cento shows that the 'syntagme', the free combination in Virgil, may be used as a 'linguistic unit'."[111] This means that the free combination of words used by Virgil has changed its status in the cento. Instead of being a free combination of words, the whole Virgilian quotation becomes a fixed linguistic unit in the cento; one may say that the quotations are the 'words' of the cento. Just like the meaning of words in other texts, the exact meaning of the quotations in the cento depends on the context where the words/quotations are used. In the latest separate study published on an ancient Latin cento poem (Carbone 2002), cento is defined in a similar way.[112] Like many earlier scholars,[113] Carbone initially defines the cento as a literary technique.[114] Later, Carbone also compares the cento to some literary experiments performed by the so-called OU. LI. PO group in France during the 1960s.[115] The similarities between the cento and the literary experi-

[111] Desbordes 1979 § 31: "L'examen du centon montre que le syntagme, la combinaison libre virgilienne, peut être utilisée comme unité de langue; comme telle, sa valeur dépend de l'ensemble plus étendu où elle entre, de ce qui précède ou de ce qui suit, ou de tout les deux. Le syntagme est plurivalent comme le mot, ou ce qu'on voudra nommer comme unité de la langue."

[112] Carbone 2002 p. 23: "Ridotta a magazzino, a dizionario, a lessemi e stilemi, l'opera centonata ha quasi cambiato statuo: non più riconosciuta e organizzata come un organismo compatto, essa è diventata una sorta di linguaggio, di codice, i cui elementi possono essere riutilizzati all'infinito e in infinite forme. Paradossalmente, i versi dell'opera hanno assunto lo stesso statuo dei segni alfabetici, delle note musicali o dei colori di una tavolozza che possono essere composti e scomposti di continuo sulla base di regole fisse che ne salvaguardino il valore – regole di semantica e sintassi per il codice verbale, di armonia e ritmo per quello musicale, di combinazione coloristica per quello pittorico,"

[113] Lamacchia 1958 1–5; 1981; Herzog 1975 pp. 7–13; Palla 1983; Verweyen & Witting 1993 p. 10 *et al.* Carbone 2002, remarkably enough, makes no reference to any of these scholars.

[114] Carbone 2002 pp. 7–25.

[115] OU. LI. PO = OUvroir de LIttérature POtentielle. A group for experimental literature founded in France in 1960 by the author Raymond Queneau and the mathematician Francois Le Lionnais. The members of the group examined in various ways how mathematical structures could be used in creative literary processes. Material for poems was often borrowed from scientific texts and the like. Well-known members of the group were Italo Calvino and Georges Perec. Particularly similar to cento writing is Raymond Queneau's *Cent mille milliards de poémes,* 1961, where phrases on strips of paper can be freely combined in many different ways. However, a major difference between Queneau's work and centos is that the phrases used by Queneau do not – as in centos – originate from any other text of origin, but are written by Queneau.

ments of the OU. LI. PO. group indicate, says Carbone, that the cento should be defined as a transformative literary genre.[116]

Today, it is commonly agreed that the meaning of a word in a given context depends not only on the immediate context, but also on how the same word is used in other contexts; intertextual approaches have shown this most convincingly within the literary field as a whole.[117] In the case of the cento, I agree with the suggestion that the meaning of a quotation depends not only on the context in the cento, but also on the context in the text of origin. I further agree with the suggestions that the quotations may be called the 'words' of the cento, and that cento shows similarities with many kinds of modern experimental literature (cf. Desbordes, Carbone *et al.*). In fact, essentially similar to centos are all kinds of texts that relate in one way or the other to a text of origin, which – although it may have been changed – still remains perceptible in the new texts.

Yet, it must be admitted that not only centos, but ancient literature as a whole, is greatly characterised by frequent allusions to earlier texts. What then is an allusion?

## *Allusion*

Conte 1986 underlines the similarities between allusion and rhetorical figures. He does not explicitly discuss centos, but much of what he says is nonetheless highly relevant also when it comes to centos. Conte gives the following general definition of allusion:

> "Thus allusion works in just the same way, and in the same semantic area, as a rhetorical figure. The gap in figurative language that opens between 'letter' and 'sense' is also created in allusion between that which is said (as it first appears), a letter, and the thought evoked, the sense. And just as no figure exists until the reader becomes aware of the twofold nature of figurative language, so too allusion only comes into being when a reader grasps that there is a gap between the immediate meaning [...] and the image that is corollary [...]. In the art of allusion, as in every rhetorical figure, the poetry lies in the simultaneous presence of two different realities that try to indicate a single reality. The single reality can perhaps never be defined directly, but it is specific and is known to the poet. The poetry lies in the area carved out between the letter and the sense. It exists by refusing to be only one or the other. This still unknown area, this tension between meanings, can be described only by referring to the two known limits that demarcate it."[118]

[116] Carbone 2002 pp. 25–30. Already Desbordes 1979 mentions the OU. LI. PO. group in his discussions about cento poetry. Desbordes underlines however also, as Carbone does not, the difference between the OU. LI. PO. group, who had the ambition of hiding their quotations in order to make their texts appear to be original pieces of literature, and the cento writers, who did not try to hide their quotations, but quoted openly throughout their works. (Desbordes 1979 § 12.)

[117] Kristeva 1969 *et al.*

[118] Conte 1986 pp. 38–39. Cf. also pp. 23–24: "Allusion, I suggest, functions like the trope of classical rhetoric. A rhetorical trope is usually defined as the figure created by dislodging a term from its old sense and its previous usage and by transferring to a new, improper, or 'strange' sense and usage. The gap between the letter and the sense in the figuration is the same as the gap produced between the immediate, surface meaning of the word or phrase in the text and the thought evoked by the allusion. [...] In both allusion and the trope, the poetic dimension is created by the simultaneous presence of two different realities whose competition with one another produces a single more complex reality. Such literary allusion produces the simultaneous coexistence of both a denotative and a connotative semiotic."

I believe that this quotation about allusive poetry in general is particularly relevant with regard to centos: *When we read a cento in relation to its text of origin, its meaning appears* neither in the text of the cento as presented to us, nor in the text of origin, but *in the gap between the cento and its text of origin.* Not only what is actually quoted in the cento, but also what is not quoted in the cento, contributes to our understanding. In order to find the significance of a cento, it is therefore necessary to study both what is articulated in the text of the cento and what is outspoken only in the text of origin. The true significance of the cento appears in the gap between these texts, and the cento is thus a kind of allusive art. That the reader has an active role in the making of meaning of such a text is obvious.[119]

**Authorial intentionality**

From the previous discussions it may be concluded that the making of meaning in an allusive text like a cento is ultimately up to the reader. The reader must not only identify the allsuions in the text; he or she must also interpret their meaning.[120] As will be further discussed below, the reader's interpretation is however restrained by the text. Is this reader-text-orientated viewpoint compatible with the idea of an intention-bearing author? Can we assume that the author consciously alludes to specific other texts and/or more widely defined textual traditions?[121] If so, can we assume that he or she intends to convey some kind of message with the allusions?[122]

Conte 1994 suggests that "probably no critic or philologist, however fully empirical or subtly theoretical he might be, will ever succeed in doing without that old, elementary trinity that subtends every model of understanding: the author, the text and the reader." He continues: "I could define my operative notion as the idea not of a *reader-interpreter* (...), but of a *reader-addressee.* The reader-addressee is a form of the text; it is the figure of the recipient as anticipated by the text. To this prefiguration of the reader, all future, virtual readers must adapt themselves."[123] Conte further suggests that it is the author who constructs the text thus, and that the author thereby constructs the addressee of the text; cf. the following chapter. Although his prime focus is the relationship between the text and its reader, Conte thus assumes that there is an intention-bearing author behind the text and its allusions.

Hinds 1998 continues the discussion. He focuses more than Conte on the intention-bearing author behind the text. Hinds sums up reader-oriented descriptions of the contract between author and reader (as suggested by Conte *et al.*) as follows:

> "The axiom that meaning is constructed at the point of reception becomes a better tool for dealing with the kinds of case which interest students of philological allusion if it embraces the fact (i.e. rather than occluding it) that one of the most persistent ways in which both Roman and modern readers construct the meaning of a poetic text is by attempting to construct from (and for) it an intention-bearing authorial voice, a construction which they generally hope or believe (a belief which must always be partly misguided)

[119] Cf. following chapter. Cf. also Chapters 7, 14 and 15.

[120] This may be done in relation to the alluding text itself, as well as to the text alluded to and to the genre. Cf. Hinds 1998 chapters 4–5. Cf. also Chapters 14 and 15 in this work.

[121] Cf. Hinds 1998 chapters 2 and 5.

[122] Cf. Chapters 6 and 15.

[123] Conte 1994 pp. xix-xx. Cf. also pp. 133–138.

> to be a reconstruction; and the author thus (re)constructed is one who writes towards an implied reader who will attempt such a (re)construction."[124]

Although Hinds agrees with this description as a matter of fact at the point of reception, he considers it ineffective as a tool to think with. The reader must certainly, argues Hinds, read the author out of the text; but while interpreting a text, it is nonetheless fruitful to presuppose an intention-bearing author, with lived experiences and passions. We can never gain full access to what an alluding poet intended by his allusions at a given moment; nonetheless, it would be a mistake to lose curiosity about the author's intentions: "Without some idea of the poet as aetiologist, as mobilizer of his own tradition, ever tendentious and ever manipulative, *our* accounts of literary tradition will always turn out too flat. If we are to dramatize the immediacy of the interests at stake in the dynamics of appropriation, we must be prepared to personalize them."[125]

It must be assumed that the authors of centos were aware that they quoted the text of origin.[126] The pertinent questions with regard to centos are instead: Can it be assumed that the authors intended anything with these quotations; moreover, did they intentionally allude also to other texts? I believe that the answers to both these questions are affirmative. However, I believe that the attentive reader may also find connections which were not intended by the author; such connections may probably be found both between the cento and its text of origin and between the cento and other texts. As both Conte and Hinds point out, unintended connections in a text can never be assertively distinguished from allusions intended by the author; I suggest that this is true also of the cento. Nonetheless, at the point of reception both the allusions and the unintended connections may provoke the reader's associations. In some cases, the reader may integrate the associations in the interpretation of the cento, in some cases not.

If the associations can be integrated, I see no reason to exclude them from the general interpretation of the cento. I further suggest that conjectures about authorial intentionality are best made as regards the overall interpretation of the cento; if many associations to other texts point in the same direction, it seems likely that the author intended to convey some kind of message to the readers with allusions. This agrees with Hinds' arguments.[127] My suggestions also agree with a general principle of hermeneutics: the interpretation of passages in a text depends on the interpretation of the text as a whole; and the interpretation of a text as a whole depends on the interpretation of the passages in the text. This principle is often described as a hermeneutical circle or as a hermeneutical spiral.

## *Genre*

As mentioned above and as will be further emphasised throughout this work, I suggest that a cento relates not only to a text of origin but also to a 'genre'. What then is a 'genre'? According to Conte 1994, a genre should be regarded as a communicative strategy within a text, a strategy that points the reader's understanding in a certain

[124] Hinds 1998 p. 49.

[125] Hinds 1998 p. 144. However, also "recent modifications of the intertextualist schemata, by Umberto Eco as well as by Conte, show that *some* interest in authorial subjectivity can be admitted by the back door into a text-and-reader-oriented intertextuality." (Hinds 1998 p. 49.)

[126] Cf. Ausonius, prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis.*

[127] Cf. Hinds 1998 *passim*.

direction. In so doing, the genre mediates the empirical world by translating it into a recognizable cultural form:

> " … genres are matrixes of works, to be conceived not as recipes but as strategies; they act in texts not *ante rem* or *post rem* but *in re.* They are like strategies, inasmuch as they are procedures that imply a response, an addressee as an integral part of their own functioning, a precise addressee recognizable in the very form of the text. Every genre is a model of reality which mediates the empirical world. The text does not work upon the direct presence of 'reality,' but upon a selective representation of it. The genre, a paradigm of the things to represent, makes reality recognizable and meaningful by translating it into something it is not. This means that, in order to be perceived, the world must take on a form, become a model of meaning; and the literary genre's communicative strategies help the reader to construct a situation or a whole imaginary world. Thus, if the literary genre shares properties with something else, then it does so not with an empirical reality but with the cultural model according to which it is perceived. In short, if poetry is conceived more as the proposal of a world than as a mimesis, it is hard to do without genres."[128]

The reader tries to relate the text not in the first place to the 'real world', but to the recognizable cultural model of the world suggested by the genre. This implies, says Conte, that: "… the reader is set on the path toward constructing a situation or an imaginary world in which only some of the many conventions found in the extra-literary world enter into systematic relation with one another."[129]

Hinds' focus is a little bit different; he gives more emphasis to the real world and the lived experience than Conte does.[130] This agrees well with his endorsement of the intention-bearing author. Hinds further suggests that the author may intentionally try to modify the genre within which he or she writes; in this process he or she may also present tendentious readings of earlier works. The author thereby appropriates the tradition and uses it for his or her own ends. Such appropriation subsequently influences the reader's understanding of the genre and of specific works alluded to.[131]

I agree with Conte's view that genres are matrixes of works and that they act in texts *in re* rather than anything else. I also agree with his suggestions that genres can be described as strategies that imply a reader's response, and that all this takes place more in relation to a cultural model than in relation to reality itself. I further agree with Hinds' suggestion that the author may try to appropriate the genre and tendentiously manipulate it for his or her own purposes. This may, I propose, also be done in centos.

[128] Conte 1994 pp. 112–113.
[129] Conte 1994 p. 126.
[130] Hinds 1998 p. 90: "Recognition of the tropes of literary history does not entail denial of their status as lived experience."
[131] Hinds 1998 chapter 5. Cf. also Stehlíková 1987.

## *The cento as a play-ground*

Nugent 1990 relates Ausonius' 'late antique' poetics to 'post-modern' literary theory. Ausonius' poems and prefaces introducing the poems (the letter containing *Cento Nuptialis et al.*)[132] are convincingly shown to reveal an attitude towards the text as an 'open place' – or even as a 'play-ground' – into which both author and reader may enter.[133] The illustrative metaphor for the text as a play-ground is motivated by the etymology of the word *allusion*, from *ludo* (play) and *ad* (engagement).[134] Ausonius invites his reader to enter the text of the poem in order to make him or her participate in the process of creating its meaning.

Nugent further identifies 'the crossing of boundaries' – including the crossing of boundaries between author, text and reader – as a characteristic of Ausonian aesthetics, and possibly also of late antique aesthetics in general. "This permeability of the text's boundaries may arise," says Nugent, "not from a deeply reasoned theoretical or philosophical position *à la* Derrida, but simply as a natural consequence of the intellectual consciousness which the poet expects his reader to share."[135] The author's awareness of the reader as a co-creator of meaning as well as his notion of texts as permeable are essentials for the creation of meaning in the cento. Nugent says:

> "Ausonius may well be capable of seeing his own text as a transaction between author and reader, because that is the way that he, in his turn, approaches the text of Vergil (or Plautus or Ovid). It should not surprise us that the 'reader reading' consciously writes for a 'reader reading' like himself. If his readers are to him as Ausonius himself is to Vergil in the *Cento Nuptialis,* little wonder that he can see the text as an open space for free play, even for the reader's *mis*-reading. For the relationship posited between text and reader is a dialectical one."[136]

It is well worth noticing that the role of the reader as described by Nugent is very similar to the role of the writer; cf. Ausonius about the role of the writer:

> "It is a task for the memory only, which has to gather up scattered tags and fit these mangled scraps together into a whole."[137]

Because of the reader's active role in the making of meaning, the appropriate question to ask when analysing a cento is not, continues Nugent, 'What does this sentence *mean?,'* but rather 'What does this sentence *do* [to the reader]? [138]

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[132] Particularly worth mentioning are the introductions to the literary *nugae Technopaegnion* and *Griphus Ternarii Numeri.* Cf. Chapters 1b and 16c.

[133] McGill 2005, chapter 1, "Playing with Poetry. Writing and Reading the Virgilian Centos", interprets Ausonius' definition of cento in essentially the same way.

[134] Nugent 1990 p. 248. The conception of the text as a play-ground derivates from Kristeva 1969; cf. Nugent p. 249. Nugent's analysis of Ausonius' aestetics is as a whole much influenced by Kristeva's theory about intertextuality.

[135] This quotation comes from the conclusion of Nugent's analysis of the permeability of the text in *Cupido Cruciatus,* but may well be applied to Ausonius' aesthetics as a whole. Nugent 1990, p. 252.

[136] Nugent 1990 p. 254.

[137] Ausonius' prefatory letter to Cento Nuptialis, line 4–5: *solae memoriae negotium sparsa colligere et integrare lacerata…*

## *The cento as a 'field of possibilities'*

Eco 1989 presents thoughts about texts that are similar to Nugent's. Despite the circumstance that he does not mention centos, but primarily focuses upon modern works of art, Eco's theories about 'The Open Work' fit ancient centos very well.[139] According to Eco, all aesthetic works are more or less open, but some kinds of modern art are deliberately more open and ambiguous, with a great variety of potential meanings. Particularly useful with regard to centos is, I suggest, the term 'field of possibilities.' Eco was not the first to use this term, but his explanation of it is excellent:

> "The notion of 'field' is provided by physics and implies a revised vision of the classic relationship posited between cause and effect as a rigid, one-directional system: now a complex interplay of motive forces is envisaged, a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure. The notion of 'possibility' is a philosophical canon which reflects a widespread tendency in contemporary science; the discarding of a static, syllogistic view of order, and a corresponding devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice and social context."[140]

It is within a 'field of possibilities' that the reader enters and creates his or her own meaning for a text. This implies that the reader has a large freedom of interpretation, and that he or she is highly involved in the making of meaning. The notion of a 'field of possibilities' also implies that there is not only one true meaning in a text. Instead there are many possible ways to stroll through and interpret the field; cf. the following chapter. Some of these are of course more comprehensive than others. It is also possible for a reader to choose various ways at various times, and of course different readers can choose different possibilities when they read the text. The author cannot foresee exactly which way the reader chooses. The making of meaning is ultimately up to the reader, although an ideal interpretation is strictly restrained within the 'field of possibilities' suggested by the text.[141]

### Nodes which limit the 'field of possibilities'

An interesting question is then how, or whether, the borders of a 'field of possibilities' can be rightly determined. I suggest that there are three different 'nodes' which limit the field of possibilities in a cento. These three nodes are: (1) the context in the cento; (2) the context in the text of origin; (3) the genre-expectations. By contrast, I suggest that in other contemporary and most modern texts,[142] there are basically two different nodes that limit the field of possibilities: (1) the context in the text in question; (2) the 'genre-expectations.' (Obviously also other ancient texts can relate closely to particular poetic

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[138] Nugent 1990 p. 255. Cf. following Chapter.

[139] McGill 2005 pp. xvii-xviii notices that Virgil's works are treated as 'Open Works' by ancient cento writers. I agree, but believe that the term 'Open Work' is even more relevant for the centos themselves.

[140] Eco 1989 p. 14. Eco's description of 'field' in physics is selective, but agrees with how the term may be used about literature.

[141] Cf. Eco 1996. In the following chapter, I will come back to the cento's field of possibilities and a discussion about different kinds of readers and their different interactions with the cento.

[142] Some modern text-types (bricolage, pastische and the like) seem to be more similar to centos in regard to their degree of openness.

predecessors,[143] but the continuous and *verbatim* dependence on a text of origin is unique for the cento.) In the cento as well as in other texts, the nodes simultaneously attract and reject each other. Other ancient texts both cohere with and differ from their genres. The cento too coheres with its genre, but it also coheres with its text of origin; simultaneously, it differs from both its genre and its text of origin. I suggest that this kind of tension, with simultaneous attraction and rejection between the nodes present in the text, constitutes fields of possibilities in all texts – in other ancient texts as well as in centos. But in a cento, this field is wider than in other texts. The reason for this is that there is one more node than in other texts present in the cento: the text of origin.[144]

The two following figures illustrate my suggestions:

*Fig. 1. Other (ancient) text*

Text

Field of possibilities

Genre-expectations

*Fig. 2 Cento*

Cento

Field of possibilities

Text of origin Genre-expectations

Among earlier scholars McGill, Lamacchia and Desbordes have most clearly taken a wider literary context than the text of origin into account when it comes to centos. I suggest that insight into the different nodes that cento poetry works from is the main key for better understanding and appreciating the centos. The different nodes present in a cento circumscribe, so to say, the field of possibilities within which the cento can be reasonably understood. I further suggest that the three different nodes from which cento poetry works are particularly useful as starting-points for methodical investigations of centos.[145]

[143] Hinds 1998 pp. 123–129 includes e.g. a fine discussion about Stat. *Ach.* and its positioning of Cat. 64 in relation to the epic genre as a whole.

[144] Differently speaking; in a cento, there is what can be called 'a double intertextuality,' whereas in other texts there is 'intertextuality' (which can be more or less intricate). The cento relates not only to its genre, but also – and differently – to its text of origin. So Moding 2003.

[145] A consequence of the lack of a convincing method of investigation for centos has been that scholars who investigate other works belonging to the same literary genre as centos have for the most part neglected the centos. (E.g., *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* have been neglected by most scholars investigating wedding poetry and the cento *Medea* has not been taken into account by scholars investigating the Medea myth.) Those 'non-cento scholars' who mention centos at all seem to be aware that a cento differs from other literature because of its extreme dependence of a text of origin. To examine the nature of centos is a task far too big to be incorporated in a general work on, for instance, wedding poetry. Therefore, it has for the most part seemed reasonable to neglect the centos in discussions about the different genres to which they belong.

## *How does the cento create an effect upon its readers?*

An interesting issue from a theoretical point of view is: *How* does the cento create an effect upon its readers? Polara (1981) identifies the cento as a special kind of allusive poetry. The cento depends not upon 'allusion by metaphor' ("allusione per metafora"), nor upon 'allusion by similarity' ("allusione per similtudine").[146] Instead, it depends upon a kind of allusion that is made through a formally exact re-use of an expression from another text. In re-using the expression, the form remains unchanged whereas the content is changed in accordance with the objectives of the new text ("allusione per antanaclasi"). The following figure illustrates similarities and differences between the three different kinds of allusive poetry as discussed by Polara:[147]

| | **Allusion by metaphor (metafora)** | **Allusion by similarity (similtudine)** | **Allusion by antanaklasis (antanaclasi)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Evocation of other text (evocazione) | Quoting of other text (citazione) | Alienated quotation of other text (citazione straniata) |
| | Integration in new text (integrazione) | Mirror image in new text (riflessione) | Combination in new text (combinazione) |
| Recurrence of the signifying (tautologia del significante) | - | + | + |

[146] Conte 1985 pp. 30–45 defines 'allusion by metaphor' and 'allusion by similarity'. 'Allusion by metaphor' demands the effort of an active reader to be recognised at all as an allusion to a foreign text. The meaning of the new text is different from the meaning of the text to which the allusion is made. An example of 'allusion by metaphor' is to call the cup of Dionysos 'Dionysos' shield' or the shield of Ares 'Ares' cup'. (Conte 1985 p. 31; cf. also Arist. *Po*. 1457b, giving a slightly different interpretation of the same example). 'Allusion by similarity' is at hand when a text is recalled in the reader's mind through the use of a quotation, or of an expression very similar to a quotation. The meaning of the new text is the same as the meaning of the text to which the allusion is made. An example of 'allusion by similarity' is Ov. *fast.* 2. 483–489 alluding to Ov. *met.* 14. 812–816 (Conte pp. 35–36). In Ov. *met.* 14. 812–816 Mars speaks to Jupiter in order to remind him about his promise to accept Romulus among the gods: *tu mihi concilio quondam praesente deorum/ (nam memoro memorique animo pia verba notavi)/ 'unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli'/ dixisti: rata sit verborum summa tuorum"/ adnuit omnipotens…,* "Once to me, in full council of the gods (for I treasured up your gracious words in retentive mind, and now recall them to you), did you declare: 'One shall there be whom you shall bear up to the azure blue of heaven.' Now let the full meaning of your words be ratified." The omnipotent Father nodded his assent." The same episode is retold in Ov. *fast.* 2. 483–489: *"Iuppiter – inquit – habet Romana potentia vires:/ sanguinis officio non eget illa mei./ Redde patri natum: quamvis intercidit alter./ pro se proque Remo, qui mihi restat, erit./ 'Unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli'/ tu mihi dixisti: sint rata dicta Iovis."/ Iuppiter adnuerat.* "'O Jupiter,' he said, 'the Roman power hath strength: it needs not the services of my offspring. To the sire give back the son. Though one of the two has perished, the one who is left to me will suffice both for himself and for Remus. You yourself have said to me that there will be one whom you will exalt to the blue welkin. Let the word of Jupiter be kept.' Jupiter nodded assent."

[147] Polara 1981 p. 59. Allusion by metaphor evokes another text. It demands that the reader recognizes the allusion and is able to integrate it with the new text. Allusion by similarity quotes another text. It produces a mirror of the other text in the new text and does not demand the same active cooperation by the reader to be recognized. Allusion by antanclasis quotes another text in a way that alienates the two texts from each other. To be recognized, it does not demand such an active cooperation by the reader as allusion by metaphor. Many alienated quotations are combined in the new text.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recurrence of the signified (tautologia del significato) | - | + | - |
| Semantic difference (scarto) | + | - | + |
| Tension between texts (tensione) | + | - | - |

I believe that Polara's choice to identify the cento as a special kind of allusive poetry is adequate. There is only one significant objection to be made against the classification of the cento as illustrated in the figure above: unlike Polara, I am convinced that there is often a tension between the cento and its text of origin (*tensione*). Polara claims that the semantic difference between the cento and its text of origin is so significant that a tension between the texts can only rarely be found.[148] I believe on the other hand that the fullest meaning of the cento can often be found in the tension between the cento and its text of origin. This is a part of the 'field of possibilities' into which the reader is invited to enter; it is part of the space where the reader may playfully create his or her own meaning of the cento.

## *Starting-points*

From which starting-points, then, can a cento be read and understood if the nodes which limit its field of possibilities are accepted?

### The cento *per se*

The simplest way of reading a cento would be to read it without taking into account any allusions to other literature. The cento *per se* is, I believe, the first and most important starting-point to consider when it comes to creating a meaning in the cento:[149]

[148] Polara 1981 p. 60 suggests nonetheless that a tension can occasionally be found in a cento, and he considers such moments particularly fruitful. Polara mentions the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* as an example where there is a poetically fruitful tension between the text of origin and the cento. In this case, the quotations move from one poetic register to another, and this has a parodic effect in Bachtin's sense of the word, says Polara. I discuss the humour of the *Imminutio* part in Chapter 12. Cf. also Chapters 14b and 16e.

[149] As shown in hermeneutics, no sound interpretation of a text strongly contradicts the situation at hand in the text in question. Cf. Desbordes 1979 § 27: "L'aimantation du sens est le résultat meme de la juxtaposition, selon le principe simple: changer le contexte, c'est changer le texte. Le contexte, ce peut être le titre: la lamentation de l'héroïne abandonée sera différement percue selon qu'on l'intitulera Ariane, Didon ou Médée; *Cento Nuptialis* ou *Medea* en tête d'une série de fragments de Virgile engage la lecture dans un certain sens."

*Fig. 3 The cento per se*

**Cento**

Field of possibilities

Text of origin Genre-expectations

**The cento and its text of origin**

Desbordes (1979) suggests that a cento may be understood as a cento only as long as its text of origin is familiar to the audience. It draws upon recognition and change of context vis-à-vis its text of origin. This is why only texts that are well-known at the time of composition and to the particular audience may be used as texts of origin for a cento.[150] I agree; since we recognise the centos as centos, we relate them to their texts of origin. The relation between the cento and its text of origin is the only kind of intertextuality which is unique for centos, and it has therefore been most thoroughly discussed by earlier scholars.

*Fig. 4 The cento and its text of origin*

**Cento**

Field of possibilities

**Text of origin** Genre-expectations

**The cento and its genre**

Centos may fit in different literary genres. As repeatedly mentioned before, I believe that it is important to relate centos not only to their texts of origin, but also to a wider literary tradition. To be fully understood, a cento must – like any other piece of literature – be related to many other works, primarily works belonging to the same genre as itself. With regard to the intertextuality between the cento and its genre, centos differ only slightly from other texts. The cento and its genre are the third starting-point from which a cento can be read and understood:

[150] Today centos are found in rap music, music videos and advertisements. As in antiquity, the performance of centos is often oral and they are often recited with special attention to rhythm and other musical dimensions of the text. The texts of origin of modern centos are often well-known popular songs or lines from popular films. Such were for instance the short scenes that were regularly transmitted some years ago on the popular TV channel MTV. Cf. Desbordes 1979 § 22: "Le centon idéal copie son modèle sans modifications et ne copie que son modèle, et pourtant il ne vit que de sa confrontation avec ce modèle dont il différe et qu'il transforme... Le centon ne vit comme tel qu'aussi longtemps que son modèle est célèbre; d'où l'utilisation d'Homère, de Virgile, et, pour les rares centons d'aujourd'hui, des rengaines populaires."

*Fig. 5 The cento and its genre*

**Cento**

Field of possibilities

Text of origin **Genre-expectations**

## *Detachment from the genre*

However, as soon as a cento is understood as a cento, it becomes awkward to read it as an ordinary example of a text belonging to the same genre.[151] The reason is that the cento as such takes a stance that detaches it from the genre to which it nonetheless belongs. Compare McGill (2005):

> "In a cento, however, the intercession of Virgil causes the patchwork poem to be something other than merely a representative of that particular genre."[152]

In this quotation, McGill suggests that it is precisely the core of the cento-technique itself, i.e. the non-stop quotations from the text of origin, which detaches the cento from the genre to which it nonetheless belongs. I strongly agree with this suggestion. The non-stop quotations from the text of origin are an element foreign to the genre. The cento is something different, not only from its text of origin, but also from its genre. The cento is Virgil, but it is nonetheless different; the cento is also a drama, a wedding-poem etc., but it is nonetheless different. The cento is in itself an element foreign to *every* other tradition. With regard to a cento's relation to the genre to which it belongs, the author's choice to use cento-technique *per se* challenges and questions the genre.[153]

## *Different stances in relation to the text of origin*

Earlier scholars have argued that centos may take different stances in relation to their texts of origin. These different stances lie beneath different applications of centos in relation to tradition. The meaning of the text of origin may be reinforced when it is torn apart and re-used in the cento. The prominent status of the text of origin in relation to other pieces of literature is underlined and sustained through this kind of *imitatio.* On

[151] Whether the genre to which the specific cento belongs is a 'high genre' or not is of minor importance; in this I differ from McGill 2005 p. 8. I believe that it is just as awkward to read *Epithalamium Fridi* as an ordinary epithalamium as it is to read *Medea* as an ordinary tragedy. Cf. Chapter 1b, footnote 31.

[152] McGill 2005 p. 8.

[153] Similarly, the author's choice to compose a cento which belongs to another genre than the text of origin challenges and questions the text of origin. As will be further discussed in the following chapter and in Chapter 15, the reader's understanding is therefore inevitably alienated from both the cento itself, its text of origin and its genre.

the other hand, the cento may take such an opposed stance towards its text of origin that the prominent status of the text of origin is questioned or actually overthrown.[154]

Herzog (1975) argues that the cento moves between two different applications: *Auflösung* (*decomposition*) and *Deutung* (*interpretation*) of its text of origin. It also moves between *Paraphrase* (*paraphrase*) and *Allegorie* (*allegory*) as regards the themes of the text of origin.[155] Verweyen/ Witting (1993) focus upon centos written from the 16th century onwards[156] and their theories about the different possible stances of centos in relation to their texts of origin are similar to Herzog's, but instead of using the words *Auflösung* and *Deutung* they use the words *Normverletzung* and *Normbildung.*[157] With regard to the early modern and modern centos, Verweyen/Witting further argue that the different applications of the cento-technique are not equally distributed over time. Centos underlining and sustaining the meaning of their texts of origin are more frequent during times and in social contexts where *imitatio,* "imitation", is the leading aesthetic ideal. When *innovatio,* "innovation", is the leading aesthetic ideal, the cento – if it appears at all – works in opposition against its text of origin, trying to bring down its authority.[158] This is illustrated by the fact that the majority of centos written before the mid-18th century strengthen the authority of their texts of origin. Centos working in opposition against their texts of origin dominate from the mid-18th century onwards.[159] This change comes with new aesthetic ideals taking form and growing in importance from the mid-18th century. From this time on, the author's genius and originality have been considered essential for the quality of a literary text.

I agree with the suggestion that centos may take different stances towards their texts of origin. It must nonetheless be stressed that these stances are secondary; regardless of whether the cento takes a stance that decomposes or interprets its text of origin, it always takes a stance that detaches it from its text of origin (just as it was argued above to take a stance that detaches it from its genre).[160] In some sense, it is the text of origin

[154] Cf. Hinds 1998 chapters 4–5 about how authors may present the reader with tendentious readings of earlier works.

[155] Herzog 1975 p. 12: "Der Cento bewegt sich so zwischen *Auflösung* und *Deutung* seines Modells und dementsprechend zwischen *Paraphrase* und *Allegorie* seiner Gegenstände."

[156] The cento-like comments written by Julius Wilhelm Zincgref (1591–1635), Late-humanist and jurist, to *Emblematum ethico-politicorum centuria* and the introduction to Justus Lipsius *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1605) have been thoroughly discussed by Verweyen & Vitting 1993. Both these texts consist of frequent quotations, but also of words written by the authors. The share of quotations is larger in Zincgref's text. In both texts, the authors show by means of typography what is a quotation and what is not. Worth noticing is also that the quotations come from different authors and texts. Verweyen & Vitting have also thoroughly discussed Erich Weinert *Einheitsvolkslied* (1924) and Edwin Bormann *Goethe-Quintessenz* (1885). Weinert's text builds upon folk-songs and the like; Bohrmann's builds upon Gothe's poems. Both texts have a parodic effect, which is not at hand in the 'centos' by Zincgref and Lipsius. None of these texts fit the strict definition of cento applied elsewhere in this work. Nonetheless, I believe that Verweyen & Witting's observations contribute to a general discussion also about late antique centos.

[157] Verweyen & Witting 1993 p. 21: "Fasst man die Ergebnisse zusammen, so dürfte wohl deutlich geworden sein, dass mit dem als "Cento" bezeichneten Zitatverfahren zwei miteinander unverträgliche Funktionen zu realisieren sind: einmal Normbildung oder Normbestätigung [...]; zum andern aber auch Normverletzung und Automatisierung der als einmalig eingeschätzten Vorlagen." Cf. also Chapter 1a, Tertullian's warnings regarding centos built up from the Holy Scriptures.

[158] Verweyen & Witting 1993 p. 22: "Im Geltungsbereich der Imitation dominiert eine Zitatmontage, die Autorität und Glanz der Prätexte usurpiert und damit zugleich deren Normhaftigkeit stabilisiert. Im Geltungsbereich der Innovation hingegen fungiert die Zitatmontage beim Cento dominant gegen die zitierten Prätexte."

[159] Verweyen & Witting 1993 p. 4.

[160] Cf. McGill 2005 for a similar view.

that we read in a cento; in some sense, it is not. From this viewpoint, all centos both reinforce (sometimes semantically, always with regard to grammar and language) and question their texts of origin.[161]

## *Summary*

This chapter can be summarized as follows:

1. The cento may be described with a linguistic terminology influenced by Saussure; the quotations can then be understood as the 'words' of the cento.

2. Cento is a special kind of allusive poetry; in relation to its text of origin, it builds upon 'allusion by antanaclasis.'

3. The cento relates both to its text of origin and to its genre; genre should then be understood as a communicative strategy within the text, a strategy that points the reader's understanding in a certain direction.

4. The cento writer may intentionally allude both to the text of origin and to the genre; he or she may thereby present the reader with a tendentious reading of the preceding tradition.

5. Conjectures about authorial intentionality are best done as regards the general interpretation of a cento; for this a hermeneutical approach may be useful.

6. The cento is an open work which may be described as a 'play-ground' or as a 'field of possibilities.' The nodes which limit a cento's 'field of possibilities' are the context in the cento, the context in the text of origin, and the genre-expectations.

7. The different starting-points from which a cento can be read and understood are the cento *per se,* the cento in relation to its text of origin, and the cento in relation to its genre. The first starting-point for a good interpretation is the cento *per se.*

8. Centos may take different stances in relation to their text of origin; they may e.g. decompose or interpret the text of origin. However, these different stances are secondary; all centos take a stance which *detaches* them from their text of origin, and from their genre.

9. The reader is highly involved in the making of meaning in a cento; the role of the reader is similar to that of the writer.

[161] Cf. Nugent 1990 p. 249 about intertextuality as defined by Kristeva 1969: "Such a notion of simultaneous affirmation and negation posits poetic composition as a kind of oxymoronic violation of the law of the excluded middle, and it accords remarkably well with Ausonius' own oxymoronic description of the cento as *opusculum de inconexis continuum, de diversis unum, de seriis ludicrum, de alieno nostrum* ('a little work unified from fragments, a whole from diverse parts, ludicrous though from serious things, mine – though from another')."

# 6. The reception of centos

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the reception of centos. This will be done from four different viewpoints: contemporary reception; repertoires; different kinds of readers; the Model Reader's co-operation.

## a. Contemporary reception

Next to nothing is known about how centos were received in antiquity. Beside the passages discussed in the first chapter of this work, there is no evidence from outside the centos themselves which shed any light on their contemporary reception.

### *Oral performance or private reading?*

It remains even unsure whether centos were generally recited in public or read in private. From the evidence in Ausonius' letter, one may get the impression that centos were recited at dinner parties and the like; this seems to be the setting of the literary contest between Ausonius and the emperor.[162] But the evidence from Ausonius is very weak; it concerns at best the reception of *Cento Nuptialis.* Even if *this* cento was recited in public, it does not imply that other centos were recited. Furthermore, the suggestion that *Cento Nuptialis* was recited does not exclude the possibility that it was *also* read in private. The uncertainty whether the centos were generally recited in public or read in private persists. Possibly both kinds of reception occurred.

The uncertainty of how the centos were generally received is disconcerting; the conditions of an audience and of a private reader vary a lot with regard to how the two kinds of addressees can reasonably be assumed to understand the centos. The quotations from the text of origin were probably easier to identify for a private reader, who had the opportunity to pause and go back in the text, than for a person in an audience, who did not easily have these opportunities. The recognition of the original contexts of the quotations is the first condition for picking up a possible allusion to the text of origin. Therefore, a private reader, who has a better possibility to identify the quotations, is also more likely than a person in the audience of a public recitation to pick up potentially meaningful allusions to the text of origin. A private reader also had better possibilities to pause and think about the possible implications of these allusions than a person in the audience of a recitation. On the other hand, a person in the audience of a recitation could pick up the paralinguistic communication of the performer (intonation, changes in facial expression and the like). He or she could also observe other persons' reactions to the recitation of the cento. These circumstances are likely to influence his or her interpretation; but none of them is possible to reconstruct today. It is worth noticing that

[162] Prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis*, lines 9–13: *imperator Valentinianus, vir meo iudicio eruditus, nuptias quondam eiusmodi ludo descripserat, aptis equidem versibus et compositione festiva. experiri deinde volens quantum nostra contentione praecelleret, simile nos de eodem concinnare praecepit*. "Emperor Valentinian, a man, in my opinion, of deep learning, had once described a wedding in a jeu d'esprit of this kind, wherein the verses were to the point and their connections amusing. Then, wishing to show by means of competition with me the great superiority of his production, he bade me compile a similar poem on the same subject."

the present-day conditions for interpretation of the centos are more similar to those of a private reader than to those of a listener in an audience at a recitation.

## *Popularity of centos?*

We know almost as little about the contemporary popularity of centos as about how they were performed. In the first chapter of this work, it was noticed that the Church fathers are for the most part harsh in their opinions about centos; this is however due to religious scruples. Perhaps the Church fathers' interest in the centos shows in itself that the centos were popular among their contemporaries; if not, why would the holy fathers bother to discuss them at all?

## *The ancient reader's familiarity with other literature?*

What is known about the contemporary reception, then? Most ancient readers probably had quite good knowledge of the Virgilian and Ovidian texts, which were thoroughly studied at school and often recited elsewhere; cf. Chapter 3a. This implies that the readers were generally able to relate the cento to its text of origin, at least to some degree. Most ancient readers probably also had a good knowledge of different literary genres. All ancient literature relates to genres, and it must be assumed that genres were discussed at intermediate level as well as thoroughly studied at higher levels of education; cf. Chapter 3a.

## *Concluding discussion*

From the preceding discussions, it may be concluded that the average ancient reader was able to relate the cento both to its text of origin and to its genre, at least if he or she had some time for reflection. Nonetheless, it must also be noticed that a steady contact with the text of origin seems to demand the impossible of the reader: he or she must continuously be able to relate the quotations which are used in the cento to their original context, and simultaneously he or she must integrate them in a sensible way in the interpretation of the cento. No private reader, and certainly no person in an audience who heard a cento only once and who lacked the possibility to go through the text again, can be expected to have sensibly comprehended *all* possible connections to the text of origin.[163]

[163] Cf. Eco 1989 p. 15 about the performances of modern musical open compositions: "Every performance *explains* the composition, but does not *exhaust* it. Every performance makes the work an actuality, but is in itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work. In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit."

## b. Repertoires

Individuals as well as texts possess what may be called 'repertoires.' In the following, it will be discussed what a 'repertoire' is, and how so-called 'personal repertoires' may disturb interpretations of texts.

### *Personal repertoires*

All individuals possess so-called 'personal repertoires.' The personal repertoire represents the individual's values, beliefs and experiences of the world; and it depends greatly on the person's socio-cultural formation and ideology, as well as gender-, race-, generation- and culture-specific experiences.[164] The personal repertoire is also coloured by the individual's innate personality. The personal repertoire helps the individual to comprehend the world; it helps him or her to sort and interpret his or her impressions in a manageable way. But, the personal repertoire may also prevent the individual from seeing and integrating aspects of the surrounding world which do not agree with former experiences and expectations; and vice versa, the personal repertoire may deceive the individual so that he or she emphasizes aspects in the surrounding world which agree with his or her personal repertoire.

### *Repertoires of texts*

All texts possess subsets of "the larger culture's discourses, beliefs, values, and ways of understanding the individual and the world." These subsets have been called the 'repertoires' of the texts.[165] They depend on the cultural context of the text's composition (of which the author may be more or less conscious), and on how the text is constructed for its intended audience. These ideas about the nature of repertoires of texts roughly correspond with the ideas presented above about the nature of personal repertoires. Paradoxically enough, though, the repertoires of a text tend to change over time, when the text is 'in use' and interacts with its readers. The reason is that readers interpret the text's past because of how they are positioned in the present.[166] Readers interpret texts in agreement with their personal repertoires; cf. above. When the reader's repertoire meets the text's repertoire, the text may become a 'site of struggle' between different repertoires. Although the text may try to privilege a particular reading position, the readers may not produce that privileged reading: their personal repertoires may prevail and mute the repertoire of the text.[167]

[164] McCormick 1994 p. 80 f.
[165] McCormick 1994 p. 9.
[166] McCormick 1994 p. 71.
[167] McGormick 1994 p. 69.

## c. Different kinds of readers

In the following, I will discuss how the awareness of different kinds of readers may facilitate a scholarly analysis of centos.

### *Empirical readers*

Empirical readers are 'real readers'; they are, have been, or will be living persons. This implies that all empirical readers belong in historical and socio-cultural contexts; and their interpretations of texts are more or less coloured by their personal repertoires. Because of the personal repertoires, empirical readers may be blind to aspects of the text which are foreign to their own repertoires, and they may also see things in the text which are not really there; cf. above. In the cento, the personal repertoire of the empirical reader may, for example, interfere with or inhibit the integration of potentially meaningful associations to the text of origin and to the genre.

It is an intricate task to investigate the empirical reader's 'repertoire' – not only because of differences between historical and socio-cultural contexts, but also because all individuals have their own personalities and carry their own personal histories. These too colour the individual's 'repertoire' and make its effects difficult to understand thoroughly, even for contemporaries who share similar socio-cultural experiences. This implies that it is difficult to foresee exactly how any other empirical reader than oneself would interpret a cento.[168] In this work, I have therefore chosen not to focus on the empirical reader's reception of centos.

### *Model Reader(s)*

Although the Model Reader is an abstract construction, he or she is for the most part more useful for this work's discussions than the empirical reader. Who is the Model Reader?

#### General definition of the Model Reader

In general terms, the Model Reader is the intended reader of a text; and he or she can be found in the text, because the author has (more or less consciously) placed him or her there.[169] Conte (1986) defines the relationship between the author, the text and the Model Reader as follows:

> Conte 1986 p. 30:
> "The modes of reading (and imitatio) of each epoch are implicit in their modes of writing. The text requires the cooperation of a reader as a necessary condition for its realization. To be more precise, a literary text is a product whose interpretative destiny belongs to its own generative

[168] Moreover, it may be difficult to foresee (and to reconstruct) one's own interpretations over time. The reason for this is that the empirical reader's repertoire may change over time, as he or she makes new experiences; this may affect his or her interpretation and change it over time.

[169] The Model Reader is however not the author's reconstruction of a specific empirical reader; cf. below.

> mechanism. Generating a text means activating a strategy that predicts the moves of others. […] … the author presupposes the competence of his (or her) own Model Reader. Today I would go further and say that the author *establishes* the competence of the Model Reader, that is, the author constructs the addressee and motivates the text in order to do so. The text institutes strategic cooperation and regulates it."

In this quotation, Conte suggests that the author constructs his or her Model Reader while writing a text and that the Model Reader therefore lies implicit in the text. The Model Reader collaborates in a wished-for way with the author in the creation of meaning in the text. When he or she writes a text, the author uses a strategy which predicts the moves of others; as a consequence, the text *per se* will partially predict the so-called Model Reader's interpretation. The Model Reader arises from the text. The Model Reader is therefore much more closely connected to the text and its repertoire than the empirical reader is. Further, the Model Reader is not limited by any other repertoire than that of the text.

**How is the Model Reader useful for this work?**

I believe that, when analysing a text, the awareness of the so-called Model Reader may help us distinguish our own repertoires from the historically and socio-culturally determined discourses of the text. The Model Reader may, I believe, help us avoid the risk of violating the repertoire of the text; cf. the discussion above about repertoires of texts. A main challenge is, I suggest, to identify the Model Reader in the text and let the Model Reader interpret the text for us. If this is successfully done, our own 'repertoires' will be separated from the 'repertoire' of the text; and this is, I believe, the first precondition for a deeper understanding of both. In this work, I will for the most part search for the Model Reader's interpretation of the centos.

**Diverse Model Readers**

In my view, however, centos may also simultaneously presuppose diverse Model Readers. This idea is similar to how some children's books seem to be constructed to suit different Model Readers. Both children and adults may appreciate such books, although they comprehend them differently. Both kinds of readings (the child's reading and the adult's reading) are grounded in the text;[170] and the author may, I suggest, simultaneously have presupposed both a Child Model Reader and an Adult Model Reader.

With regard to centos, I believe that the author is more likely to establish diverse Model Readers in a cento which contains many multifaceted allusions to the text of origin and to the genre than in a cento which does not contain many such allusions. Centos which contain many multifaceted allusions are also more open for different and complementary interpretations than centos where all (or most) allusions point in a similar direction. In the following, I will call the diverse Model Readers that complex centos may presuppose 'advanced' and 'less advanced.'

[170] In the individual case, they are however also coloured by the child's and the adult's personal repertoires; cf. discussion about 'The empirical reader's personal repertoire' above.

## *Ideal reader(s)*

I further suggest that a cento (and probably also other texts) may have what I call an Ideal Reader. The Ideal Reader differs in part from both the Model Reader and the empirical reader. The Ideal Reader may, I suggest, assimilate the author's reconstruction of a specific addressee of the text. In the case of *Cento Nuptialis,* this specific addressee may have been the emperor, the groom, or some of the judges at the literary competition; cf. Chapter 12.

# d. The Model Reader's co-operation

How does a cento's Model Reader co-operate with the text in the cento? I suggest that the Model Reader collaborates by associating the cento to both its text of origin and its genre.[171] Such a Model Reader lies implicit in the cento; the cento alludes directly to various situations in its text of origin, but it also belongs to a genre, which may differ from the genre of the text of origin. Both the text of origin and the genre may considerably contribute to the significance of the cento; cf. the preceding and following chapters.[172]

## *What does a cento with a wide field of possibilities presuppose of its Model Reader?*

I suggest that the demands that a cento with a wide field of possibilities puts on its Model Reader can roughly be sorted under three different headings: familiarity with classical literature, playfulness, and associative capacity as regards the present situation compared to the literary situations at play.

### Familiarity with classical literature

Familiarity with classical literature is a *sine qua non* for an empirical reader who wants to create a somewhat deeper meaning for a cento. And, as I hope to have made clear, the cento demands a learned Model Reader. How much acquaintance with classical literature a cento demands from its Model Reader probably varies between different centos; the more complex the connections are between cento, text of origin and genre, the more acquaintance seems to be needed.

The role of familiarity with classical texts is above all to provide the Model Reader with the necessary tools to become conversant with the cento. Familiarity with classical literature also helps the Model Reader to define the boundaries of the cento's field of possibilities. But such familiarity is not all that is needed for a more comprehensive interpretation.

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[171] Cf. Chapter 5.

[172] In the preceding chapter, the cento was described as a playground or as a field of possibilities into which the reader was invited to enter. The latter description of the cento corresponds well with the moves that the cento predicts for its readers; cf. also discussion above. The readers are invited to enter this field and the Model Reader may read the cento from three different starting-points: (1) from the text in the cento *per se;* (2) from the cento and its text of origin; and (3) from the cento and its genre; cf. Chapter 5. However, as will be further discussed below, none of these starting-points provides the Model Reader with constant support.

**Playfulness**

The cento also demands that its Model Reader has a certain personality. I believe that the Model Reader of a cento with a wide field of possibilities particularly benefits from playfulness.[173] As Eco points out, transactional psychology and information theory provide us with some wide-ranging arguments for an open and playful attitude towards open works in general.[174]

In a cento, very many connections with other texts and situations can be found. These connections are brought about both by the quotations from the text of origin and by the generic associations of the cento in question. Sometimes, the connections point in one and the same direction; in other cases, the connections do not seem to point in any particular direction. In these cases, the quotations are juxtaposed without any immediately apparent underlying structure.[175] The connections which are juxtaposed without any immediately apparent underlying structure can be labelled 'noise'. 'Noise' is a term borrowed from information theory and it stands for all the obstacles a message must overcome before it reaches its destination.[176] It is the reader's task to distinguish the quotations that may enrich the message of the cento from the quotations that may not. In other words, it is the reader's task to distinguish the meaning in the cento from the noise; and, as will be further discussed in the following, this may be difficult.[177]

When the reader takes the relationship between the cento and its text of origin as starting-point for the reading, he or she remembers the original contexts of the quotations and relates them to the new context in the cento.[178] However, in this process, the reader's memory is continuously *challenged*. As soon as a quotation has been identified, and the situation at hand in the original context has come to the surface of the reader's mind and thereby started to influence his or her expectations on the successive narrative in the cento, there comes – surprise! – a new quotation overthrowing the

[173] With the word 'playfulness', I intend an open attitude which stimulates the Model Reader to participate actively and with confidence in the making of meaning to the cento. The Model Reader gains from having an open and confident attitude towards the cento, just as a child gains from having an open and confident attitude towards a new playground. Such a child knows the borders of the game (from previous education and experiences as well as from immediate communication with its caretaker), and within these borders the child freely explores the swings, the slides and all other possible divertissements of the place. In a similar way, the open and confident Model Reader knows the borders of the cento (from previous education and experiences), and within these borders the Model Reader freely explores the different suggestions of the cento.

[174] Cf. Eco 1989 pp. 44–82.

[175] This will be further discussed in Chapter 14a; cf. discussions about 'meaningful' and 'empty' associations.

[176] Eco 1989 pp. 50–51: "In its analysis of communication, information theory considers messages as organized systems governed by fixed laws of probability, and likely to be disturbed either from without or from within (from the attenuation of the text itself, for instance) by a certain amount of disorder, of communication consumption – that is to say, by a certain increase in entropy commonly known as 'noise'. If the meaning of the message depends on its organization according to certain laws of probability (that is, laws pertaining to the linguistic system), then the 'dis-order' is a constant threat to the message itself, and entropy is its measure. In other words, *the information carried by a message is the negative of its entropy*. .... One way or another, my message will have to overcome a certain number of obstacles before it reaches its destination; in information theory, all these obstacles fall under the rubric 'noise'." Hardie 2007 uses 'backgruond noise' as a term in his discussions about Hosidius Geta's *Medea.*

[177] Cf. Hardie 2007.

[178] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the tasks of the reader and of the writer are similar in this respect; cf. Ausonius about the writer: *Solae memoriae negotium sparsa colligere lacerata*, "'Tis a task for the memory only, which has to gather up scattered tags and fit these mangled scraps together into a whole."

expectations. With the new quotation, the procedure starts all over again: identification, expectations, overthrowing of expectations, surprising continuation – over and over again, all the way through the cento. Likewise, when the reader takes the relationship between the cento and its genre as starting-point for the reading, he or she relates the cento to the genre to which it belongs. However, the non-stop quotations from the text of origin are foreign to the genre; cf. the preceding chapter. They therefore disturb the reader in his or her attempts to relate the cento to its genre. The reader is thus challenged not only by the unexpected continuation of the narrative in the cento in comparison with the original context of the quotation (the cento in relation to its text of origin). He or she is challenged just as much by the unexpected divergences from the genre-expectations, i.e. by the continuous quotations from the text of origin. This is the core of the cento itself. The reader may therefore not lean back and rely on his or her knowledge of the Virgilian texts, nor may he or she trust his or her knowledge of the generic pattern of the text. No matter which node (text of origin or genre) the reader primarily chooses to support his or her comprehension of the cento, he or she will find that the cento just does not fit the expectations.

Now, what does all this have to do with the Model Reader's need for playfulness and an open attitude? As was seen above, when the reader opens up towards the cento, he or she finds that the expectations that he or she has on the cento from previous education are constantly questioned. I believe that an empirical reader without an open and playful attitude is likely to find this disturbing.[179] I further believe that playfulness is often the most beneficial attitude to adopt when our assumptions are questioned and when we feel disturbed or even threatened. This is probably valid also for the cento's Model Reader who wants to create a meaning for a cento; playfulness certainly allows the Model Reader to combine associations and thoughts which arise from the text more freely than severity does. Moreover, playfulness may help the Model Reader to combine also some of the ideas that are juxtaposed through the use of quotations without any immediately apparent underlying structure into a meaningful whole. This implies that for the playful Model Reader also some of the quotations that the author has used in a cento without any conscious intention of allusion to the text of origin or genre may bear a meaning that sensibly integrates with the general meaning of the cento.[180]

**Associative capacity**

It has been said that "Art deliberately frustrates our expectations in order to arouse our natural craving for completion."[181] In the case of centos, I believe that they may demand a Model Reader with a good associative capacity as regards the present situation compared to the literary situations at play. Such capacity is needed if the reader is to be able to accommodate as many as possible of the associations which come to his or her mind when reading the cento into a meaningful whole. Such capacity is also needed to distinguish meaning from noise; cf. above. The most important mental structure for the

[179] Cf. Chapters 14b and 16d and e. Cf. also the Church fathers' harsh opinions as referred in Chapter 1a.

[180] Cf. Eco 1996. Eco 1996 also discusses how empirical readers may integrate associations in a non-sensible way. The author cannot foresee exactly which associations the Model Reader will use in his or her interpretation, nor can the cento itself stipulate its Model Reader or his or her exact interpretation; cf. below. The cento's playful Model Reader probably integrates more associations as meaningful than the average empirical reader of centos.

[181] Eco 1989 p. 74.

Model Reader of centos seems to be associative capacity as regards the present situation compared to the literary situations at play.[182]

Associative capacity is connected with intelligence. If we look at the English word 'intelligence' from an etymological point of view, it is composed of the Latin prefix 'inter' = 'between' and the Latin verb 'legere' = 'choose, pick out, read'. And the ability to 'read between the lines' or to 'choose between different possibilities' is precisely what I mean by 'associative capacity'. The English word 'intelligence' means, however, a lot more than this, and I have therefore chosen to use the expression 'associative capacity' rather than the more wide-ranging word 'intelligence'. A cento's wide field of possibilities may call for a Model Reader with a good associative capacity.

## *Concluding discussion: The blanks in the cento and the non-quoted*

The wide field of possibilities in a cento implies that the Model Reader must fill many blanks in the cento.[183] I believe that the expectations which are brought about by the original context of the quotations used in the cento may have a large influence over how this is done.[184] I therefore suggest that what is not explicitly quoted in the cento may well play the most important role for how the reader fills the blanks in the cento.[185]

I further suggest that the non-stop quotations from the text of origin make the Model Reader continuously adjust his or her expectations, both on the cento, on the text of origin and on the genre. As a consequence of this, both the cento, the text of origin and the genre may open up towards a broader understanding.[186] It is, I believe, impossible

[182] As has been shown above, familiarity with classical literature and playfulness help the Model Reader to overcome the oscillation between informative disorder and total unintelligibility. But, although certain knowledge and a certain attitude are beneficial for the Model Reader, it is also important to shed some light on the mental structures that help the Model Reader to create a more comprehensive meaning for the cento. As I see it, both associative capacity and intelligence denote mental structures.

[183] Cf. McCormick 1994 p. 83 f.

[184] Cf. Desbordes 1979 § 23: "L'opposition perçue par le lecteur n'est pas entre le propre et l'étranger, mais entre le texte connu et sa variation centonisée. C'est Virgile qui est là, et ce n'est pourtant pas Virgile. La mémoire toujours sollicitée est perpétuellement soumise à des ruptures où ce qui n'est pas cité joue pourtant le plus grand rôle." Cf. also the preceding chapter.

[185] If we want to simulate the process of the Model Reader's making of meaning in the cento, it is therefore important not only to identify the quotations, but also to comprehend the contexts they come from and try to identify how these contexts may influence the cento's field of possibilities. Cf. the preceding and following chapters. An interesting question is whether we can assume that certain quotations have a greater impact on the cento's Model Reader than others (cf. Hardie 2007). I suggest that it can almost certainly be assumed that frequent quotations from one and the same passage in the text of origin have a greater impact than other quotations both on the empirical reader and on the cento's Model Reader. Quotations of unusual length are also likely to have a greater impact than other quotations. What impact a particular quotation has upon an empirical reader depends to a large degree on the knowledge that the empirical reader has of the situation in the text of origin. It must be assumed that cento writers primarily wrote the centos for a contemporary audience, and that they were aware that allusions to well-known Virgilian works might be more easy than other allusions to pick up for most people. (E.g. the 1st, 4th and 6th books of the *Aeneid.* Cf. Rosenblum 1961 p. 252.)

[186] In connection with this discussion, an interesting question is whether centos which belong to the same genre are more closely related to each other than to other texts belonging to the same genre. Are there any particular traits (apart from the non-stop use of quotations) that such centos share with each other, but not with non-cento texts belonging to the same genre? Does the Model Reader make any distinction between how a cento relates to its literary tradition in general and how it relates to other similar centos? The extant source material is far too small to provide any certain answers to these

for the author to foresee exactly which way the Model Reader chooses to overcome the oscillation between the text on the surface of the cento, the text of origin and the genre; neither the author nor the cento *per se* can stipulate the Model Reader's exact interpretation. Once the cento has left its author, it is up to the reader to make a meaning to it. It must have been particularly difficult for a cento writer to foresee which allusions the empirical readers and audiences would pick up, and what effects these allusions would have on their individual making of meaning for the text. This depends greatly on the modes of reception and on each individual's personal repertoire.

Although the cento's Model Reader is not (like the empirical reader) affected by any other repertoire than that of the text, it is likewise impossible to foresee exactly how he or she would interpret the cento. There are many blanks in the cento which the reader must fill, in order to make sense of the text. Furthermore, since the Model Reader is not limited by any personal repertoire, he or she may be more receptive for the possible allusions to the text of origin than the empirical reader, who may be held back by his or her personal repertoire. This implies that the Model Reader in some respects enjoys more interpretative freedom than the empirical reader, although the former is more strictly restrained within the limits of the cento's field of possibilities.

# 7. Method used in this work

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the cento presupposes its Model Reader's collaboration and that the Model Reader relates the cento both to its text of origin and its genre. It was also claimed that "a main challenge is to identify the Model Reader in the text and let the Model Reader interpret the text for us." The main issue of this chapter is to explain how we best approach the Model Reader's interpretations of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi.* The answer to this question will provide us with the method to use in this work.

## *The three nodes*

### The genre

As repeatedly argued, the genre may considerably contribute to a deeper understanding of centos; and the Model Reader of the wedding centos is certainly able to relate them to other texts which belong to the same genre. But, the genre to which *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* belong is not straightforward. In the ancient tradition there are texts of many different kinds which concern weddings. Relevant texts are found not only in poetry, but also in epic and drama; rhetorical prescriptions too seem to have played an important role for the development of late antique wedding poetry. The genre will be presented separately before proceeding with the analyses of the wedding centos.[187] It is worth noticing that the focus in my interpretations of the wedding-related texts which precede the wedding centos sometimes differs from more conventional

questions. The two wedding poems investigated in the third part of this study are the only two centos written for this same kind of occasion.

[187] It is likely that the genres to which other centos relate also need further examination before they can provide present-day readers with the necessary familiarity with classical literature for the centos' interpretation.

interpretations. The reason is that I have chosen to emphasise aspects in the texts which are particularly relevant for the following discussions about the wedding centos.[188]

**The cento *per se***

The cento *per se* is the first starting-point from which the Model Reader reads and understands a cento; cf. the previous chapter. Therefore, the wedding centos are presented first as they appear *per se*; the wedding centos' subject matters, structures, lengths, authors and dates of composition are presented, as well as the circumstances under which the wedding centos were written and the degrees with which they cohere with the formal rules for centos.[189] The method used for this is straightforward; facts about the centos and their authors are presented as they appear.

**The text of origin**

The second starting-point from which the Model Reader interprets a cento is in relation to its text of origin. As was argued in Chapter 6, not only what is explicitly quoted in the cento, but also the original contexts of quotations, should influence the interpretation. It is therefore necessary to identify not only the provenance, but also the original contexts of the quotations used in the cento.[190] My summaries of the quotations' original contexts inevitably depend on my interpretations of the situations in the Virgilian works. There may be a risk that the contexts in the centos influence my interpretations of the situations in the Virgilian works. However, my aim is to interpret and summarize the original contexts as neutrally as possible, with no considerations about the contexts in the centos. The results will be presented as tables. In the tables, quotations with a length of one line or more will be highlighted; I believe that such quotations, as well as clusters of quotations coming from the same passage in the text of origin, may influence the Model Reader's interpretation more than other quotations.[191]

## *Analyses*

The analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* include considerations about the wedding centos in relation to both their text of origin and their genre.[192] The analyses certainly also include considerations about the circumstances under which the centos appear to be written, and about the cento as it appears on the surface of the text, the cento *per se*.

Needless to say, it is desired that the comprehensive analysis of a cento include as many possibilities in the cento's field of possibilities as it reasonably can; cf. the discussion in the preceding chapter about the Model Reader's associative capacity. The average ancient reader probably did not notice all connections with the text of origin which become visible in my analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi*; nor

[188] Cf. Hinds 1998 chapters 4 and 5, discussions about how authors may present tendentious reading of tradition.

[189] A first general presentation would probably be useful for the analysis of other centos too.

[190] However, I do not believe that it is generally necessary to discuss the overall structure and subject matter of the text of origin as a whole. The reason for this is that the cento relates a narrative that differs from the narrative in the text of origin; cf. Chapter 2.

[191] Cf. Chapter 6d, footnote 185. This is probably valid for other centos too.

[192] As repeatedly argued, these are the second and third starting-points from which the Model Reader interprets a cento.

can it be assumed that they were all intended by the author.[193] Nonetheless, all meaningful associations which are included in my analyses lie implicit in the centos, and are therefore available for the centos' Model Reader.[194] My chief ambition in the analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* is to fill the blanks in the texts in a way which is firmly founded on evidence in the cento's field of possibilities. This may imply that my analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* include a larger number of potentially meaningful associations to the text of origin than earlier scholars'.

In the analyses, I use a hermeneutical approach: I interpret the different parts and the different quotations used in the cento in relation to the cento as a whole; and vice versa, I interpret the cento as a whole in relation to its different parts and to the quotations used in it. In some cases, this implies that a first interpretation of a passage or a quotation used in the cento must be modified during a later stage of interpretation. I believe that it is reasonable to search intensively for unity within the centos; unity is desired in most ancient poetry, and unity can be identified as the core of Ausonius' discussion on cento.[195] In my analyses, it will also be seen that the hermeneutical approach uncovers some unexpected turns in the centos. Earlier scholars, who have primarily used other methods to analyse the centos, have overlooked these surprising turns.[196]

## *General conclusions and further discussions*

When the analyses have been made, some general conclusions may be drawn and some further discussions may be held. Although they build upon the findings in the analyses of the wedding centos, these conclusions and discussions go for the most part beyond the immediate context of the wedding centos; however tentative and open-ended, they aim towards better understanding of cento poetry in general.

The different functions of the associations to the text of origin which are found in the wedding centos will be considered. Beside this investigation, a discussion will be held about the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin: do the wedding centos stimulate the Model Reader to reconsider the text of origin; if so, why and with what effect is this reconsideration made? Some of the general discussions about centos which have been held in this first part of this work will also be reconsidered: how may a cento guide its Model Reader beyond a wide field of possibilities; which demands do different kinds of guidance put on the reader; which are the probable functions of centos?

## *Conclusion of the chapter*

The aim of this chapter was to present the method of investigation which will be used in the following parts of this work. This method has, as will be shown, a high validity for the wedding centos, but I believe that it also has a potentially high validity for other centos.

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[193] Cf. Hinds 1998 and Eco 1996. Cf. also Chapter 6.

[194] The cento's Model Reader must fill many blanks in the text and has a large freedom of interpretation within the cento's field of possibilities; cf. the preceding chapter.

[195] Cf. Chapter 1b.

[196] Cf. McGill 2005 chapter 5, analysis of *Cento Nuptialis.*

PART TWO: WEDDING-RELATED TEXTS

# 8. How did late antique wedding poetry develop?

The aim of this chapter is to provide the necessary understanding of the development of the genre to which the wedding centos belong. It may be useful to keep the following figure in mind when reading this chapter; the figure sums up the most important stages in the development of late antique Latin wedding poetry.

*Fig. 1.* **The development of late antique Latin wedding poetry – a survey**
(Marked with * will be treated in this chapter)

I. Tradition of wedding poetry — II. Tradition of *Encomium*

Popular Greek* — Popular Roman* — Popular epideictic poetry
e.g. *Hymenaios, Epithalamion* — *Fescennini Versus* — (returning warrior, funerals etc.)

6th cent. Sappho* — 5th cent. Pindar

Rhetorical prescriptions
5th cent. Sophists
4th cent. Aristotle
*Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*

3rd cent. Theocritus 18*

1st cent. Catullus 61,* 62*

1st cent. Cicero

Catullus 64* — 1st cent. Quintilian

1st cent. Vergil *Aen.* 1. 657–726;* 4. 90–171*
1st cent. Ovid *Met.* 10. 519–739*
1st cent. A. D. Seneca *Med.* 1–115*
1st cent. A.D. Valerius Flaccus Val. Fl. 6.427–506;* 7.153–299;* 8. 217–317*

app. 92–93 Statius: *Silvae* 1. 2.*

3rd / 4th cent. Rhetorical prescriptions for wedding speeches*
284–305 Menander Rhetor 2. 399.11– 2. 412. 2
Pseudo-Dionysius *Ars* 260–266; 269–271

c. 374 Ausonius *Cento Nuptialis*

Late 4th cent. Claudian *carm.* 9–14; *carm. min,* 25*
Later *Epithalamia of occasion*

Late 5th/early 6th cent. Luxorius *Epithalamium Fridi*

Before progressing to the main aim of this chapter, it is also necessary to say a few words about the different terms which scholars have used in their discussions about ancient wedding poetry and about my use of terminology in this and subsequent chapters.

## Terminology

Modern scholars have used different terminologies in their discussions about ancient wedding poetry.[197] Robert Muth 1954 claims that the word *Hymenaios* should be used as a general term for wedding poems of various kinds.[198] *Epithalamion* should be used only for the song which was sung at the threshold of the bridal chamber during the wedding night. This is also how the terms are generally explained in modern encyclopaedia.[199] Later scholars generally use the word *Epithalamium* for Latin wedding poems written in hexameters.[200] However, the word *Epithalamium* is also always used for poems belonging to the late antique tradition of wedding poems beginning from Statius and Claudian's poems, regardless of in which meter they are written; cf. Chapter 8e.[201] One and the same word, *Epithalamium,* is thus used for both poems like Catullus 64 and poems like Statius *Silvae* 1. 2, although these poems differ widely from each other with regard to function and subject matter.

I consider the meticulous distinctions presented above as less fruitful for the purpose of this work.[202] In this chapter, I have chosen to deal broadly with texts related to

[197] Already during antiquity, a common name was required for various kinds of wedding poetry. In classical times, the Greek word *Hymenaios* was used both specifically about the song that was sung when the bride was brought to her new home (cf. Chapter 8a) and generally about wedding poems of various kinds. Muth 1954 treats thoroughly the use of the words *Hymenaios* and *Epithalamion/ Epithalamium*. There is both Greek and Roman evidence for the latter use of the word *Hymenaios*. There is also evidence from both Classical and Hellenistic times. (Aischylos Agamemnon 707; Call. *Fr.* 75, 43; Verg. *Aen.* 7. 398. See Muth 1954 p. 33.) During Hellenistic times onwards, not only the word *Hymenaios,* but also the word *Epithalamion* was used broadly about wedding poems of various kinds. (Mangelsdorff 1913 p. 12; Muth 1954 p. 38 about Sappho's wedding poems, which were collected during the Hellenistic period under the title *Epithalamia*.) From Hellenistic times onwards, the word *Epithalamion* is also used about wedding speeches of various kinds. (Muth 1954 p. 42.) From Statius onwards (i.e. late 1st century onwards) the Latinized word *Epithalamium* is used about a longer epic poem dedicated to the wedding couple.

[198] Muth draws attention to most of the sources I have used in this chapter, and my conclusions too agree with Muth's, unless otherwise stated. Muth 1954 p. 43: "Die hier ablesbare Ausweitung der Bedeutung, die sich unter dem Einfluss der Retorik und Sophistik immer mehr ausprägte, ist sekundär. Es empfehlt sich daher, im Unterschied zum Hymenaios Epithalamion lediglich in seiner engeren, weil ursprünglichen und der Etymologie des künstlich geschaffenen Worts entsprechenden Bedeutung zu gebrauchen und als Bezeichnung des Hochzeitslieds schlechthin zu vermeiden... Hymenaios ist daher der übergeordnete Begriff und verhält sich zu Epithalamion wie das logische Genus zu Species."

[199] Robbins 1998. Mangelsdorff 1913 distinguishes between *Hymenaeus* and *Epithalamium* in his discussions about Roman wedding poetry. He claims that the word *Hymenaeus* should be used about wedding poems written in a lyric metre and that the word *Epithalamium* is to be used about wedding poems written in hexameters. This would agree with how Romans used these words. (Mangelsdorff 1913 p. 12: "Die Römer machen allerdings einen Unterschied zwischen hymenaeus und epithalamium: mit hymenaeus bezeichnen sie das in lyrischen Massen gedichtete Hochzeitslied, mit epithalamium das hexametrische Hochzeitsgedicht.")

[200] This agrees with Mangelsdorff's recommendations (Mangelsdorff 1913).

[201] Mangelsdorff 1913 does not discuss this tradition.

[202] As regards the terms *Hymenaios, Epithalamion* and *Fescennini Versus,* I use them for the most part in their strict senses only. I use the word *Hymenaios* only specifically about the song that was sung when the bride was brought to her new home; cf. Chapter 8a). The word *Epithalamion* is also used in a strict sense only, about the song that was sung at the threshold of the bridal chamber during the wedding night; cf. Chapter 8a. In Roman tradition, there was a frivolous kind of wedding poems called *Fescennini*

marriage. All the texts share a strategy that points the reader's understanding in a certain direction. Therefore, I suggest that they belong to the same widely defined genre, tentatively called *wedding-related texts.* Some of the *wedding-related texts* are *wedding poems* written in a lyric metre or in hexameters. In this work, I call all wedding poems *epithalamia.* Among these, I distinguish between (1) poems treating mythic weddings and (2) poems treating actual weddings taking place in the age when the poems were written. I call the first kind (1) *mythic epithalamia* and the second kind (2) *epithalamia of occasion. Mythic epithalamia* and *epithalamia of occasion* differ with regard to the function of the poems and the nature of the protagonists. In *mythic epithalamia,* the protagonists are heroes or gods. In *epithalamia of occasion*, the protagonists are human and the function of the poems is epideictic (to praise the couple and the wedding).[203]

Among the *wedding-related texts* dealt with in this chapter are also *representations of wedding-like events in epic and recited tragedy.* As we shall see, such events are not depicted in happy colours. Tufte 1970 is the first scholar to discuss in some detail wedding representations in the classical tradition where the normal happy event and rejoicing over a union attended by proper ceremony is replaced with a situation and emotions of a directly opposite kind.[204] Tufte uses the expression *anti-epithalamium* for these representations, and defines *anti-epithalamium* as "a poem or excerpt using epithalamic devices in an expression of unhappiness, disorder, and evil omen associated with an improper union."[205] Tufte also presents the following four patterns for the *anti-epithalamium.* A single work may utilize only one of the patterns, or it may combine them:[206]

1. "It remarks on the *absence* of the ritual and order customarily associated with marriage. It asserts that no torches gleam in a wedding procession, no garlands adorn the participants, no wedding veil covers the face of the bride. There are no singers, no fathers and mothers to give blessing. The gods too are absent, in particular Hymen and Juno, and no Graces dance."
2. "It remarks on the presence of the epithalamic trappings, but they are functioning in reverse: Hymen's torch does not gleam, but flutters weakly or goes out, his coat is not saffron, but sullen, and he drags his torch instead of waving it. Human attendants, along with the Graces and

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*versus*; cf. Chapter 8a. Claudian too uses the name *Fescennini versus* about his four short poems written for the wedding between Honorius and Maria, *Carmina* 11–14; cf. Chapter 8e. These poems are probably quite different from the popular kind of poems with the same name. Nonetheless, I have preferred to use the same name, *Fescennini versus,* for both Claudian's poems and the popular ones.

[203] Both wedding centos seem to deal with actual weddings and they seem to be written for these weddings (occasional poems). It is therefore particularly relevant to relate them to *epithalamia of occasion.*

[204] Tufte 1970 pp. 37–55. Tufte has found such representations in drama, epic, erotic epyllion, mythological narrative and pastoral funeral elegy. Greek and Roman *anti-epithalamia* analysed by Tufte are: Euripides Troades and Phaethon; Sen. *Med.* and *Tro.;* Ov. *Met.;* Lucan *Pharsalia;* Musaeus *Hero et Leander;* Bion *Epith. Ad.*

[205] Tufte 1970 p. 38: "Instead of expressing joy over a proper union, the anti-epithalamium expresses lamentation or foreboding over a union which for some reason is improper or unsanctioned, and thus passages tragedy, death, dissension, murder, war, or other disruptions of order and nature. Sometimes, but not always, the misfortune is partially resolved on a note of hope or triumph. In general, the anti-epithalamium is a poem or excerpt using epithalamic devices in an expression of unhappiness, disorder, and evil omen associated with an improper union."

[206] Tufte 1970 p. 38.

the Loves, weep rather than dance, and the flowers in the nuptial wreath wilt and die."

3. "Instead of seeking to repel the elements and symbols of evil omen as is customary in the wedding ritual and epithalamium, it summons them or remarks on their presence. The furies prepare the bridal bed, bearing tapers they have stolen from a funeral; a cursed owl sits at the head of the nuptial couch; Darkness and the Shade cover all."
4. "It places a conventional epithalamium in a situation already tragic or horrible, or about to become so. In the drama especially, a conventional epithalamium is used in this way for dramatic irony, the reader or audience at times being aware of the impending tragedy or evil when the participants are not. Sometimes the "anti" devices are inserted in a conventional epithalamium; sometimes an opposing song precedes or follows a conventional one."

Horstmann 2004 dismisses Tufte's use of the expression *anti-epithalamium* as not sufficiently well defined; it denotes examples from too many different genres and it is used to describe not only passages containing wedding songs proper, but also passages that merely describe a wedding.[207] Nonetheless, Horstmann agrees on the existence of the phenomenon as such. According to Horstmann the traditionally essentially happy event of marriages is often inserted in antique tragedies with the purpose of dramatic irony. The dramatic irony comes about through the use of typical epithalamic elements in a tragic context known to the audience, but not to the protagonists of the story. The audience may either know the tragic context already beforehand, or it may become evident during the course of events. Horstmann notices that descriptions of marriages with a similar function occur also in epic texts.[208]

In this work, I will use Tufte's term *anti-epithalamium* for the kind of passages identified by both Tufte and Horstmann. Since the structure and subject matter in these passages (but of course not the atmosphere) are similar to the structure and subject matter found in proper wedding poems, I consider *anti-epithalamium* a fitting term for such passages. I further suggest that these passages point the reader's understanding in the same direction as more traditional and essentially happy wedding-related texts. They

[207] Horstmann 2004 p. 34: "Diese neue Kategorie wird aber nicht genau definiert: Tufte wendet den Begriff "Anti-Epithalamium" auch auf Texte an, die gar kein Epithalamium enthalten, sondern lediglich eine Hochzeit unter Verwendung der oben beschrieben literarischen Mittel [see quotations from Tufte 1970 p. 38 and Horstmann 2004 p. 33] negativ charakterisieren, und untersucht das Phänomen der negativen Darstellung einer speziellen Eheshießung in der Literatur anhand von acht offenbar willkürlich ausgesuchten Beispielen, die sowohl dem griechischen als auch dem lateinischen Bereich entstammen, zeitlich vom fünften vorchristlichen bis zum sechsten nachchristlichen jahrhundert reichen und drei verschiedenen Literaturgattungen anhören [scil. Euripides Troades and Phaethon; Sen. *Med.* and *Tro.;* Ov. *Met.;* Lucan *Pharsalia;* Musaeus *Hero et Leander;* Bion *Epith. Ad.]".*

[208] Horstmann 2004 p. 33: "Da das antike Epithalamium traditionell eher freudligen Inhalts ist und sowohl die Eheschließung als solche als auch die daran beteiligten Personen feiert, wird es in antiken Tragödien mehrfach eingesetzt, um dramatische Ironie zu erzeugen. Das heißt: Die zumindest auf den ersten Blick freudlige inhaltliche Aussage des Epithalamiums wird durch den Handlungszusammenhang, in dem sie vorgetragen wird, als Täuschung entlarvt. Durch die Bezugnahme auf typische Elemente eines Epithalamiums…, wird eine Spannung zwischen dem Inhalt des Gedichts und einer tragischen Entwicklung der handlung erzeugt, die sich entweder für die Rezipienten abzeichnet oder aber bereits offentsichtlich ist.

Die Beschreibung von Hochzeitsszenen innerhalb eines antiken Epos kann eine ähnliche literarische Funktion erfüllen."

therefore belong to the same widely defined genre (*wedding-related texts*); moreover, the authors may intentionally have modified the genre for their own ends.[209] I therefore disregard Horstmann's critique of the term.

# a. Early wedding poetry

## *Popular wedding poetry*

*Hymenaios* originally denotes the song which was sung when the bride was brought from her old to her new home.[210] From ancient until early Hellenistic times, this is said to have been the most common kind of song at the Greek wedding.[211] *Hymenaios* may often have been performed either as a chorus sung by the bride's female friends, or as a singing contest between a chorus of boys and a chorus of girls.[212] Songs were also sung at many other moments during the wedding ceremonies.[213] It seems that the practice of singing at weddings became more and more obsolete in classical times. It has even been said that wedding songs did not occur any more in the Greek wedding ceremony of the first century B.C. The relative popularity of the *Epithalamium* when compared to *Hymenaios* may be due to the growing urban culture in Hellenistic times. Denser traffic and spectators' curiosity may have caused an inclination to avoid singing during the procession to the bride's new home.[214]

In the old Roman tradition, the song which was sung when the bride was brought to her new home was called *Fescennini versus.*[215] Our knowledge about *Fescennini versus* is very incomplete. It may have shown similarities with *Mime.* [216] It can be assertively assumed that the popular kind of *Fescennini versus* was much bolder than the later Latin wedding poems extant today.[217] In his apology for the indecency of the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis,* Ausonius appeals to *Fescennini versus* and an 'old established precedent for freedom of speech.'[218]

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[209] Cf. Conte 1994 and Hinds 1998. See also the discussion about genre in Chapter 5 in this work.

[210] The wedding god *Hymen* was invoked by the shouting of his name during the procession from the bride's old to her new home, and the practice of singing *Hymenaios* may derive from this popular shouting *Hymen!* (Mengelsdorff 1913 pp. 4–6. Muth 1954 pp. 8–9. Horstmann 2004 pp. 28–29.)

[211] Muth 1954 p. 35.

[212] Some Sappho fragments (104, 111 and 117B, Lobel-Page enumeration) may come from such songs. The nature of the *Hymenaios* can probably also be traced in Catullus 61 and 62: Cat. 61. 36–40. It is however important to remember the riskiness of drawing any certain conclusions at all about early stages in a literary tradition on basis of later stages in the same tradition.

[213] At weddings in ancient Greece, wedding songs were sung when the bride took her bath, during dinner, when the bride was brought to her new home, and in front of the door of the bridal chamber during the night as well as in the morning (Muth 1954 p. 34).

[214] Muth 1954 pp. 36–37.

[215] About the Roman wedding procedure, see Grimal 1967 pp. 54–57, Gardner 1986 p. 44.

[216] Cf. Macrobius (c. 400 A.D.) Saturnalia 3. 14. 9: *Ceterum superius pleramque nobilitatem haec propudia celebrare conquestus est. sic nimirum M. Cato senatorem non ignobilem Caelium "spatiatorem" et "Fescenninum" vocat, eumque staticulos dare his verbis ait: "Descendit de cantherio, inde staticulos dare, ridicularia fundere." et alibi in eundem: "Praeterea cantat ubi collibuit, interdum Graecos versus agit, iocos dicit, voces demutat, staticulos dat."* Many other authors too underline the audacious and joyful character of Fescennini versus. (Catull. 61.122, Sen., Med. 109 o 113, Mart. Cap. 9. 904, Auson. Cento Nuptialis.)

[217] Erotic teasing often takes place also in these later poems, but the joking is relatively inoffensive. Cf. Catull. 61. 131–155; Claud. 11–14.

[218] Aus. Cento Nuptialis, Parecbasis.

## *Sappho*

Sappho's wedding poems (6th cent B.C.) are the first Greek wedding poems of which considerable fragments have survived.[219] It is generally assumed that most features of later wedding poetry had their germs in Sappho's poems. Yet, there is little consensus about which Sappho fragments come from wedding poems; most assumptions are based only on evidence in later poems.[220] Because of the scarcity of the fragments, it is also impossible to decide whether the poems were *mythic epithalamia* or *epithalamia of occasion.*

Some later commonplaces which may have their germs in Sappho's poems are: praising of the evening star;[221] the teasing of the bridegroom;[222] the teasing of the door-keeper;[223] the bride's virginity;[224] the father giving away his daughter to the groom;[225] the farewell to bride and groom[226] and the bride's beautiful feet.[227] Sappho also praises bride and groom in her poems. They are praised for their looks, both in general terms and by comparison with trees,[228] apples,[229] heroes,[230] flowers,[231] a Lesbian singer[232] and prize-winning horses.[233] Many of these comparisons will appear again in later poems. Due to the corrupt status of the poems, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether bride or groom is praised.[234] Probably also the use of refrains in wedding songs can be traced in fragments of Sappho's poems.[235] Many of the features of Sappho's poems are found, although probably in a different form, in the late antique Latin *epithalamium of occasion.* This is the branch of the genre which the wedding centos resemble most.

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[219] In this work, I use the Lobel-Page enumeration whenever referring to Sappho's poems, unless otherwise stated.

[220] Fordyce 1961 p. 236 believes that there are only four considerable fragments of Sappho's wedding poems extant today, fragment 110a, 111, 112 and 115; Horstmann 2004 p. 20 believes that fragments 104–117 certainly come from wedding poems. Possibly also fragments 18, 27, 30, 44, 103, 120, 128, 141 and 158 come from wedding poems (Horstmann 2004, footnote 38); Goold (ed.) 1982, introduction p. 13 says that also fragments 27, 30, 103 and perhaps also 44 come from wedding poems.

[221] Frg. 104(a); 104(b).

[222] In fragment 111, Sappho makes fun of the bridegroom by exaggerating his size. The fragment also reflects the use of refrains in a wedding song; cf. below.

[223] Frg. 110(a).

[224] Frg. 107.

[225] Frg. 109.

[226] Frg. 116; 117.

[227] Frg. 103; 103(b)

[228] Frg. 115.

[229] Frg. 105(a); 105(b).

[230] Frg. 105(b); cf. above.

[231] Frg. 105(c); 117A.

[232] Frg. 106.

[233] Frg. 117(a) cf. above.

[234] Frg. 112 Hephaestion, Handbook on Metres: The same poetess (Sappho) uses the 3 ½-foot choriambic with iambic close: Happy bridegroom, your marriage has been fulfilled as you prayed, you have the girl for whom you prayed… Your form is graceful, your eyes… gentle, and love streams over your beautiful face… Aphrodite has honoured you outstandingly. According to Fordyce, fragment 112 praises the bridegroom's good fortune and his looks, whereas Campbell (transl.) 1982 suggests that the bride's looks are praised: Goold (ed.) 1982 p. 137: "The context in Choricus [i.e. Chorichum Zach. 19] shows that these words are addressed to the bride." The truth is that, from Sappho's fragment, it is impossible to decide whether bride's or groom's beauty is praised. The scholars' different opinions illustrate well the difficulties brought about by the corrupt status of Sappho's poems.

[235] Frg. 111; 117B (Voigt).

## b. Theocritus and Catullus

### *Th.* Id. *18*

Theocritus *Id.* 18 (3rd cent. B.C.) is the only complete Greek wedding poem from classical times extant today.[236] The subject matter of this poem is the wedding between Menelaus and Helen.[237] In most editions and translations the poem is entitled *Epithalamium for Helen.* To my knowledge, *Id.* 18 is the only extant antique wedding poem named from the bride only.[238] Although it was probably not Theocritus who gave the title to the poem,[239] the title provides important information about the reception of the poem; it clarifies what the scribe who gave the title considered to be the poem's main theme. The reason why Menelaus is generally not named in the title of *Id.* 18 is probably that there is no *encomium* of him in the poem. *Id.* 18 was not written for a contemporary wedding and it was probably not performed at a wedding; it is a *mythic epithalamium*.[240]

Like many later epithalamia*, Id.* 18 contains many traditional pastoral elements. The subject matter of the poem does not seem to be 'the actions of shepherds,' but the setting is unmistakably pastoral, as are the comparisons to nature, the singing maidens bedecked with garlands, and the reference to the suckling lambs' desire for the teats of the mother ewe which the maidens' longing for Helen resembles. There is no pastoral dialogue in the poem, although this becomes a feature of many later epithalamia.[241] There is a general belief that Theocritus was inspired by popular traditions and by earlier poets like Sappho.[242] The poem certainly influenced Catullus' wedding poems. Even though *Id.* 18 is in itself a *mythic epithalamium,* it resembles the rhetorical pattern set up by rhetoricians for wedding speeches in the 3rd and 4th centuries; cf. Chapter 8d. This is the case especially as regards the *encomium* of Helen.

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[236] The first word of *Id.* 18 is the Greek ἄρα, "so," "thus." This word could indicate that the poem is a fragment from a longer, now lost, epic work. Since the poem seems to form a unit, this is however probably not the case. It may rather be assumed that the poet begins his poem after being asked to do so by a friend. Beckby (ed.) 1975.

[237] Kaibel 1892 p. 255 and Mangelsdorff 1913 p. 18 claim that the main theme of *Id.* 18 is the aetiology of Helen the tree-goddess. This should explain the divergences from the traditional epithalamium pattern. Horstmann 2004 p. 26 dismisses (rightly, I believe) the idea of aetiology being the main theme of *Id.* 18 because the aetiology takes up only a little more than 10 % of the poem.

[238] Customarily, ancient wedding poems are named either from both groom and bride or from groom only. The following poems are named from both groom and bride: Stat. *Silv*. 1. 2 (Stella/ Violentilla; Claud. 9–14 (Honorius/ Maria); Claud. *carm. min*. 25 (Palladius/ Celerina); Sidon. *carm*. 10–11 (Polemius/Araneola); Ven. Fort. *carm*. 6. 1 (Sigibertus/ Brunechilde). The following poems are named from groom only: Claud. *carm. min. app.* 5 (Laurentius); Ennod. *carm.* 1–4 (Maximus); Lux. *anth.* 18 (Fridus). Some wedding poems are named neither from groom nor bride: Cat. 61; 62; 63; Aus. *Cento Nuptialis*; Drac. *Romul.* 6; 7; Paul. Nol. *carm.* 25.

[239] Cf. critical apparatus in Beckby (ed.) 1975 giving diverse variants of the title, most of them containing the name only of Helen, not of Menelaus. As anyone who is familiar with the history of classical texts knows, it is often impossible to determine the date of a title in relation to a single work.

[240] Cf. Horstmann 2004 p. 26 and Stern 1978 p. 31. There is no evidence in the text supporting the idea that the poem was intended for a contemporary wedding, and hexameter is not believed to have been used in occasional wedding poems from Classical times.

[241] Cf. Tufte 1970 p. 19.

[242] This belief is however rather hypothetical, given the scarce extant fragments of such poetry; cf. Chapter 8a. For a different view, see Contiades–Tsitsoni 1990. Kaibel 1892 tries to reconstruct the structure of Sappho's wedding poems from evidence in *Id.* 18.

Helen's and Menelaus' wedding is seemingly depicted in happy colours, but of course no one can be expected to read an epithalamium for Helen and Menelaus without remembering what the future of that marriage will be.[243] The traditional context of the spouses involved makes it impossible not to see an implicit dramatic irony in the poem and not to consider the whole unspoken dimension, which the topic itself implants in the reader's mind.[244] The mythic figure of Helen has a reputation of promiscuity, and in Roman literature she becomes an emblematic figure for the beautiful adulteress.[245] The traditional context of the spouses involved is the main reason to understand the poem ironically, but there is support for this kind of reading also within the text. One remarkable feature in the poem is the missing praise of the groom's qualities. [246] Another missing commonplace is the picture of the chaste and shy bride who is afraid to leave her mother, to meet the spectators and to lose her virginity. This picture is, however, not congruent with Helen's reputation for promiscuity and it therefore cannot be included in her wedding poem.[247]

It would certainly be an unsound method of research to consider missing commonplaces in a much later defined genre alone as evidence about the character of the poem.[248] It should also be noticed that commonplaces are selected quite freely also by later authors; cf. the rhetorical prescriptions as presented in Chapter 8d. Nonetheless, the inherent irony of the poem becomes indisputable if the omissions from the traditional epithalamium pattern are considered together with how some of the commonplaces present in the poem are handled – e.g., the congratulations to Menelaus for having got his hands on the most infamous adulteress in Greek mythology, as well as the traditional calling for *Hymenaios* at the end of the poem, is best understood ironically.[249]

We are also repeatedly told that Menelaus wants to sleep on his wedding night. The teasing of the groom is a traditional feature in wedding poems, and remarks on the groom's drowsiness could well be found in this context.[250] Nonetheless, the well-known course of events following the wedding between Helen and Menelaus explains better the choir's reproaches towards Menelaus for being a sluggard; if he had been more wakeful and if he had given his wife appropriate sexual attention, she would not have run away with the tempting young suitor. Even though an assumed historical choir could not have known about the following events at the actual moment of the wedding, it would be absurd to believe that the author and the audience of this fictive wedding

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[243] Stern 1978 p. 29.

[244] It is surprising to find that Tufte, who later defines the *anti-epithalamium* (Tufte 1970 pp. 37–55; cf. introduction to this chapter), does not notice the tragic irony in the thematic context of *Id.* 18. Instead, she focuses upon the importance of this poem in the tradition linking the epithalamium to pastoral tradition.

[245] Cf. Ov. *epist*. 16. 17; Hor. *epod.* 17. 42; *sat.* 1. 3. 107; Sen. *Tro*. There are preceding literary traditions making attempts to defend Helen's bad reputation, but even these versions of the story acknowledge events in her marriage that can hardly be considered happy. Besides, it would only be by some explicit statement that Theocritus could expect us to think of such extraordinary justifications or repudiations of the traditional story. (Stern 1978 p. 30.)

[246] In other wedding poems, the praising of the groom is sometimes shorter than the praising of the bride, and in some cases it is even left out all together (Horstmann 2004 p. 25). Nonetheless, in an epithalamium we would expect to find a praise of the groom rather than aetiology of Helen the tree-goddess.

[247] Cf. Horstmann 2004 p. 25.

[248] Cf. Russell & Wilson 1981 pp. 33–34 criticising this kind of approach.

[249] Cf. Horstmann 2004 p. 25.

[250] Dover (ed.) 1971 pp. 230–231 believes that the reproaches towards Menelaus for being a sluggard are altogether motivated by the traditional mockery of the groom.

poem did not know about them. Therefore, the dramatic irony seems indisputable at this point of the poem. It is also worth noticing that the choir insists very much on the point of Menelaus' sleepiness and that it actually teases Menelaus for this alone.[251]

In this context, it should also be noticed that Helen is likened to a horse.[252] Ancient authors sometimes use similes of horse races as circumlocutions for sexual intercourse,[253] but generally not in conjugal contexts.[254] I believe that the likening of Helen to a horse in Th. *Id.* 18 emphasises her sexual hunger. This hunger is opposed to Menelaus' sleepiness in the poem. The analysis of *Cento Nuptialis* will show similarities between the cento and *Id.* 18.

## *Catullus*

Catullus (87–54) found inspiration in Th. *Id.* 18 when he wrote his wedding poems *Carmen* 61, 62 and 64.[255] These poems have in their turn had an enormous influence on many later wedding poems.[256] There is consensus that *Carmen* 61 and 62 show many similarities with popular marriage hymns. *Carmen* 61 was written for a special occasion, the wedding between Manlius Torquatus and his bride Junia (*epithalamium of occasion*),[257] whereas *Carmen* 62 treats a wedding in general terms. C*armen* 64 is an *epyllion* about Thetis' and Peleus' wedding (*mythic epithalamium*).

### ***carm.* 61**

The order of commonplaces used in *carm.* 61 develops into a formula in later wedding poems: invocation of a God; prayer for help with singing; the song; presentation of the events of the wedding day in a chronological order. The whole poem can almost be regarded as a catalogue of scenes, themes, actions and images present in later epithalamic tradition.[258] With regard to the following tradition, some details worth particular attention are:

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[251] We are reminded about Menelaus' drowsiness not only in the teasing of the groom in the beginning of the poem, but also at the end of the poem, where together with wishes for good luck and prosperous offspring we would expect only an exhortation to intercourse. Whenever we find any directives for the wedding night at this point of other ancient wedding poems, these pieces of advice deal with copulation and fulfilment of the marriage. Here, the choir tells Menelaus and Helen to breathe love and desire into each other's breast – undoubtedly referring to sexual activities (cf. Dover 1971 p. 237) – but the choir also, absurdly, tells them to sleep! How on earth shall they be able to produce legitimate offspring if they sleep! I feel unconvinced by Dover (ed.) 1971 *ad locum* who solves this problem by saying that the couple "will no doubt make love again" when the choir has wakened them in the morning.

[252] v. 30. Dover (ed.) 1971 p. 235: "This simile is curious, to our taste; a horse's relation to the chariot which it draws is quite different from that of a tree to a landscape or Helen's to Sparta." Beckby (ed.) 1975 p. 469 mentions the parallel with Song of Solomon 1. 9 ("I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots").

[253] Spies 1930 p. 41.

[254] Menander does however, several centuries later, recommend this simile for wedding speeches. Worth noticing is also that in *Cento Nuptialis, Imminutio* part, several verses come from descriptions of horses and horse races: v. 102, 103, 119, 124, 126, 131. Cf. Chapter 12.

[255] *Carmen* 61 is 235 lines long and is divided into 47 stanzas. The meters used are four glyconic + one pherecratean. *Carmen* 62 is 66 hexameters long, *Carmen* 64 is 408 hexameters long.

[256] This influence is not limited to the Roman sphere only, but is spread through many centuries and different countries; see Tufte 1970 p. 21.

[257] The groom is probably to be identified with L. Manlius Torquatus, a slightly older contemporary of Catullus who was praetor in 49 (Fordyce 1961 p. 237). He is known also from some of Cicero's works: *De fin.; Ad Atticum* 13. 5. 1.; *Brutus.* The identity of the bride is unknown.

[258] Tufte 1970 pp. 24–26.

1. The indications of time found throughout the poem; the events of the wedding day are evidently sketched in chronological order.[259]
2. The singing match between boys and girls.
3. The account of the wedding god Hymen in the poem. It agrees in many details with what the rhetoricians say of Gamos – he gives the bride to the groom, inspires love and unites the couple. Also noteworthy are his young age and his many feminine attributes.[260] He is also closely connected with the topic of the advantages and blessings of a legal marriage.[261] Stanzae 13–15 treat Hymen in connection with some specifically Roman themes. Hymen is the protector of legal marriages, without him Venus cannot unite couples legally (vv. 61–65), without him no legitimate children are born to the families (vv. 66–70) and without him no soldiers are provided to the country (vv. 71–74).[262] The role of Hymen in later epithalamia is generally taken over by Cupid.
4. The account of the bride. The bride is praised though a reference to mythology and through references to flowers.[263] She is also compared to other women and to the vine.[264] It is noteworthy that every time Catullus praises the bride's beauty in her *encomium*, he also hints at the possibility that her husband may betray her. The idea that the groom may deceive his bride is particularly shocking when it is presented as part of the *encomium* of the bride.[265] Stanzae 16–17 reflect ancient Greek and Roman wedding customs.[266]
5. The arguments in favour of the wedding. The arguments used are: the groom's wealthy home; a portrait of a happy family life until old age; the sight of the

[259] Menander Rhetor treats at some length the indication of time, which he states is an important topic of the genre. Time indications are frequent also in later epithalamia, and seem to have occurred already in Sappho's wedding poems.

[260] He has a snow-white foot v. 9 and a high voice v. 13 and he even wears a bride veil v. 8, flowers, vv. 6–7 and a bride's shoe v. 10.

[261] Cf. Wheeler 1930 pp. 210–211. Particularly interesting are stanza 10–15 (vv. 46–75). This song, which is incorporated in the poem, is generically a *hymnos kletikos,* i.e. an invocation hymn, and seems to be sung by the poet together with the girls. In its praising of Hymen it agrees to a large extent with the advice given by Menander on the *enomium* of *Gamos* and on wedding being a good thing – two of the most important topics of the wedding speech. Hymen is the greatest of all gods and worshipped by both gods and humans (vv. 46–55). His duty it is to take the bride from her mother and give her to the groom (vv. 56–60) – this function is in later wedding poems generally taken over by Venus, sometimes by Cupid.

[262] The idea of the family being the foundation of the state's welfare has been identified as a major theme, *carm*. 61. This patriotic motive has no Greek precedent, but is important in later Roman tradition (cf. Wiseman 1985 pp. 112–115).

[263] Venus and Paris, vv. 16–19; myrtle, vv. 21–25, hyacinth, vv. 91–93. Both these references agree with Sappho, with the advice given by Menander and with the practice in many later epithalamia. The bride is also likened to a tree and Hymen to ivy; these associations are not consonant with the tradition as we know it.

[264] vv. 86–90; vv. 106–109. This is in accordance with the advice given by Menander Rhetor and with the practice in later epithalamia. Also the association of the groom with a tree (vv. 106–107) agrees with Menander Rhetor's prescriptions and the practice in the later tradition. The associations of the bride with the vine and of the groom with a tree seem to derive from Sappho (Wheeler 1930 p. 212).

[265] Cf. Babin 1978 pp. 83–84.

[266] The weeping bride appears already in Sappho's wedding poems. In later epithalamia Discordia may not attend the wedding, but hangs at the door. In *carm*. 61, Pudor is slow to leave.

groom waiting for his bride; and the groom's deep love, which is even deeper than the bride's.[267]

6. The last part of the poem and the arguments presented there in favour of sexual intercourse.[268] A wish for children and some advice to the spouses for the future seem to be almost obligatory at the end of later Latin *epithalamia of occasion.*

Both wedding centos show some similarities with *carm.* 61. These similarities are however commonplace; they are shared with many other wedding poems and with the tradition of late antique *epithalamia of occasion* as a whole.

### *carm.* 62

The influence from *carm.* 62 on later tradition is second only to the influence from *carm.* 61.[269] The setting of this poem is fixed neither in time nor in space.[270] Another important structural feature of *carm.* 62 is its amoebaean character; a chorus of boys argue in favour of the wedding and a chorus of girls against it. The question whether one should marry or not was a subject used for rhetorical exercises,[271] but rhetoricians also mention that this subject is not proper for an epithalamium; this question obviously ought to be resolved before the marriage.[272] As mentioned above, a singing match between choirs of boys and girls was probably a regular feature in the popular tradition of wedding songs. The amoebaean character of this and other marriage hymns probably also inspired the development of the late antique Latin *epithalamium of occasion,* where a similar dialogue is held between Venus and Cupid. Such a dialogue is found also in *Epithalamium Fridi.*

Commonplaces of later wedding poetry found in *carm*. 62 are:

1. The evening star tearing the bride away from her mother and raping her of her virginity.[273]
2. The likening of the bride to a flower.[274]
3. The likening of the bride to the vine and the groom to the elm.[275]
4. Advice for the wedding night at the end of the poem.[276]

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[267] vv. 156–158; vv. 161–163 (Babin 1978 pp. 85–86 includes stanzae 32–33 (vv. 156–165) in the *Fescennina iocatio* and argues that the suggestions of adultery, homosexuality, and impotence of old age in the context of a wedding song are more vicious than mere references to phallic achievements); vv. 171–173 and vv. 176–178. All these arguments for a wedding will be used again in later epithalamia, but then generally as part of the praising of the groom and presented by either Cupid or Venus. Menander Rhetor too recommends the use of these topics.

[268] The reason why they should have sexual intercourse – and why they should marry at all – is to come forth with children to enrich the groom's prosperous and old family line (vv. 211–215). This argument has been said to be particularly popular with Roman morals (Wiseman 1985 pp. 112–114).

[269] Tufte 1970 p. 28.

[270] Cf. Fraenkel 1972 p. 98.

[271] Cf. Juv. 6.

[272] Cf. Babin 1978 pp. 34, 94. The amobean structure is not found in later Roman epithalamia, but became popular during the Renaissance. (Babin 1978 p. 101).

[273] vv. 20–25; cf. Sappho frg. 104(a), possibly treating the same matter.

[274] vv. 39–48; cf. Sappho 105c, Menander Rhetor and many later epithalamia.

[275] vv. 49–58.

[276] Cf. the tradition of late antique *epithalamia of occasion* and the recommendations of the rhetoricians from the 3rd and 4th centuries. Generally however, this kind of *allocutio sponsalis* is addressed to both spouses. (Babin 1978 p. 97.)

### *carm*. 64

Catullus' *carm.* 64 differs greatly from *carm.* 61 and *carm.* 62. While *carm*. 61 and 62 seem to be more closely moulded on a traditional pattern for popular wedding songs, *carm*. 64 is an *epyllion*.[277] It is also a *mythic epithalamium. Carm.* 64 influenced many later poets; Virgil is the most important in this study. It also coheres well with the late antique rhetoricians' advice for wedding speeches.[278] What importance should be given to the wedding theme of the poem has, however, been a question of debate. Is the whole poem a wedding poem, or is only the song of the *Parcae,* which is found towards the end of the poem, a wedding poem?[279] Most modern scholars agree that a wedding is the main theme of the whole poem, and this also seems to have been the opinion prevailing in earlier days: Menander proposes the motive of Peleus' wedding with Thetis or Dionysus' wedding with Ariadne for the introduction of the relaxed wedding speech; the early Renaissance title of the poem was *The marriage of Peleus and Thetis.*[280]

*Carm.* 64 contains a story within the story; the story about Theseus and Ariadne is enclosed within the story about Peleus and Thetis. The relationship between the various parts of the poem has been debated. There is not even consensus about what should be regarded the main motive of the poem; is the wedding between Peleus and Thetis or the love story between Theseus and Ariadne the poem's main theme? Scholars also disagree on whether or not the poem primarily depicts a happy union; there are certainly negative notes in the poem, whatever these notes may mean.[281] Moreover, the poem contains several further digressions with glimpses into past and future within both stories.[282] Probably the most important key for understanding the poem lies in the contrast between Peleus' and Thetis' happy legitimate marriage and Theseus' and Ariadne's unhappy illegitimate love story.[283] The primarily joyful representation of the

[277] It has been proposed that the poem is a translation of a now lost Alexandrinian poem, but today there seems to be general consensus that Catullus was influenced not only from one but from many different Hellenistic sources – Callimachus and Apollonius have been identified, and it also seems that Catullus and Nonnus were inspired by a common, now lost, Alexandrinian source. (Fordyce, 1961 p. 272.) Fordyce's line-by-line commentary contains many useful references to the preceding literary tradition, Fordyce 1961 pp. 276–325.

[278] Babin 1978 pp. 101, 115–116 suggests that *carm.* 64 coheres even better than Catullus' other wedding poems with the late antique rhetoricians' advice for wedding speeches.

[279] For the later view, see Mangelsdorff 1913 pp. 27–29, commenting only upon vv. 323–381.

[280] Cf. Babin 1978 p. 115.

[281] There are a few scholars who do not perceive any significant negative connotations at all in *carm.* 64. (Babin 1978 pp. 111 ff. and seemingly also Mangelsdorff 1913 pp. 27–29.)

[282] This technique, which resembles that of a Chinese box, traditionally goes back to Homer's description of the shield of Achilles, *Il.* 18. 478 ff., and it was favoured by Hellenistic poets – so at this point again we recognize Alexandrinian influence on the poem (Fordyce 1961 p. 273). It may be noticed, whatever the connection may mean for this study, that the description of Achilles' shield contains a wedding representation, *Il.* 18. 493. The most evident negative notes in Peleus' and Thetis' wedding story are found in the predictions of the *Parcae* about Achilles' violent achievments; cf. Horstmann 2004 pp. 66–68.

[283] Some scholars interpret this in autobiographical terms with references to the Lesbia poems: Catullus should be identified with Ariadne and Aegeus; Lesbia with Theseus; the relationship between Peleus and Thetis with the relationship Catullus had hoped for (Putnam 1972). Other scholars suggest that the contrast between the moral decline of Catullus' contemporary society and the moral excellence of a heroic past is the main theme of the poem; this contrast seems to be highlighted in epilogue of the poem (Quinn 1972 pp. 261–264). Babin 1978 pp. 113–114 suggests that the contrast presented in the last lines of the poem is not between contemporary society and heroic past, but between different kinds of literature (tragedy and comedy vs. epos). Horstmann 2004 p. 68 suggests that the poet criticises the morals of his own days in the last lines of the poem, but also points to the fact that this critique is not convincing, since the picture of the heroic past is not altogether positive in the preceding part of the poem.

wedding between Peleus and Thetis is cast in a doubtful mode particularly through the account of the unhappy outcome of events between Theseus and Ariadne.

Catullus' account of the unhappy love story between Theseus and Ariadne undoubtedly belongs to a long tradition of epic and dramatic tales of unhappy love. The picture of the abandoned heroine and her complaint are easily recognizable.[284] Ariadne is found, just as Dido will be found in Virgil's later account of her story, gazing after her lover running off over the waves from a deserted shore.[285] It is plausible that Virgil found inspiration in *carm.* 64 for his portrait of Dido. The brides in both wedding centos are linked with Dido.

### *Summary*

In this part of the chapter, the most influential extant wedding poems from classical times have been discussed. All seem to depict essentially happy weddings. Nonetheless, unhappy notes, sarcasm and irony are also found in these poems. Theocritus' and Catullus' wedding poems share many characteristics with later wedding representations; many of the commonplaces found in late antique *epithalamia of occasion* have their germs in these poems. Similarities will also be found with the wedding centos.

## c. Weddings in epic and recited tragedy – anti-epithalamia

Also in epic and tragedy[286] there are passages with a subject matter and structure resembling those of late antique wedding poems. None of these passages describe happy events, and they may all be labelled *anti-epithalamia.* The influence from classical epic works on the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* was attested, although not further examined, already in 1910.[287] Because of the scarce attention from earlier scholars and

[284] The most well-known example of this commonplace in Latin literature must be Virgil's representation of Dido deserted on the shore by unfaithful Aeneas, *Aen.* 4. 584–705. Other examples of this commonplace are found in Seneca's *Medea*; cf. Chapter 8c. Some similarity can also be seen with the account of Atlanta in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* as regards the fact that neither Ariadne nor Atlanta has experienced love before, but they are now struck by its full force (Cat. 64. 84–93; Ov. *Met.* 10. 636–637); cf. Chapter 8c.

[285] The enumeration of parallels with Virgil's Dido could easily be prolonged; see Pease's commentary on *Aen.* 4. 584–705 (Pease ed. 1935), but these parallels will suffice here as examples. There are also numerous parallels with the Medea myth (cf. for instance Fordyce 1961). Virgil's account of Dido may also well have been influenced by the story about Ariadne as it was depicted in visual arts (Pease ed. 1935, note on *Aen*. 4. 586).

[286] In drama, the passages which are most similar to later wedding poetry are found in tragedy rather than in comedy. Morelli 1910 pp. 326–328 treats briefly Sen. *Med;* Tufte 1970 pp. 37–48 treats epithalamic passages from the following dramas: Eur. *Troades* and *Phaeton;* Sen. *Med. and Tro.*; Horstmann 2004 pp. 33–49 treats Eur. *Troades* and Sen. *Med.* For this work, the literary tradition is more important than the historical event that may lie behind the texts discussed, but possibly wedding representations in comedies generally present a more faithful representation of contemporary ceremonies than most of the representations given in tragedy. Horstmann 2004 has a chapter about epithalamia in antique comedies, Horstmann 2004 pp. 27–33. The plays treated there are Aristophanes' *Peace,* Plautus' *Casina,* Aristophanes' *The Birds*.

[287] Morelli 1910 p. 335, note 2: Verg. *Aen.* 1. 657–; Ov. *met.* 10. 525–; Val. Fl. 6. 455–, 7. 153–, 8. 232–; Sil. 11. 387–. I have noticed considerable similarities between the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* and all these passages. My reason not to treat Sil. 11. 387 is that the purpose and result of Venus' and the amorines' interference in the human world differ in this passage when compared to later wedding poems. In Sil 11. 387– Venus orders the troops of amorines to attack the Carthaginians in order

because of their importance for the later tradition, particularly for the wedding centos, I have chosen to treat the selected passages in some detail.[288] All passages will be treated in chronological order.

## *The Aeneid*

In the *Aeneid,* there are two passages with clear structural parallels to the late antique Latin *epithalamium of occasion: Aen.* 1. 657–726 and *Aen.* 4. 90–171. The first of these passages was identified, although not further discussed, already in 1910.[289] Both passages are clearly anti-epithalamic.[290] Many quotations from these passages are used in *Epithalamium Fridi.*

The plot and structure in Virg. *Aen.* 1. 657–726 are as follows:

> vv. 657–688: *Aeneas has come to Carthage and Venus – who fears Dido's people and Juno's treachery – calls upon her son Cupid. She explains to him the situation of his brother Aeneas and reveals her plan. She will put Aeneas' son Iulus to sleep, while he – Cupid – should take Iulus' appearance for a night. When Dido caresses the disguised Cupid, he will put her heart on fire with his fierce ardour of love. Thus, Dido will fall in love with Aeneas and thereby be unable to hurt him.* vv. 689–719: *Cupid obeys his mother's command and disguised as Iulus heads for Dido's palace, where the queen holds a party for Aeneas and his men. Aeneas and his friends arrive, sit down at the table and are served a delicious meal. The Carthaginians also arrive, admiring Aeneas' gifts and his graceful son, the disguised Cupid. Dido too is full of admiration. After lingering a while with Aeneas, Cupid aims for Dido who caresses him and takes him in her arms – an act that will soon yield disastrous consequences.* 719–726: *Cupid acts perfectly in accordance with his mother's commands: He sets Dido on fire with a fierce ardour of love for Aeneas. At this point of the party, a pause is made – wine is put on the tables, garlands are put up to decorate the room. Joyful clamour fills the rooms, which are illuminated by lamps and fervent torches.*

The plot and structure in *Aeneid* 4. 90–171 are as follows:

> vv. 90–114: *Juno is anxious, since she has taken notice of the growing love that Dido feels for Aeneas. Therefore, she turns with a proposal to Venus claiming that she wants them both to rule with joint power over the lovers Aeneas and Dido; that she wants these both to marry; that Dido should give her people as a dowry to Aeneas and that she should serve him as his wife. Venus perceives treachery in Juno's proposal, but nevertheless pretends to approve. She asks Juno to demand that her husband agree on a union between the peoples of Aeneas and Dido.* vv. 114–128: *Juno agrees and begins to explain how to unite the lovers: Dido has arranged a hunt in which both she and Aeneas will participate. When the party has set out for the hunt, Juno intends to send a thunderstorm in order to split up the group and to cover the scenery in darkness. Dido and Aeneas will join in a cave, to which they have both taken their refuge from the blizzard, and thus be united in a lawful marriage. Venus nods*

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to make them lose interest in fighting with the Romans at Capua. The results are drinking, promiscuous love and doziness. Particularly Sil. 388–390 (Venus giving orders to the amorines and amorines fulfilling these orders) recalls similar passages in late antique *epithalamia of occasion.* The somehow relevant passage runs from 11. 385 to 11. 439.

[288] Horstmann 2004 pp. 33–55 treats two late antique epic passages showing close similarities with the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* (Claudian, *De raptu Proserpinae* and Dracontius *De raptu Helenae*), but gives no examples from classical epic works. This is surprising, given the considerable influence from these sources on the late antique *epithalamium of occasion*. There are wedding representations already in Greek epic, but they are not similar to late antique Roman wedding poetry, e.g. Hes. *Shield* 273–285 and Hom. *Il.* 18. 491–496.

[289] Morelli 1910 p. 335, note 2.

[290] Surprisingly enough, however, Tufte does not treat these passages in her chapter about the *anti-epithalamium*. Tufte 1970 pp. 37–56.

*approvingly to the plans of the other goddess*. vv. 129–168: *At dawn, the party sets out for the hunt. Both Dido and Aeneas wear beautiful clothes and make a delightful sight as they depart together with their populace. Soon the company arrives at a desolate region in mountains populated by wild beasts, and the hunting begins – Aeneas' son Iulus shows the way. But then comes the thunderstorm – heaven grows dim, hail begins to fall, the group is split up in every direction. Dido and Aeneas both seek shelter in a cave, and there they come together while thunder is heard outside and thunderbolts illuminate the heavens. Nymphs howl from the tops of the mountains*. vv. 169–171: *Summary of the events. This was the first day of death and the cause of calamity, since Dido no longer concealed her love thinking of her reputation. Instead she called it a marriage, veiling her sin with that name.*

The plots in both these passages from the *Aeneid* show similarities with parts of the actual ancient wedding ceremony. In the first passage, bride and groom, *or in this case Dido and Aeneas,* meet in the evening at a splendid (wedding-) feast. The rooms are filled with clamour and illuminated by torches. After some time there is a pause in the festivities while bride and groom withdraw to the bridal chamber, *or in this case when Dido and Aeneas have just fallen in love.* The second passage continues, so to speak, the 'wedding ceremony' where the first passage ended.[291] The spouses, *or in this case Dido and Aeneas,* withdraw to the bridal chamber, *or in this case to a desolate cave in the mountains.* Here, the 'spouses' unite physically, an act through which the 'wedding' is confirmed. The love-making should take place at night, when the scenery is covered in darkness. *In the case of Dido and Aeneas, the love-making takes place during the day, but the landscape is covered in darkness because of the thunderstorm.* Torches should illuminate the bridal chamber. *In Dido's and Aeneas' case thunderbolts fulfil the function of the torches, and instead of the clamour from the crowd gathered outside the doors of the bridal chamber, Dido and Aeneas hear the sounds from thunderstorms.* At a wedding, an epithalamium should be sung by the guests attending the doors of the bedroom. *In the case of Dido and Aeneas, nymphs howl some kind of epithalamium from the tops of the mountains.*[292] *We note also that the wedding-like episode is linked to subsequent death and disaster in the final summing-up of events.*

It is uncontroversial to understand the passages from the *Aeneid* discussed above as *anti-epithalamia;* cf. the discussion about terminology in the introduction to this chapter. The tragic events which Dido's and Aeneas' love story brought about were undoubtedly well known to the audience of the *Aeneid,* and the effect resembling that of dramatic irony, which was identified by Hostmann as characteristic of many wedding-like representations in epic and drama, is therefore at hand. There is also an obvious tension between the use of epithalamic elements and the outcome of events. The passages from the *Aeneid*, the latter passage in particular, also combine elements from all four patterns typical of an *anti-epithalamium*.[293] Venus, Cupid and Juno are deities who often assume the role of *Pronuba* in proper wedding poems. In the *Aeneid,* they initiate the events, but do not bless the outcome. The nuptial couch is not ornamented with flower garlands, but is replaced by a stony rock in a desolate cave. No fathers and mothers (or any other luck-bringing witnesses at all) bless the union. The thunderstorm is an evil omen covering the landscape in darkness, although the events take place during the day. This too is an abnormality, since the events presented should take place

[291] Pease 1935, note on line 90, says that Gercke, *Die Entstehung der Aeneis* (1913) p. 44, considers the scene where Juno and Venus make plans for Dido and Aeneas to marry (*Aen.* 4. 90–128), to be a companion piece to *Aen*. 1. 657–690. I agree with this opinion, but think that it is also well worth noticing that "the wedding ceremonies" too are continued at this point.

[292] Pease 1935 note on line 168 comments the bad omens of the scene.

[293] Cf. discussion about terminology in the introduction to this chapter and Tufte 1970 p. 38.

during the wedding night. The whole scenery is anomalous and it represents nature's and gods' protest against the union taking place. The light of the thunderbolts replacing the torches and the howling Graces replacing the wedding guests singing proper epithalamia further emphasize the spooky atmosphere. The dramatic irony of the passage is appallingly evident.

## *The* Metamorphoses

Ovid too presents an *anti-epithalamium*. As early as 1910, the passage was identified as similar to the late antique *epithalamium of occasion*.[294] The similarities, however, have not been further discussed and the passage has not, as far as I know, been identified as anti-epithalamic before. Within the story about Venus and Adonis, Ovid tells the story about Atlanta and Hippomenes, and I suggest that this story can be read as an *anti-epithalamium*.

The plot and structure in Ov. *Met.* 10. 519–739 are as follows:

> *Venus, who has fallen in love with the tender Adonis, urges him not to hunt the bravest beasts since she fears they might hurt him, and thereby cause not only his death, but also her own unhappiness. Adonis wonders why her fear is so strong, and Venus reclining under a tree and placing her head on his chest begins to tell the story about Atlanta and Hippomenes. She intermingles kisses with her words.*
>
> *When requesting an oracle, the swift maiden Atlanta had received the advice to avoid marriage, since she would do much better on her own, without a husband. Nevertheless, the oracle said, she would in due time surrender to marriage and thereby lose herself, although still alive. Atlanta feared her destiny and, trying to avoid it, she lived in the forest. All her suitors – who were many, because of her beauty – had to race against her. Whoever won the contest would be her husband, but everyone who was defeated had to die. One day Hippomenes – Neptune's great-grandson – came to see a race. As soon as he perceived the beautiful girl, he fell in passionate love and being ready to risk his life to win her, he came forth and asked for a race. Atlanta – who had never been in love before – thought that his youth, his bravery and his excellent lineage as well as his love for her caused her own unwillingness to risk his life. She asked him to avoid the contest, but was in her heart unsure whether she wanted to win or to lose against him.*
>
> *Atlanta's father and the people nevertheless demanded that there should be a race, and the anxious Hippomenes prayed to Venus for assistance. Venus was moved by his prayers and secretly offered him three golden apples with which he would put off his competitor. The spectators cheer for Hippomenes and by making use of Venus' apples he wins the race. But once he has won his prize, Atlanta, he neglects his due offers to Venus. Venus is infuriated and decides to take revenge for his disregard.*
>
> *Atlanta and Hippomenes arrive at a cave-like sanctuary adjacent to a temple devoted to Cybele. Here, Hippomenes through Venus' intervention is overwhelmed by uncontrollable hunger for Atlanta, and they make love in the shaded sanctuary. Cybele avenges their intemperance by transforming them both into lions. Therefore, says Venus, Adonis must avoid the wildest beasts.*
>
> *Adonis listens to her warnings, but during a hunt nevertheless incautiously hurts a wild boar, which thereupon attacks and almost kills him. When he is about to die, Venus finds him and in her deep grief transforms him to an anemone.*

In the story about Atlanta and Hippomenes, there are some typical epithalamic elements. Atlanta and Hippomenes are engaged. Hippomenes has won the race, and Atlanta is therefore his promised wife. It seems not out of place to understand the race as corresponding to the procession from the bride's to the groom's home in the ancient

[294] Morelli 1910 p. 335, footnote 2.

Greek wedding ceremony. During the contest, the spectators cheer in favour of Hippomenes and this cheering corresponds to the singing of *Hymenaios* during the wedding procession. Had it not been for the oracle's warnings and the cruel death of the other suitors, the reader would have been unaware of the frightfulness in the present situation. As it is now, it comes as no surprise that the contest will end in tragedy no matter who wins it. The dramatic irony is evident. The fulfilment of the marriage takes place during daytime in a dark cave, just like the 'fulfilment of the marriage' between Dido and Aeneas in *Aen.* 4. 90–171. What further increases the fallacy of the setting in *Met.* 10. 519–739 is that this cave is a sanctuary devoted to ancient religion; what could be more inappropriate than to violate a place of worship with tactless adultery? Of course, divine revenge instantly punishes the couple at fault.

In the passage from the *Metamorphoses* there is an interesting feature which is not at hand in the passages from the *Aeneid:* Not only the story about Atlanta and Hippomenes, but also the love story between Venus and Adonis, is told. The technique is similar to Catullus' technique in *carm.* 64. The love story between Venus and Adonis is in many ways parallel to the story about Atlanta and Hippomenes. The outcome of the events is tragic in both stories. Venus (like Hippomenes) is punished for her intemperance.[295] We understand early that the love between Venus and Adonis is illegitimate: Adonis is too young for Venus, his mother's conception was anomalous, and he must take revenge on Venus for her fierce anger towards his mother (vv. 519–524). We also learn that Cupid hurt his mother with his love-bringing arrows by mistake (vv. 520–528). The scenery with Venus reclining together with Adonis clearly recalls the situation in a bridal chamber (vv. 555–559). This too announces the close similarities between the whole passage and a wedding poem.

In late antique *epithalamia of occasion,* a love story with heroic or divine protagonists is often told near the story about the spouses.[296] Such parallel stories are also recommended by the rhetoricians; cf. Chapter 8d. No parallel stories are explicitly told in the wedding centos, but the quotations used can make the Model Reader associate them with what he or she considers as analogous events in the text of origin. Analogous events in the text of origin may therefore have a function which is similar to the function of parallel stories told in other *wedding-related texts.*

## *Seneca's* Medea

Seneca's *Medea* contains the most well-analysed wedding-song extant from early imperial Rome (vv. 56–115).[297] *Medea* opens with a long and spirited monologue held

[295] Venus is punished for her intemperance both towards Adonis' mother Myrrha and towards Hippomenes. Myrrha was the daughter of Cinyras, king in Cyprus. Venus punished her with a passionate love for her father, because she neglected due worship of the goddess, or because her father boasted, saying that his daughter overthrew Venus in beauty. Myrrha secretly slept with her father and was pregnant with Adonis. When her father understood what had happened, he ran after her with a sword with the intention to kill her. She prayed to the gods, and they transformed her into a myrrh tree. After nine months, the tree gave birth to the beautiful infant Adonis.

[296] Cf. the *Praefatio* to the *Epithalamium* for Honorius and Maria (Claud. *carm.* 9) treating the wedding between Thetis and Peleus.

[297] Seneca may well have found inspiration for this song from a similar chant in the now lost *Medea* by Ovid. The treatment of the myth shows similarities with other extant representations of the *Medea* myth written by this author, *Met.* 7. 1–424; *Her.* 12. (Morelli 1910 p. 326; Costa 1973 p. 71; Horstmann 2004 p. 41.) Euripides' *Medea* does not contain a wedding song, but it was probably the chief model for Seneca's drama. (Costa 1973 p. 8.) The myth was however well spread and we know about some 12 plays treating it. Apart from Euripides' and Seneca's *Medea,* all these plays are lost today, or only very

by the protagonist (vv. 1–55). The wedding song follows immediately after this monologue, and it shows such clear thematic and structural parallels with the preceding monologue that it seems impossible not to analyse both of these passages as a unit. This has also been the procedure of some modern scholars.[298]

The structure and themes treated in Medea's monologue and the wedding song are as follows:

vv. 1–55 Monologue held by Medea.

> vv. 1–18 Invocation of gods and a prayer that they will assist just as they did at the wedding between Jason and Medea, and that they shall also bring death and destruction on Jason's new wife (Creusa), his father-in-law (Creon) and the royal stock.
> vv. 19–36 Medea mulls over a suitable revenge on her husband.
> vv. 37–55 Concrete plans for the immediate future. Ego-boosting talk directed to herself.

vv. 56–115 Wedding-song sung by Corinthians.[299]

> vv. 56–74 The chorus calls upon the gods of the heavens and the sea to favour the royal marriage.
> vv. 75–101 Praise of the beauty of the bride and groom.
> vv. 102–115 Let Jason forget Medea in the joy of his new marriage; let Hymen light his torch; and let all enjoy the jests permitted on the occasion.

The unit related above anticipates the tragedy and horror to come in the remainder of the play, where nuptial imagery recurs at several points.[300] The horror of Medea's deeds is particularly highlighted though the setting of events on a wedding day.[301] Later in the play, nuptial imagery always occurs in relation to death and disaster. It is also linked to Medea's triumphant feelings of revenge. I suggest that an association of marriage with death, and more explicitly of Creusa marrying death instead of Jason, is a recurrent theme throughout the play.[302] Associations between marriage and death are frequent also in *Cento Nuptialis.*

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fragmentarily preserved. Which literary sources have had a major influence on Seneca's drama is therefore difficult to determine with certainty.

[298] Tufte 1970 and Horstmann 2004. Morelli 1910 does not comment at all upon the opening monologue of the play. Costa 1973 comments upon some individual parallels in his commentary, but does not present any overall analysis of the passages. Costa 1973 p. 72 notices a thematic division in three sections in the wedding song. The similar general structure of the wedding song has not been commented in any earlier investigation that I am familiar with.

[299] Tufte 1970 p. 45 suggests that a chorus of Corinthian women should perform the wedding song. Horstmann 2004 note 112 believes that the solidarity with Jason, which strongly contrasts with the sympathy with Medea that was expressed by the chorus of women in Euripides' play, suggests that it is a chorus of men which performs the wedding-song in Seneca's *Medea.* I stick with Costa's opinion (Costa 1973 p. 70), saying that a chorus of Corinthians performs the song. We know too little about the actual wedding customs that lie behind the literary representations of ancient weddings to be able to decide more precisely who might have sung this song. Moreover, the ceremonies represented in this song cannot be linked to a specific moment of the celebration, or even to a Greek or Roman setting.

[300] Tufte 1970 pp. 46–47. Horstmann 2004 pp. 48–49.

[301] So Horstmann 2004 pp. 48–49.

[302] vv. 740–743 (Medea singing an invocation to the gods of the underworld before carrying out her revenge): *Comprecor vulgus silentum vosque ferales deos/ et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,/ Tartari ripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus/ supplicis, animae, remissis currite ad thalamos novos*: "I supplicate the throng of the silent, and you, funeral gods, murky Chaos and shadowy Dis' dark dwelling-place, the abysses of dismal Death, girt by the banks of Tartarus. Leaving your punishments, ye ghosts, haste to the new nuptials;" Note the similarity between this invocation and the invocation of the underworld spirits in Medea's opening monologue (vv. 9–17); vv. 893–894 (Medea to the nurse, refusing to leave the burning Corinth, where Creusa and her father lie dead in the ashes): *Egone ut recedam? Si*

## *The* Argonauticon

Valerius Flaccus also tells the myth of Jason and Medea. He does so in his epic work *Argonauticon,* a work which much resembles Virgil's *Aeneid.* In Val. Fl. 6. 427–506; 7. 153–299; 8. 217–317, Valerius Flaccus gives an account of how and why Medea falls in love with Jason. He also tells about Jason's marriage with Medea. In 1910, these passages were identified as similar to late antique *epithalamia of occasion*; but the similarities were not further discussed.[303]

### Val. Fl. 6. 427–506

The plot and structure in *Argonauticon* 6. 427–506 are as follows:

> vv. 427–454: *When Juno understands that Jason cannot win the golden fleece or return home without her assistance, she decides to do whatever she can to help her protégé. She foresees the dangers to come and realises that Medea is the only one who can help Jason: Medea fears nothing and shrinks from no sight of ill. Juno thinks to herself: "What if blind passion adds thereto its merciless flame?"*
>
> vv. 477–494: *Juno visits Medea disguised as her sister Calliope, but nonetheless involuntarily provokes Medea's fear because of her divine gleam. She blames Medea for sitting alone and idle in her father's house while everyone else is out admiring the fight of Jason and his men. Ignorant of future ill and in the hands of her feigned sister, Medea beholds Jason and his men from the top of the walls. Medea and the disguised Juno are likened to white lilies whose life is short and whose glory reigns just for a short while. Hecate sees them there and says to herself that she will never forsake Medea: Medea has left her against her own will and Jason will be aware that although he has stolen Medea away from her, she will still continue to be Medea's true master. Meanwhile Medea and Juno-Calliope listen motionless and in fear to the cries of men and the trumpets' blaring – as birds disheartened at the coming chill flock to the branches and hang to them in terror.*
>
> vv. 455–476: *Juno sets out for Venus, who reclines on a couch surrounded by a troop of winged Amorines. Being afraid to reveal her real fears, Juno pretends to need Venus' help to win back Jupiter's love. Venus perceives her craft, but since she hates Medea and all the Sun's race, she nevertheless instantly lends the other goddess her ornament as well as her merciless and unfaithful girdle – Juno can make use of all her power and all her sons' weapons in attacking whoever she decides.*

In the passage related above, as in the *Aeneid,* Juno seeks Venus' help to unite a couple of lovers, without however revealing her true motives for doing so. As in the *Aeneid,* too, Venus perceives the other goddess' craft, but nonetheless promises her help. It is also worth noticing that the gods in both stories intervene directly in human affairs only under disguise. In the *Aeneid,* Cupid disguised as Iulus sets Dido on fire with a fierce ardour of love for Aeneas; in the *Argonauticon,* Juno disguised as Medea's sister Calliope tries to make Medea fall in passionate love with Jason. Also noteworthy are the

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*profugissem prius,/ ad hoc redirem*. *Nuptias specto novas*. "What I – shall I give ground? Nay, had I fled already, for this I should return. Strange nuptials see I here"; vv. 982–986 (Medea standing in the burning Corinth on the top of her house after taking revenge for her brother by killing one of her sons, the other is still alive): *Iam iam recepi sceptra, germanum, patrem,/ spoliumque Colchi pecudis auratae tenent;/ rediere regna, rapta virginitas redit./ O placida tandem numina, o festum diem,/ o nuptialem!* "Now, now have I regained my regal state, my brother, my sire; and the Colchians have once more the spoil of the golden fleece; restored is my kingdom, my ravished virginity is restored. Oh, divinities, at last propitious, oh, festal day, oh, nuptial day!"

[303] Morelli 1910 p. 335, footnote 2.

similarities between the disguised Juno in the *Argonauticon* and Dido's sister Anna in the *Aeneid.*

The protective goddesses of the male protagonists in both stories (Venus in the *Aeneid,* Juno in *Argonauticon*) realise that only a loving woman (Dido in the *Aeneid,* Medea in *Argonauticon*) can save their male heroes (Aeneas in the *Aeneid,* Jason in *Argonauticon*) from overwhelming and immediate danger. The protective goddesses therefore turn a blind eye to the potential danger of a woman ruled by passion, although they are presumably well aware of the coming disasters. In both stories the reader's attention is drawn to the well-known outcome of events through hints in the text. In Val. Fl. 6. 427–506*,* these hints begin to appear in the account of Medea's magic skills and in the account of the coming deeds that she will perform for the sake of her beloved Jason.[304] The horror inherent in Venus' girdle is also described at some length.

**Val. Fl. 7. 153–299**

There are elements linking Valerius Flaccus' work to the epithalamic tradition also in Val. Fl. 7. 153–299. The plot and structure in Val. Fl. 7. 153–299 are as follows:

> vv. 153–170: *Juno, despite all her efforts, has not succeeded in making Medea fall in desperate love with Jason. She therefore visits Venus again, this time asking the goddess of love herself to do the job: Venus must force Medea to love and to help Jason. Medea must leave her father's house and put the serpent guarding over the golden fleece to sleep through the power of her poisons. If Venus only convinces Medea to do so, Juno will make the Furies and Medea herself commit the rest.*
>
> vv. 171–192: *Venus again promptly promises her help. By her own presence she will make the yet hesitating virgin surrender to love – a work that is already begun by Juno, who, with the help of Venus' girdle, has made Medea experience the worries of love for the first time. Through Venus' interference, Medea will spontaneously seek a union with Jason. Juno must only make him come to the temple of Hecate, where Medea serves, and not be afraid of Hecate's power – the more Hecate strives against the power of Venus, the more love will spill over also to her and the more she will be forced to help Jason, by restraining the fire-breathing bulls with her spells. Iris is ordered to bring Jason to the temple of Hecate, Venus heads for Medea, and Juno sits down on the tops of Caucasus to watch the coming events, not knowing what will happen.*
>
> vv. 193–211: *Venus, hiding so as not to be seen, begins to influence Medea with a new kind of languor. The maiden begins to suffer from desperate passion for Jason and laments that she can do nothing to help him. She wishes his mother or – alas! if he had one – a wife would help him. As for herself, she wishes that she will not have to see his death with her own eyes, and promises that she will bury his corpse and pay him due respect when he is dead.*
>
> vv. 212–236: *Under the disguise of Medea's aunt Circe, Venus makes herself visible to the virgin and sits down at the side of her bed. Medea – as in a dream – recognises her feigned aunt, throws herself in Venus' arms, kisses her, rejoices over her visit and blames her for not coming before Jason. Venus interrupts her by saying that the cause of her journey is Medea alone – Medea is now mature enough to marry and she should follow her aunt's example and leave the harsh Colchis to find a better husband in a friendlier country. She should also watch out not to be married to a Hiberian or a fierce Gelonian, to be one among many wives.*
>
> vv. 237–253: *Medea answers that she is mindful of Circe's own example – or of Hecate. (The meaning of the text is ambivalent: vv. 238–239: 'Non ita me immemorem magnae Perseidos' inquit/ 'cernis ut infelix thalamos ego cogar in illos. "'You see me not so forgetful of great Perseis,' she said, 'as to be driven, unhappy, into such wedlock.'" Perseidos, "Perseis," may mean either Hecate or Circe (or both). Hecate was the daughter of Persaeus, and is*

[304] Medea's magic skills are horrifying enough to make Circe and Phrixus marvel. Medea fears nothing and shrinks from no sight of ill.

*frequently called by this name. Circe was the daughter of Perse, and may therefore also be called Perseidos.) Circe does not have to worry that she will be forced into a marriage against her own will. But she wants her help against the new troublesome feelings: She is restless and cannot sleep; her tongue is dry and she wants Circe to cure this through her power. She also foresees a marriage baneful enough to erect Circe's hair of serpents. After these words, Medea falls crying on the goddess' bosom, showing her hidden ill and the fire in the depth of her heart.*

vv. 254–291: *Venus caresses Medea, giving her kisses causing fury and inspiring her with love mingled with hatred. She diverts her by talking about how she has met 'a man more handsome than all the others.' This man was soon to die and he had implored her to tell 'her virgin mistress' about his misery and pass on to her his prayer for help – now that his former protective goddesses have failed him, she is his only hope! If Hippodamia could help Pelops and if Aradne killed her brother, why then should Medea not help him? He can pay no debt of gratitude after his death, but his corpse and soul will be hers – and so he throws himself into the battle. Venus begs Medea not to let him down – had it not been that Medea was more worthy of a new glory and a worthy suppliant, she herself would have helped him.*

vv. 292–299: *Medea rolls her eyes in shame and anger at Venus' words. She presses her ears to the bed not to hear any more and she shivers. She knows not where to hide: she is trapped and wishes to die and be buried, to escape from these dreadful words.*

In the passage related above, the events told in Val. Fl. 6. 427–506 are continued. Also the divine masquerade continues. This time, Venus herself visits Medea disguised as Medea's aunt Circe. The purpose of the visit is to convince Medea to surrender to her love for Jason. The situation is similar in late antique *epithalamia of occasion,* apart from the circumstance that Venus does not act under disguise there, but reveals her true identity.[305] The appearance of gods at weddings will be further discussed in the following chapter and in the analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi.*

The arguments used by Venus to convince Medea are frequently used also in late antique *epithalamia of occasion:* The maiden's right age for marriage;[306] the same power of love reigning all over the world;[307] the young man's excellence in comparison to other suitors;[308] the young man's beauty, virtue and ardent devotion for the maiden.[309] In both Val. Fl. 7. 153–299 and later *epithalamia of occasion,* Venus makes references to her own happy marriage.[310] The purpose is to convince Medea/ the bride. In

[305] In Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2 (*Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla*), just as in the passage from Valerius Flaccus related above, Venus approaches the bride as she reclines alone upon her coach: *tunc ipsam solo reclinem adfata cubili,* "Then she addressed the maiden as she reclined alone upon her couch." (Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 161). The account of the love-sick Medea also resembles accounts of love-sick grooms in later *epithalamia of occasion* (cf. Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 81–94). Like them, Medea struggles against a love that she has never experienced before. Like them, she is nevertheless restless, she cannot sleep and her tongue is dry – all traditional signs of love (*signa amoris*). Medea's unwillingness to surrender to love as well as her inexperience in these matters are emphasised again and again in Val. Fl. 7. 153–299.

[306] Val. Fl. 7. 224.

[307] Val. Fl. 7. 227–234.

[308] Val. Fl. 7. 235–236.

[309] Val. Fl. 7. 259–291.

[310] In Val. Fl. Venus makes, of course, reference to Circe's marriage with Picus, since she appears under Circe's disguise. Also the future destiny of Medea and Jason is reflected through the reference to Circe and Picus: Circe has left Colchis in order to marry a stranger. According to other versions of her myth, this was not at all a happy marriage. Ov. Met. 14. 320 ff. explicitly says that her husband betrayed her; cf. Gärtner 1994 pp. 191–192. Gärtner 1994 pp. 192–195 further notices that the future unhappy destiny of Medea has its counterpart also in the likenings to Hippodamia (v. 276–278) and to Ariadne (v. 279). These circumstances, which must have been well known to the erudite reader, link Circe's story with Medea's. In the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* for Stella and Violentilla on the other hand

both cases the geographic provenance of the groom is emphasised, and in both cases the excellence of Rome above other nations is indirectly proclaimed.[311] The geographic setting of the wedding is very important also in *Epithalamium Fridi.*

**Val. F. 8. 217–317**

The anti-epithalamic tendencies in the *Argonauticon* culminate in Val. Fl. 8. 217–317. Jason and Medea have fled together with the Argonauts and they marry on the island Peuce. Medea is still reluctant, but nevertheless agrees to get married. Just as their union is entered, Medea's brother Absyrtus and his men appear. It is evening and the ships are illuminated by torches. Absyrtus, full of sarcasm, rails against his sister and Jason. The bitter quarrel ends with a battle between the Argonauts and the Colchians.

The passage is carefully moulded upon the epithalamic pattern, but by altering the traditional commonplaces, a suggestive *anti-epithalamium* is accomplished. The commonplaces used and their negative modifications are as follows (the commonplaces are listed in the same order as they appear in the passage):

| *Commonplace; cf. Chapters 8d and 8e* | *Negative modification and interpretation* |
|---|---|
| Beauty of the groom praised through comparisons to gods, heroes and other humans. | Jason on his wedding day is compared to Mars coming from blood-stained Hebrus stealing into Idalium or his beloved Venus. He is also compared to the weary Hercules who is sustained by Hebe. (vv. 226–231)<br>The first of these likenings in particular highlights the illicit secrecy of Jason's marriage with Medea.[312] |
| Venus dresses the bride, sharing her own adornment with her. | Venus adorns Medea with her own robe of saffron texture, a double crown and jewels destined to burn upon another maiden. (vv. 234–236)<br>The double crown seems to allude to the double crown that Aeneas gives to Dido (Aen. 1. 655),[313] thereby associating the tragic union between Dido and Aeneas with the marriage between Medea and Jason. The jewels destined to burn upon another bride recall future events in |

(Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2), the reader must be assumed to associate the future of their kin with the prosperity of Venus' son Aeneas and his family.

[311] Val. Fl. 7. 232–234:

*Et nunc Ausonii coniunx ego regia Pici*
*nec mihi flammiferis horrent ibi pascua tauris*
*meque vides Tusci dominam maris…*

"And now am I Ausonian Picus' royal consort, nor are my meadows there unsightly with flame-breathing bulls, but in me thou beholdest the mistress of the Tuscan sea."

Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 188–189:

*Unde novum Troiae decus ardentumque deorum*
*raptorem, Phrygio si non ego iuncta marito?*

"Whence could have come Troy's later glory and the rescuer of the burning gods, had I not been joined to a Phrygian spouse?"

[312] Cf. Gärtner 1994 pp. 226–228.

[313] Mozley 1958 p. 429 (cf. also *Cento Nuptialis* 62).

| | |
|---|---|
| | Medea's and Jason's own marriage, i.e. how Medea will send crown and jewels to Creusa and thereby kill her with fire. |
| Beauty of the bride praised through comparisons to goddesses and other women. | Medea's new beauty is praised through reference to how the cult statue of Cybele is washed during the goddess' festival. (vv. 237–242)<br>This likening recalls the cruel Cybele cult and links it with the present marriage.[314] |
| Well-omened wedding ceremonies and offerings are related. | The flame does not rise; concord and lasting faith are not perceived in the frankincense, but a brief term of love. (vv. 247–249) |
| Wish for children. | Wish that Medea will not have any children. (v. 251) |
| Marriage bed adorned with flowers. | Jason and Medea recline in a cave where Hister "once had caught the panting Peuce to his breast." (255–256)<br>The river-god Hister is described as *torvus*, "savage" and *metuendus,* "horrifying" (v. 218) and it seems that a rape unknown from other extant sources is alluded to in these verses, thus again associating Jason's and Medea's marriage with violence. |
| Torches. | Absyrtus shakes a threatening torch when interrupting the nuptials (vv. 261–263); Absyrtus says that he will shake his torch at the Greek walls (v. 276); Absyrtus ironically says that he is the first to shake his torch at his sister's wedding (vv. 278–279); Absyrtus likens the torches illuminating the Colchian battleships to wedding-torches (v. 284). |
| Wedding song celebrating the marriage. | Absyrtus' ironic outburst when he sees his sister marrying Jason. (vv. 264–284) |
| Likening of the present marriage to divine love-stories. | Absyrtus says that Jason is not a Jupiter who steals, and that the steps they follow do not come from a false bull. (vv. 265–266)<br>This likening points out a similar deed (stealing away a maiden over the sea), but an inferior intruder (Jason is a simple thief, whereas Jupiter acts with divine authority).[315] |
| Many witnesses and members of family are present at a worthy marriage. | Absyrtus says that he is present celebrating a sacred marriage worthy of his sister, but ironically ask the spouses to forgive his father, who is prevented from participating by his old age. All the rest however – senate and folk alike – participate. (vv. 277–284) |

[314] Cf. Gärtner 1994 pp. 229–231.
[315] Cf. Gärtner 1994 pp. 231–232.

Val. Fl. 6. 427–506; 7. 153–299 and 8. 217–317 show more and closer parallels with later ancient wedding poetry than any other epic or drama passages examined in this chapter. The *Argonauticon* is on the whole clearly inspired by the *Aeneid.* Particularly noteworthy for this work is the resemblance between Val. Fl. 6. 427–506; 7. 153–299 and 8. 217–317 and Virgil's account of the beginning love story and of the 'marriage' between Dido and Aeneas (Verg. *Aen.* 1. 657–726; 4. 90–171).

### *Summary*

In this part of the chapter, passages in epic and recited drama which structurally and thematically resemble epithalamia have been discussed. None of the wedding-like events told in these passages are depicted as essentially happy; evident negative notes are found in all the passages. Such negative notes are: presence of epithalamic trappings functioning in reverse (*Aeneid, Metamorphoses, Argonauticon*); presence of elements and symbols of evil omen (*Aeneid, Metamorphoses, Medea, Argonauticon*); placing of a conventional epithalamium in a situation which is about to become tragic (*Medea*). All the passages can be labelled *anti-epithalamia.*

Despite the negative tone in these passages, they show structural similarities with the late antique epideictic *epithalamium of occasion.* The most important such similarities are the use of parallel stories, the dialogues between gods which precede the events in the human world, and the dialogues between goddesses and brides. There are also significant similarities between the passages discussed in this section of the chapter and the wedding centos. Indirectly, the discussed passages are important for the wedding centos because they structurally influenced the late antique *epithalamium of occasion.* With regard to their direct importance for the wedding centos, it is worth noticing that most quotations in the centos come from Virgil's epic works. It is particularly noteworthy that many quotations used in *Epithalamium Fridi* come from the anti-epithalamic passages in the *Aeneid.* The *anti-epithalamium* will be thoroughly discussed again also in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis.*

## d. Rhetorical advice on wedding speeches

As was shown in the introduction to this chapter (*Fig. 1*), the development of late antique wedding poetry seems to be connected with rhetorical advice on wedding speeches. The connection between wedding poetry and rhetorical advice motivates the following part of the chapter, which includes a presentation of late antique rhetorical advice on wedding speeches.[316]

Wedding poetry and rhetorical advice on wedding speeches seem to have had a mutual influence on each other in the following way:

[316] Russell & Wilson 1981 Introduction p. 40 say that Menander's work probably datees from the reign of Diocletian (284–305). In the sole primary source (Parisinus 1741), Pseudo-Dionysius' work is wrongly attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first cent. B.C), but this work is probably contemporary with Menander's and its author unknown (Russell & Wilson 1981 Appendix p. 362). Cairns 1972 p. 73 says Menander's work dates from the 3rd cent. A. D. and Pseudo-Dionysius' from the 2nd cent. A.D. Babin 1978 chapter 2, footnote 38 refers to the possibilities that Pseudo-Dionysius' work was written by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first cent. B.C.) or else that it was a compilation of the second century A.D.

*Fig. 2* (Cf. *Fig. 1* for a comprehensive survey of the development of late antique Latin wedding poetry)

Early wedding poetry (Sappho, Theocritus *et al.* Greek authors)

I

Rhetorical prescriptions (Pseudo-Dionysius, Menander Rhetor *et al.*)

I

Late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion*

Greek rhetoricians from the 3rd and 4th centuries treat marriage speeches under the heading of epideictic oratory, i.e. oratory of praise and blame. Their prescriptions depend not only upon rhetorical tradition,[317] but also upon poetic tradition (especially Sappho and Theocritus). The recommendations probably also agree, at least to some extent, with contemporary popular songs which have for the most part not been preserved. It is worth noticing that the rhetoricians recommend the use of poetry as a source of inspiration for the orators. This recommendation fits well with the general mixture of genres in late antique literature. What role should be given to the prescriptions of late antique rhetoricians when examining the development of classical literary genres has been a question of debate for modern scholars.[318] In antiquity there seems to have been a belief "that rhetoric and poetry are two branches of the same activity, that the rules, procedures and excellences of the two are closely connected and that some, if not all, genres found in poetry are rhetorical genres."[319] True or not, this belief's practical utility was considerable.

## *Menander Rhetor*

Menander distinguishes between two different kinds of wedding speeches: (1) the *Logos Epithalamios* (a "speech which hymns bridal chambers and alcoves, bride and bridegroom, family, and above all the god of marriage himself")[320] and (2) the *Logos Kateunastikos* (dealing with what is "appropriate to the bridal chamber, the union of the couple, the alcoves, Cupids, hymeneal songs, and the rite of marriage)."[321] All the themes of the *Logos Kateunastikos* should be treated concisely, with care only for grace

[317] Especially with the so called *protogymnasmata, i.e.* handbooks containing rules for oratory and examples to follow. *Progymnasmata* existed early in antiquity. Apthonius, a writer of the fourth century in Antioch, wrote some of the most popular progymnasmata. Among other subjects treated, Apthonius also lists the rules for writing *encomia* and in a chapter treating the question "Whether One Should Marry," he recommends many of the topics that are found in the prescriptions of Pseudo-Dionysius and Menander as well as in the orations of Himerius (4th cent. A.D.). (Babin 1978 pp. 31–33.)

[318] Morelli 1910 shows how themes and commonplaces of late antique epithalamia cohere remarkably well with the advice given by the late antique rhetoricians. Later scholars like Babin 1978 and Horstmann 2004 further develop the same observation (Babin 1978 pp. 26–71; Horstmann 2004 pp. 88–96).

[319] Cairns 1972 p. 70.

[320] Men. Rh. 399. 12.

[321] Men. Rh. 405. 15–19. *Logos Kateunastikos* is a brief kind of speech and it is an "exhortation to intercourse." (Men. Rh. 405. 23–24.) It may be deduced from the topics treated that the *Logos Kateunastikos* should be held after the ceremony, whereas the *Logos Epithalamios* may fit any point during the festivities (Babin 1978 p. 41).

and charm. Plainness and simplicity in the speaker's personality are essential for the grace and charm of the speech. The speech should be unadorned and largely asyndetic, in the manner of non-oratorical prose, like "talk." Menander also presents a number of *topoi* which may be used in this kind of speech. In the *encomium* of the bride, her youth and beauty rather than the virtues of her soul shall be emphasised.[322] The groom shall be praised for his prowess and strength.[323]

One must be careful not to say anything scandalous, cheap or vulgar in the exhortation to intercourse.[324] In the exhortation to the groom, Menander mentions the possibility of encouraging him with reference to competitions between athletes, a race course or battle.[325] The groom is exhorted to fight in a manner worthy of his fathers. His adversary is not pointed out explicitly, although it must be assumed that his adversary is the bride. Among ancient authors, it is by no means original to use similes of race horses to be tamed, or combats to be won, as circumlocutions for sexual intercourse.[326] What is unusual for Menander is that he incorporates this kind of exhortation into a conjugal context.[327] The groom may also be exhorted with reference to the banqueters and to the company present as well as to the beauty of the chamber, to the beauty of the girl and to the marriage gods who attend her. If the bride tries to deceive the groom with 'guileful chatter', the groom must beware of the deceit: "she wears Aphrodite's cestus, wherein is deceit through words."[328]

Menander says that he gives more starting points than needed for a single speech, and this seems to be true. In late antique *epithalamia of occasion,* elements from the *Logos Epithalamios* and the *Logos Kateunastikos* are mingled quite freely. The recommendations partly agree also with the practice in the wedding centos. Although they differ from the practice in other epithalamia*,* Menander's recommendations as regards the exhortation to intercourse agree at some points with the description of the coitus in *Cento Nuptialis*.

[322] 2. 405. 28–2. 406. 1.

[323] 2. 406. 1–2. 406. 4.

[324] 2. 406. 4–2. 406. 7. Some useful *topoi* are: the dream of happy augury; children; lifelong harmony; increase of property and praiseworthy management of wealth. The groom should pray to Eros and Hestia and the gods of birth to help him in his enterprise. Material from the season and from nature may be used, as well as traditions relating marriage and intercourse, love stories of nymphs and trees. Dionysus may also be mentioned as well as various mythic love stories. The audience may be exhorted to put up garlands of roses and violets, light torches, have sport around the chamber, dance and cry 'Hymen,' clapping hands and wearing garlands.

[325] "If we were athletes and had to compete at Olympia or Pytho against other athletes, there would necessarily have been a prize offered, a herald present, a judge of the victory, and a public race course. But since the performance is the rite of marriage, Eros the umpire, Hymen the herald, and the bedroom the race course, beware of behaving like a coward in battle and fearing the rout before the engagement: imagine rather that desire stands by you on one side, and Marriage on the other, while Love judges the contest and Hymen cries out: 'Go, fight in a manner worthy of your fathers'" (2. 406. 14–2. 406. 24). Cf. also 2. 409. 27–2. 410. 19.

[326] Spies 1930.

[327] Babin 1978 p. 48 and note 59 suggest that it is unique for Menander. As we shall see in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis* (and partly also in the analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi*) this is exactly what Ausonius (and to some degree Luxorius) does too.

[328] Men. Rh. 407. 11–12. Cf. *Cento Nuptialis*, *Ingressus in cubiculum*.

### *Pseudo-Dionysius*

Like Menander, Dionysius differentiates between two types of wedding speeches. There is one general speech (*Logos Gamikos* or *Gamelios*) and one to be held at the threshold of the bridal chamber (*Logos Epithalamios*). [329] Dionysius leaves out the exhortation to intercourse which was the main theme for the bedroom speech according to Menander. It is also worth noticing that Dionysius, unlike Menander, makes no significant distinction between the *encomia* of the spouses presented in the general wedding speech and in the bridal chamber speech.[330]

Almost last in the bridal chamber speech should come an exhortation to the married couple to be fond of each other and to live in concord as far as possible. Marital concord has painful consequences for the couple's enemies and pleasant consequences for their friends. Finally there should follow a prayer that children may be born as soon as possible, so that the orator may live to see their marriage also, to sing their wedding song, and to have a subject for this sort of speech once again. Many of Dionysius' recommendations agree with the practice in late antique *epithalamia of occasion*, and also with the practice in *Epithalamium Fridi.*

## e. The late antique epithalamium of occasion

Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2 (*Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla,* 2nd half of first century) together with Claud. 9–14 (*Epithalamium, Praefatio and Fescennini Versus for Honorius and Maria*, app. 389) and Claud. *carm. min.* 25 (*Epithalamium for Palladius and Celerina,* app. 400) form the starting points for a subsequent tradition of late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion,* to which most later antique Latin wedding poems belong.[331] The consolidation of the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* is fairly con-

[329] *Ars.* 260–266 treats the kind of speech that Dionysius calls *Logos Gamikos* or *Gamelios*. *Logos Gamikos/ Gamelios* almost exactly corresponds to the *Logos Epithalamios* by Menander. *Ars.* 269–271 treats the kind of speech that Dionysius calls *Logos Epithalamios.* Dionysius' *Logos Epithalamios* roughly corresponds to the *Logos Kateunastikos* by Menander. The following figure may be helpful to sum up the confusing terminology used by Menander and Dionysius:

General wedding speech: Menander *Logos Epithalamios* ≈ Dionysius *Logos Gamikos/ Gamelios*

Wedding speech held in the evening outside the bridal chamber: Menander *Logos Kateunastikos* ≈ Dionysius *Logos Epithalamios*

The terminology used by Pseudo-Dionysius is more in accordance with the preceding poetic tradition, where *Epithalamium* originally was the song sung in the evening outside the bridal chamber. Later the word *Epithalamion* however came to be used to denote wedding poetry in general (cf. the discussion about terminology held in the introduction to this chapter), and this use of the word seems to be more in line with Menander's terminology.

[330] Menander, defining the exhortation to intercourse as the major subject for the bridal chamber speech, insisted that the physical beauty of the bride should be stressed in this speech. Dionysius, who does not propose the exhortation to intercourse as a subject of the bridal chamber speech, does not stress the physical beauty of the bride in his advice.

[331] Morelli 1910 first shows this and his work has been followed by Pavlovskis 1965, Roberts 1989, Horstmann 2004 *et al.* Morelli also briefly discusses the relationship between this tradition and previous *epithalamia for mythological spouses* as well as rhetorical advice for wedding speeches (Menander Rhetor, Himerios and Pseudo-Dionysius); cf. Chapters 8b, 8c, 8d. Wedding poems of this kind were written in Roman Gaul, in Roman Africa and in the Italian parts of the empire from the end of the second century onwards. The following poems are commonly considered to belong to this tradition: Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2 (*Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla,* 2nd half of 1st cent.); Claud. 9–14 (*Epithalamium, Praefatio*

temporary with the wedding centos, and like the wedding centos, late antique *epithalamia of occasion* treat contemporary weddings. Thus, Statius' and Claudian's wedding poems are both chronologically and functionally more closely related to the wedding centos than any other *wedding-related texts*. This motivates my choice to treat them more thoroughly than other texts in the genre. In the later poems of the kind, so little differs from the scheme set up in these first poems that it does not seem worthwhile to treat the later poems separately in this work.[332]

## Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla

Statius' *Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla* (*Silvae* 1. 2) was written for the marriage between Lucius Arruntius Stella and his bride Violentilla. Statius and Stella were personal friends, both coming from Naples and both poets.[333] Violentilla is familiar only from this poem and from some of Martial's epigrams.[334] The exact date of the wedding is unknown.

As in most late antique *epithalamia of occasion,* Venus is the protective goddess of the marriage; she is *Venus Pronuba.*[335] She inspires and sanctions the mutual love between the spouses. Many gods attend the wedding, but Venus rules over them all.[336] Cupid is Venus' first attendant in the poem, but also Amorines, Muses and Graces participate. In the poem, there is also a central dialogue between Venus and Cupid. This dialogue sets the plot in motion, and the bride and groom are praised. Their praising

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and *Versus Fescennini for Honorius och Maria,* app. 389) and *carm. min.* 25 (*Epithalamium* and *Praefatio for Palladius and Celerina,* app. 400); Sidon. *carm* 10–11 (*Epithalamium* and *Praefatio for Ruricus and Hiberia,* app. 461) and *carm.* 14–15 (*Epithalamium* and *Praefatio for Polemius and Araneola*); Claud. *carm. min. app.* 5 (*Epithalamium Laurentii*); Drac. *Romul.* 6 (*Epithalamium for the brothers,* end of 5th cent.) and *Romul.* 7 (*Epithalamium for Iohannis and Vittula,* end of 5th cent.); Ennod. *carm.* 1. 4. (*Epithalamium for Maximus,* beginning of 6th cent.); Lux. *anth.* 18 (*Epithalamium Fridi,* beginning of 6th cent.); Ven. Fort. *carm.* 6:1 (*Epithalamium for Sigibertus and Brunechilde*, app. 566). Also Paul. Nol. *carm*. 25 (ca. 400), seems to be part of this tradition, despite the emphasis on Christian virtues and lack of traditional mythologic elements in this poem. Morelli 1910 pp. 416–421, Pavlovskis 1965 pp. 165–166, and Roberts 1989 pp. 337–338 treat Paul. Nol. in relation to the tradition.

[332] Morelli 1910 and Horstmann 2004 analyse all poems of the kind separately.

[333] Stella was also *XIvir* and held some curule office (Mozley 1955 p. 15).

[334] Martial sometimes calls her *Iantis,* "the going's" with allusion to her husband *Stella,* "the Star" (Stars go over the heaven) and according to the *Epithalamium* (v. 197–198) Stella calls her *Asteris,* "the Star's." From the *Epithalamium* can further be understood that Violentilla, like her husband, comes from Naples (v. 260–265), that she has been married before (v. 136–139; 242–246), that she was rich (v. 121) and that she possessed an exquisite residence in Rome (v. 144–157). (Frère 1961, note on p. 19.) The wealth of the spouses as well as the exquisite residence of the bride are however frequent *topoi* of the genre, thus making the historical evidence of the two later statements about Violentilla weaker.

[335] In the classical wedding ceremony, Juno was the special protector of the marriage. In this function, she was called *Juno Pronuba* and guaranteed the legacy of the wedding. In Paul. Nol. *carm*. 25, Christ has this role. Most authors writing in this tradition were Christian, or were at least very well acquainted with Christian beliefs – this certainly counts for Sidonius Apollonaris, Dracontius, Ennodius and Venantius Fortunatus. Also some of the spouses were Christian – this is undoubtedly the case with Sigibertus and Brunechilde (Ven. Fort. *carm.* 6. 1) and with Julianus and Titia (Paul. Nol. *carm.* 25). Nevertheless, Roman mythology strongly dominates the poems.

[336] As regards influence on this poem from other kinds of poetry than wedding poems and epideictic poetry, it is worth noticing that Elegia attends the wedding under disguise (v. 7–10). I believe that her presence may indicate some kind of proximity between the late antique Latin *Epithalamium of occasion* and elegy. An example of possible influence from elegy is the presence of troops of armoured Amorines. Spies 1930 shows that such troops were commonplace in elegy. Mozley 1955 p. 16 and Frère 1961, note 4 to page 19 both suggest that Elegia is present at the wedding because Stella has written elegiac poetry.

recalls the praising of bride and groom in Cat. 61 and 62, and, as already mentioned, the praises in these poems were probably inspired by the amoebaean singing contests between choirs of young boys and girls which seem to have been a regular feature of the celebrations in the early Greek tradition.[337] In *Silv.* 1. 2, the dialogue between Cupid and Venus takes place in Venus' palace and it is preceded by a vivid description giving the setting for the dialogue. Such vivid *tableaux* have not occurred in the earlier tradition; they become commonplace in the following tradition, where dialogues are generally preceded by *tableaux.*

In Statius' poem, Venus lies exhausted on her couch after having spent the night with Mars.[338] Amorines play around her couch and ask her to tell them whom to hurt with their arrows.[339] Cupid comes forth among his brothers and of his own accord tells her about Stella's love and the marriage with Violentilla which he longs for.[340] Cupid praises the groom, Venus the bride. Both praises are structurally similar. There is no clear winner in the comparison between bride and groom; both are equally worthy. Cupid begins to praise the groom and makes reference to his noble ancestry,[341] his beauty,[342] and the circumstance that Ausonian matrons have wanted him as a son-in-law.[343] Cupid himself has fostered him;[344] and he suffers from a passion which has not yet been satisfied.[345] The groom is loyal to Venus' and Cupid's power.[346] All these elements become commonplaces in the following tradition. When Cupid has embraced his mother,[347] Venus begins to praise the bride. She starts with the bride's beauty[348] and noble ancestry.[349] With regard to her beauty, the bride is compared to other women, nymphs and to Venus herself.[350] Venus herself has fostered the bride;[351] Amorines,[352] heroes and gods would desire her, if they had the opportunity to see her.[353] The bride is likened to mythological women[354] and the happy man to win her is the groom.[355] These elements too become commonplaces in the following tradition.

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[337] Venus' and Cupid's praise of the spouses is also similar to the amoebaean singing contests found in bucolic poetry. (Theoc. *Id.* 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Verg. *ecl.* 3, 5.) This has been seen as evidence for a close relation between wedding poetry and bucolic poetry; cf. Chapter 8b. It is well worth noticing that this affinity is at hand also in these late poems. Wilson 1948 investigates the relationship between bucolic poetry and wedding poetry.

[338] v. 52; 59–60.

[339] v. 45.

[340] v. 65.

[341] v. 70–72.

[342] v. 72.

[343] v. 76–77.

[344] v. 77–78.

[345] v. 81–84; 93–94.

[346] v. 95–102.

[347] v. 103–104.

[348] v. 107–108; 110–120.

[349] v. 108–109.

[350] v. 112; 114–117.

[351] v. 109–112.

[352] v. 119–120.

[353] v. 127–136: Hermus, Tagus, Glaucus, Proteus, Nereides; Theseus; Phoebus, Jupiter.

[354] v. 131–136: Daphne, Ariadne, Europa, Leda and Danae. Through these likenings, the marriage between Stella and Violentilla is associated with the relationships between Apollo and Daphne, Theseus and Ariadne, Jupiter and Europa, Leda and Danae. None of these associations is altogether positive; cf. the general discussion in the introduction to Chapter 9. See Roberts 1989 pp. 324–328 for an analysis of the use of mythology in this poem.

[355] v. 136–140.

After finishing their dialogue, Venus and Cupid travel to the bride's house. Their journey is only briefly described;[356] this motive is generally more elaborated in later epithalamia. The bride's house is described in some detail; it is said to be worthy of a goddess and the whole section clearly resembles descriptions of Venus' residence in later poems.[357] The mansion is lofty and adorned with precious stones, the golden ceiling rests on innumerable columns, and eternal spring rules over the climate.[358] Like the previous one,[359] this *tableau* too gives the setting of a following dialogue. This time, Venus addresses the bride and convinces her to submit to the yoke of marriage. She encourages the bride to take advantage of her youth and her beauty.[360] She also praises love, which rules over the world,[361] and the groom. The groom is praised for his beauty and noble ancestry,[362] and Venus introduces another panegyric commonplace which will recur in the following tradition: the groom is young, but he possesses all the virtues of an old man.[363] When the account of events is complete and the bride is persuaded to surrender for her love,[364] the author wishes the couple good luck; he congratulates the groom with numerous mythological references and gives the couple advice for the marriage.[365] The poem ends with a wish that children shall be born.[366]

The complex chronological and geographical circle-composition distinguishes Statius' *epithalamium* from Claudian's *epithalamia* and from most other epithalamia in the following tradition.[367] Statius' *epithalamium* begins in present time and in the human world; Violentilla arrives at Stella's house in order to celebrate the wedding. The author recalls the former sufferings of the love-struck Stella. He wonders why Stella's pains are suddenly recompensed and he invokes Erato and asks her to help him tell the cause of the wedding.[368] Hereafter follows the account of Venus' mansion, the dialogue between Cupid and Venus, their journey to the human world, the description of Violentilla's house, Venus' speech to the bride, the bride's growing love and finally the author's words to the couple. Thus, Statius' *epithalamium* moves from present to past and back to present again, as well as from the divine to the human world and back again, in a way without known parallels in the following tradition.[369] I will return to issues of geography and time in the analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi.*

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[356] v. 141–146.
[357] v. 147. Cf. for instance Claud. 10. 85–95.
[358] v. 145; v. 148–151; v. 153–153; v. 154–157.
[359] v. 51–64.
[360] v. 162–172.
[361] v. 183–193.
[362] v. 173.
[363] v. 172–182.
[364] v. 194–200.
[365] v. 200–265.
[366] v. 266–276.
[367] Roberts 1989 pp. 322–323; Horstmann 2004 p. 80.
[368] v. 46–50: *Sed quae causa toros inopinaque gaudia vati/ attulit? hic mecum, dum fervent agmine postes/ atriaque et multa pulsantur limina virga,/ hic, Erato iocunda, doce. vacat apta movere/ colloquia et docti norunt audire penates*, "But what was the cause that brought to the poet the unhoped-for joys of wedlock? Do thou teach me, lovely Erato, here by my side, while the halls and portals are astir with folk, and many a staff beats upon the threshold. [I am not sure about the meaning of this phrase. Frère 1961 p. 21, note 1 says that the rods worn by lictors preceding the other guests are intended. However, the custom that lictors should beat upon the threshold of the groom's house at weddings is not confirmed by other sources that I am acquainted with.] Time permits apt converse, and the poet's home knows well how to listen."
[369] Also the implicit suggestions about a secret love affair between bride and groom before the wedding and the likewise implicit suggestion that the bride has been married before are unique in comparison with

## *Praefatio, Epithalamium* and *Fescennini Versus for Honorius and Maria*

Claudian wrote a whole set of poems for the wedding between Honorius and Maria. Honorius and Maria were cousins. Claudian also wrote a number of panegyric works for Honorius and for the bride's father Stilicho.[370] The wedding between Honorius and Maria took place in 389. There are a separate preface (9), the proper *Epithalamium* (10), and four collections of *Fescennini versus* (11–14). All six poems can, however, be read as one unit.

These poems have a more solemn tone than Claudian's *Epithalamium for Palladius and Celerina* (*carm. min.* 25); cf. below. The solemn tone may be a consequence of the high social status of the couple and of the author's relationship to them and their families; the groom is Honorius Augustus and the bride is Maria, who was the daughter of Claudian's most prominent guardian Stilicho.[371] The panegyric character of these poems is also more evident than in Statius' poem for Stella and Violentilla; cf. above. This coincides with the decreased importance of mythology; not even the gods are more important than the human protagonists of these wedding poems.[372]

A preface treating the wedding between *Thetis and Peleus* precedes the *Epithalamium* (9).[373] The preface reflects the coming events in the human world. Many gods and mythic creatures participate in the wedding between Thetis and Peleus.[374] The wedding customs in the poem seem to be Greek, with choirs of girls (led by Terpsichore) and boys (led by centaurs and fauns). In the evening of the seventh day, Phoebus told an epic tale about the coming deeds of Achilles; cf. Cat. 64. Meanwhile the wedding cries re-echo all over Olympus.

Hereafter follows the proper *Epithalamium for Honorius and Maria* (10). The groom is hurt by Cupid's arrows; he suffers from a not yet satisfied passion (v. 1–46). He is young and has never experienced love before. His passion is described with references to mythology. He also complains to himself that the bride's father has not yet fulfilled his promise to marry him with his daughter. In his complaint, the groom makes use of two traditional commonplaces: his own faithful love and his noble ancestry. Cupid is moved by the groom's complaint and departs towards Venus' mansion (v. 47–48).

Hereafter follows a *tableau* of Venus' home and gardens (v. 49–96). The setting resembles representations of the Golden Age, and the description is more detailed than the similar *tableau* in Statius' poem.[375] The amorines are the sons of nymphs, while

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the following tradition. (v. 136–139; 242–246. Cf. Roberts 1989 pp. 324–328; Horstmann 2004 p. 80.) As regards previous tradition, I believe it is worth noticing that Dido had also been married before she met Aeneas. In later epithalamia, the chaste bride with no experience of love is commonplace.

[370] There are four extant panegyric books about Stilicho's consulships, one book about Honorius' third consulship (396), one about his fourth (389, the same year as he married Maria) and one about his sixth (404).

[371] Roberts 1989 p. 328.

[372] Roberts 1989 p. 333: "According to Claudian's panegyric perspective, the reality of Stilicho's Rome outgoes the world of myth."

[373] Cf. Cat. 64 and the preface to Statius' *Epithalamium*.

[374] Jupiter, Chion (v. 5); Peneus (v. 7); Terpsichore (v. 9); Centaurs and fauns (v. 13); Hesperus (v. 16); Phoebus (v. 17).

[375] Venus' dwelling is far away and inaccessible (v. 49–51); eternal spring rules over its climate (v. 52–55); Vulcanus has made a golden palace for his beloved wife (v. 56–59); nature is ever green, cultivated only by the Zephyr (v. 60–61). Venus alone decides which birds may enter (v. 62–64), all nature

Cupid alone is Venus' son; this reflects the hierarchic universe of the poem. Hierarchy is important in both its divine and human universes.[376]After this *tableau*, the poem returns to Cupid. He arrives at his mother's house (v. 97–98). The Graces comb Venus' hair as Cupid arrives.[377] Venus embraces her son and asks about the reason for his visit, proposing a number of mythic love stories.[378] Cupid tells about Honorius' love for Maria and he also takes the opportunity to praise the bride's family. Venus' victory over the groom outdoes all her former victories, and he asks her to come immediately to seal the union.[379] Venus gets delightfully dressed[380] and orders the amorines to call for Triton who shall carry her over the sea.[381]

Hereafter follows a much more elaborate excursus about Venus' journey than in Statius' *epithalamium* (v. 144–201).[382] Nature rejoices at Venus' arrival (v. 184–185); even soldiers experience her power at her command (v. 186–201). Venus gives orders to Hymenaios, Gratia, Concordia and amorines to adorn the house and the wedding chamber.[383] Venus heads for the bride, who is studying exempla of female virtue in literature under the guidance of her mother; she is still ignorant of the imminent wedding.[384] A brighter air and a lovely fragrance from her hair announce Venus' arrival.[385] The beauty of the bride and her mother astonishes Venus. The bride and her mother are likened to the moon, laurels and roses. Venus addresses the bride. She tells her to make use of her youth and praises her family as well as her beauty.[386] When her beauty is described, the bride is likened to roses, gems, other women and goddesses,[387] and of course she triumphs over them all. Even gods would desire her.[388] When she has

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experiences the power of love, trees love each other (v. 65–68). The springs in Venus' gardens are sweet and bitter, like Cupid's arrows – and he dips his arrows in them (v. 69–71). The amorines play and compete with each other – they are the sons of the nymphs, while Cupid alone is Venus' son (v. 72–74). Also other deities and abstract personifications are present: Licentia, Ira, Lacrimae rudes, Pallor, Audacia, Metus, Voluptas, Periura and Iuventas (v. 77–85). Senius alone is excluded (v. 85). The palace is built of gems, gold and diamonds. The scent of flowers and slow-running balm further adorns it (v. 85–96).

[376] Roberts 1989 p. 332.

[377] v. 99–106. There is an interest in Venus'/ the bride's hair also in later poems, and this seems to reflect early and classical Roman traditions: The bride's hair should be divided into six coils with a spear by which an enemy had been killed, and it should be knotted up with wool-ribbons. Plut. *Quaestiones Romanae* 87. 285 c.

[378] v. 110–116.

[379] v. 117–121.

[380] v. 123–126.

[381] v. 127–134. In connection with this the love story about Triton and Cymontoe is briefly told (v. 135–144).

[382] A procession with various deities follows the goddess: amorines, Leucothea, Palaemon, Nereus, Glaucus and nereids riding upon various sea-monsters (v. 153–164). Cymontoe, Galatea and Psalmathe bring splendid gifts for Venus to give to the bride: a girdle, a necklace, a pearl-set diadem. The gifts show that the sea submits to the bride and her family. They are compared to, and are said to be more precious than, the gifts given to Thetis and Amphitrite at their marriages (v. 165–179).

[383] They are adorned with torches, flowers, garlands, lamps, myrtle, scent, gems and a beautiful canopy. Since the bride's family is rich and prosperous at war, the palace can be more delightfully adorned than mythic palaces and the wealth of exotic countries (v. 202–227).

[384] The poem says that this resembles how Diana studied under the guidance of Latona and how Mnemosyne studied under the guidance of Thalia (v. 228–250). The poets studied are Homer, Orpheus and Sappho. The virtue and inner qualities of the bride and her mother are indirectly praised in this section.

[385] v. 238–240.

[386] v. 252–281. As regards the noble decent, it is important that bride and groom come from socially equal families; cf. Chapter 8d.

[387] Diana and her own mother.

[388] Bacchus, Bootes, Aeter.

married Honorius, all nature will be under her command. Finally the bride receives the gifts from the Nereids, Venus combs her hair, and she is decorated for the wedding.[389] The plot ends when the bride, persuaded by Venus to give in to love, leaves in a procession heading for the groom's house.[390] The groom longs for the sun to set. He is likened to a horse kindled by the first smell of love. The poem ends with a song to Stilicho from his soldiers.[391] The main purpose of this song is the praise of Stilicho. The song ends with a wish that children shall be born in the marriage between Honorius and Maria.

The events in the *epithalamium* are told in chronological order. The poem moves from the human world to the divine world and back again to the human world. Both the human and the divine world are strictly hierarchic. This seems to reflect the character of the whole poem, which is more panegyric than both Statius' *Epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla* and Claudian's *Epithalamium for Palladius and Celerina.*

After the *Epithalamium* follow the four collections of *Fescennini versus* (11–14). The first collection of *Fescennini versus* (11) is addressed to the groom and praises him. His high hunting skills and his beauty are mentioned, as well as goddesses' and women's different desires for him. This collection ends with the statement that the bride is happy; she will marry him soon and unite the bonds of first love with him. In the second collection of *Fescennini versus* (12), nature and society are invited to share the joy of the spouses. Love ruling all over the world is praised.[392] The third collection of *Fescennini versus* (13) is addressed to Stilicho, the bride's father. He is asked to give his blessing to the wedding. It is a panegyric collection of verses to Stilicho, but the author also takes the opportunity to praise the families of both bride and groom.

The fourth and last collection of *Fescennini versus* (14) resembles the speech which the rhetoricians recommend to be held at the door of the wedding chamber; its function is to urge the groom to sexual intercourse.[393] As will be further discussed in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis,* military metaphors play a more dominant role in this collection of verses than in any other extant antique Latin wedding poem, except *Cento Nuptialis*.

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[389] v. 282–285.

[390] v. 282–294.

[391] v. 300–341.

[392] Forests, rivers, winds and mountains will rejoice and sing while the tops of the mountains will be adorned with roses. Italian and Spanish elements are mentioned (both groom and bride are of Spanish descent), east and west will share the joy (this betokens peace).

[393] It starts with an indication of time – the Evening Star rises (v. 1–2). After this, the author turns to the groom with advice for the wedding night (vv. 5–15) and a demand for conjugal love (v. 16–29). Bride and groom are likened to oak and ivy (v. 19–24). The bride is furthermore likened to a rose and to honey, her nails to thorns and bees (v. 5–10). The groom is told that her resistance will increase his delight and his pleasure from coming sexual joys is compared to the joy of victories over savage enemies (v. 11–15). In the beginning of this collection of verses, the spouses are represented as enemies. The wedding bed is likened to a battlefield (v. 25–29). The boys attending at the wedding are likened to military leaders, the girls to soldiers (v. 33–34) and among the peoples and over the sea this cry re-echoes: *Formosus Mariam ducit Honorius,* "Handsome Honorius leads Maria" (v. 37, my translation. Platnauer 1956 translates: "Fair Honorius weds with Maria," a translation in which the inherent pun of the line is lost.). The pun of this last line of the poem is evident – it both alludes to the phrase *aliquem in matrimonium ducere*, "to marry someone (with a male subject)", and continues the military metaphors from the preceding verses. The spouses are no longer enemies fighting against each other, but leader and soldier in the same army of love.

## *Epithalamium and Praefatio for Palladius and Celerina*

Claudian's *Epithalamium and Praefatio for Palladius and Celerina* (*carm. min. 25*) was written for the wedding between Palladius and Celerina which took place in 399.[394] Claudian and Palladius did military service together, under the command of Celerina's father.[395] Claudian is thus more socially equal with these spouses than with Honorius and Maria, and the social equality between Claudian and the spouses is reflected in the mythic universe of the poem.[396] Differently from in the *epithalamium* to Honorius and Maria, there are no hierarchic relationships among Venus' attendants.[397]

The main themes of the preface are the relationships between the poet, the groom and the bride's father. The poet claims that he is asked to write a poem for the wedding and that he obeys the command, although he must write the poem hurriedly.[398] This may be compared to the *Praefatio* of *Cento Nuptialis.*

The proper *epithalamium* begins with a description of Venus' cave and of Venus sleeping together with her attendants on a bed of flowers. There is spring weather and nymphs, gratians and amorines are present.[399] Suddenly song, music and the sound of dancing are heard from the town. The reader is abruptly thrown from the mythic universe to the human world.[400] Venus wakes up. Naked and uncombed she heads for Hymenaeus, who is the son of a muse. No weddings can be entered without Hymenaeus. Venus finds him under a tree, playing on his pipe together with the amorines.[401] Hymenaeus is embarrassed and stops playing at Venus' arrival.[402] Venus wonders if he will never stop playing his mother's songs and whether he really prefers Lycaeus' wild landscape, cattle and Echo to the wedding lyre.[403] She commands him to tell her about the wedding and the ancestry of the spouses.[404] Hymenaeus answers that Venus, too,

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[394] Platnauer 1956 says that the *Epithalamium* was also written in 399.

[395] Cf. *Praefatio* of the *Epithalamium*.

[396] Roberts 1989.

[397] Possibly Hymenaeus playing the pipe rather than the lyre is Palladius' *alter ego.* This would indicate that Palladius wrote bucolic poems and it would explain why Claudian insists so much upon the picture of Hymanaeus playing the pipe, a picture without parallels in the epithalamic tradition, as we know it. (Roberts 1989 p. 335.) I believe that the connection between wedding poetry and bucolic poetry is highlighted through the references to mythology and different musical instruments. Morelli 1910 p. 370 insists on Hymanaeus' genealogy: Hymenaeus is the son of a muse. This would explain his interest in music. It would also explain why his role is similar to the role of the amorines in this *epithalamium* as well as in many later epithalamia.

[398] Cf. Menander, *Proemium* of the *Logos Epithalamios,* chapter 8d. Cf. also Morelli 1910 p. 368. Morelli notes that this is the only time Claudian excuses himself for a poem he has written. This would indicate that his excuse is sincere. I believe that it can nonetheless be explained as part of the authors' *captatio benevolentiae.* Ausonius too claims to have composed his wedding poem *Cento Nuptialis* hurriedly in the prefatory letter of *Cento Nuptialis*.

[399] v. 2–5; v. 8–12.

[400] v. 22–24: *et fausti iuvenum plausus mixtaeque choreis/ auditae per rura lyrae. Celerina per omnes/ Italiae canitur montes omnisque maritum/ Palladium resonabat ager.* "Joyous acclamations of youth and the strains of the lyre accompanying dancing in the streets. Through all the hills of Italy the name of Celerina is chanted and every field re-echoes that of her husband Palladius." Morelli 1910 pp. 373–374 claims that nature does not rejoice and that dancing, choirs and the city celebrating the wedding are absent from this poem. I suggest that all these commonplaces are present in the poem, but that they are less elaborate than in many other *epithalamia of occasion*.

[401] v. 25–39.

[402] v. 39–43.

[403] v. 44–49.

[404] v. 50–55.

has been idle for a long time and that he has waited long for her.[405] He briefly tells about the both spouses' noble ancestry and about the groom's high morals and career.[406] Thereafter, he tells about the bride's ancestry and particularly about her father's repute.[407] He finally asks Venus to come.[408] He will also participate, playing on his pipe.[409]

Venus combs her hair, takes a bath and dresses in beautiful clothes woven by Dione.[410] Her chariot is adorned with flowers and drawn by pigeons.[411] She leaves together with birds and amorines; the amorines ride on the birds, play and wrestle.[412] The excursus about Venus' journey is rather elaborate; cf. the *epithalamium* for Honorius and Maria. Venus and her throng adorn the house and the wedding chamber with roses, violets and other flowers from Venus' ever-green garden, as well as with exotic balm.[413] Venus tears the frightened bride from her mother's arms. The bride's beauty is briefly described.[414] Venus unites the right hands of bride and groom and encourages them to live in concord and learn the task she gives to them.[415] They shall kiss and bond with each other. He shall avoid violence and she shall surrender voluntarily to him. Many expressions commonly used in violent contexts appear in this section.[416] Hereafter follows a wish for children to be born, and some consolation to the bride.[417] Venus orders Aethon to shoot the bride and Pyrios to shoot the groom with arrows soaked in honey. Both bride and groom are equally wounded.[418]

The events are told in chronological order throughout the poem. Also geographically, the poem moves in one direction only: from the divine world to the human world. In this *epithalamium*, Claudian follows the tradition from Statius and the rhetoricians less rigidly than in his *epithalamium* for Honorius and Maria. Myths, particularly episodes and *tableaux* related to Venus, play an important role;[419] also Roman wedding traditions are more frequent in this *epithalamium* than in the previous. Venus uses mild violence when she tears the bride away from her mother. Venus also unites the right hands of bride and groom, and she gives advice to them both.

## *Concluding discussion*

It remains unknown whether the late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion* were performed at the weddings for which they were written or not. There is no evidence in the texts showing how or when they should have been incorporated in the celebrations, nor is there any other evidence about the recitation of these poems. Whether performed

[405] v. 56–57.
[406] v. 57–61; 61–69.
[407] v. 69–94.
[408] v. 94–99.
[409] v. 98–99.
[410] v. 99–102.
[411] v. 103–104.
[412] v. 105–110.
[413] v. 116–123.
[414] v. 124–127.
[415] v. 128–130.
[416] v. 130–136 (*livesco, nexus, ligo, virtus proterva, terror, domo, concedo, infensus unguis, ira, vinci patior*).
[417] *sic uxor, sic mater eris,… quem nunc horrescis amabis,* "so shalt thou be indeed a wife, so a mother, … thou shalt love him whom now thou fearest." (v. 137–138.)
[418] v. 139–145.
[419] Morelli 1910 pp. 373–374; Roberts 1989 pp. 328–335.

at the nuptials or not, these poems were evidently written for real contemporary weddings. The function of these poems thus differs from most poems treated earlier in this chapter. More emphasis is given to panegyrics; the spouses, their families, and often also their native towns and countries are praised, generally with frequent mythological references.

Most characteristics of the late antique Latin *epithalamium of occasion* have their germs in earlier wedding poetry, but in late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion* there is more of everything – more mythology, more panegyrics, more exempla, more beauty, more amorines and so forth. This abundance reflects the literary taste of the period. The extant literary sources indicate that the late antique Latin *epithalamium of occasion* was more influenced by earlier epic wedding representations than by earlier occasional wedding poetry. In connection with this, the frequent use of epic hexameters in late antique *epithalamia of occasion* should be noted.

A set scheme for late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion* soon developed. This scheme can be traced back to Statius' and Claudian's poems, and it is varied surprisingly little by their followers. As already mentioned, the scheme agrees both with poetic practice and rhetorical advice.[420] In this chapter, Statius' and Claudian's wedding poems were discussed with the purpose of shedding light on the whole branch of the genre.

## Summary of the chapter

The aim of this chapter was to provide the necessary understanding of the development of the genre to which the wedding centos belong. The following stages were discussed as important for the development of late antique wedding poetry in general: early wedding poetry; wedding poems by Theocritus and Catullus; representations of weddings or wedding-like events in epic and recited drama; late antique rhetorical prescriptions. Finally, the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* was presented in some detail.

Among the non-rhetorical *wedding-related texts* treated in this chapter, distinctions were made between wedding poems and representations of wedding-like events in epic and recited drama. Among the poems, a distinction was made between (1) *mythic epithalamia* (i.e. poems treating mythic weddings) and (2) *epithalamia of occasion* (i.e. poems treating actual weddings taking place in the age when the poems were written). The fragments of Sappho's wedding poetry are too meagre to allow a classification of this kind; Th. *Id.* 18 and Cat. 64 are *mythic epithalamia;* Cat. 61 and late antique *epithalamia of occasion* are *epithalamia of occasion.* Both wedding centos are *epithalamia of occasion.* A distinction was also made between texts where the wedding was portrayed in primarily happy colours and texts where the wedding or wedding-like event was portrayed in unhappy colours. The latter kind of texts was labelled *anti-epithalamia.* The discussed passages from epic and recited drama were all identified as *anti-epithalamia;* in such texts, the wedding-like events were always depicted in unhappy colours. The misfortune was very evident, but it was portrayed in different ways.

For the wedding centos, the late antique tradition of *epithalamia of occasion* was identified as a particularly important point of reference. This was because of the poems'

[420] Most *topoi* identified by the rhetoricians for wedding speeches appear also in late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion*, but they are treated and mingled quite freely; cf. Chapters 8d and 8e.

similar functions and dates of composition. Also representations of weddings or wedding-like events in epic and recited drama were identified as particularly important points of reference for the wedding centos. Indirectly, these representations were important for the wedding centos because they structurally influenced the late antique *epithalamium of occasion.* With regard to the direct importance of these passages for the wedding centos, it was noteworthy that most quotations in the centos come from Virgil's epic works. It was also noticed that both the *Aeneid* and the *Argonauticon,* a work which draws greatly upon the *Aeneid,* contain *anti-epithalamia*. The discussed *anti-epithalamia* from the *Aeneid* will be thoroughly reconsidered in the analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi.*

In the sections about early wedding poetry and about Theocritus' and Catullus' wedding poems, the germs were traced of some commonplaces in the later tradition: the dialogue between Venus and Cupid could perhaps be traced back to early popular wedding songs; the germs of many commonplaces in the *encomia* of bride and groom were found already in Catullus' and possibly also Sappho's poems; the mockery of the spouses could be traced back to the popular Roman *Fescennini Versus* and possibly also to Sappho's poems, and so forth. Cat. 64 contains a negative parallel story about Theseus and Ariadne. Parallel stories were also found in the *Metamorphoses* and in some *epithalamia of occasion.* Although the wedding centos do not explicitly include any parallel stories, it may be assumed that the Model Reader of the wedding centos associates with stories in the text of origin which he or she understands as analogous with the stories told in the centos. Such stories may have a function which resembles the function of parallel stories in other wedding-related texts.

Remarkable are also the negative notes which were found in many wedding-related texts. Unhappy notes, dramatic irony and sarcasm could be traced back already to Theocritus' wedding poem for Helen. Such features were also found in Catullus' poems and they were appallingly evident in the *anti-epithalamia.* Sexual violence is rarely suggested in the tradition; moderate hints of the kind were found in Menander's recommendations for wedding speeches and in Claudian's *Epithalamium for Palladius and Celerina.* Negative notes, as well as the issue of sexual violence, will be reconsidered particularly in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis.*

# 9. Attitudes towards marriage in ancient literature

Which attitudes are revealed towards marriage in ancient literature? In the preceding chapter, it was seen that marriage and marriage-like events can be depicted in both happy and unhappy colours. I believe that these different attitudes are best explained through the different functions of the discussed texts; I further believe that the texts' functions are closely connected with the different branches of the genre. At the risk of oversimplifying things, I would say that wedding-like situations in epic and drama are depicted as unhappy events; weddings in *mythic epithalamia* are depicted as happy at first sight, but with unmistakable unhappy notes; weddings in *epithalamia of occasion* are depicted as happy events, even though there are often also some negative notes.

The following figure illustrates what I have just said:

*Fig. 1*
**Marriage as an unhappy or happy event in different branches of the genre *wedding-related texts*:**

| *Unhappy event* | *Happy at first sight, but with unmistakable unhappy notes* | *Happy event* |
|---|---|---|
| *Anti-epithalamia* | *Mythic epithalamia* | *Epithalamia of occasion* |

Our genre-expectations lead us to believe that the weddings in *epithalamia of occasion* should be considered happy events. These poems have an epideictic purpose. Their function is to celebrate the wedding, the spouses and their families. As was seen in the preceding chapter, there are nonetheless often dubious allusions to mythic love stories with an unhappy outcome in the *epithalamia of occasion.* This has troubled modern scholars, since such accounts in connection with *epithalamia of occasion* sometimes seem to endow the represented wedding between humans with negative connotations.[421]

I agree with the opinion that mythic love stories often have a disastrous outcome, and that they therefore may give negative connotations to other love stories told in connection with them. It is necessary to keep an open eye for these dubious allusions when analysing late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion,* but it is also necessary to show a certain degree of acceptance for negative connotations in poems that must nevertheless be considered to presage essentially happy marriages. After all, the most important scope of all these poems is to praise the spouses and their families and to wish them good luck for the future. The just prejudice to have when starting to read these poems is that they are essentially happy. They may mock the spouses (as did the *Fescennini Versus*), or they may for some other reason contain a couple of negative connotations, but nonetheless forecast and wish for a happy marriage.

Why, then, are the spouses in *epithalamia of occasion* compared to unhappily married[422] divine or heroic spouses, and to spouses with a negative repute as regards their marital traits?[423] I believe that one reason to use such parallel stories and characters in an *epithalamium of occasion* is a strong literary tradition of parallel stories in classical epic works, for instance in the *Metamorphoses,* but also in the *epyllion* Cat. *carm*. 64. Another reason is that heroic and divine parallel stories and characters give an obvious grace to poems about humans, no matter whether the heroes and gods are unmistakably good-hearted or not.[424] In some cases, a disastrous love story can also be related in order to highlight the present happy events by means of contrast. It therefore takes more than one or two associations with unfortunate heroic love stories to consider an *epithalamium of occasion* as not unquestionably expressing an opinion in favour of the wedding. I believe that none of the poems which are commonly considered to

[421] Hostmann 2004 pp. 21–22; 24–26; 63–68.

[422] The 'spouses' in the epic works that are structurally most closely related to the late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion,* i.e. Dido and Aeneas; Medea and Jason, are particularly unhappily 'married'. In fact, these couples are not legally married at all. Nonetheless, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, they are portrayed in a wedding-like way in literature.

[423] Helen is beautiful, but also deceitful; Thetis and Peleus were, at least according to Catullus, happily married; but according to the same version of their myth, their offspring were cruel etc.

[424] Cf. Menander Rhetor.

belong to the tradition of late antique Latin *epithalamia of occasion* expresses an essentially negative opinion about the wedding for which it was written.[425]

One reason why *mythic epithalamia* contain stronger negative notes than *epithalamia of occasion* is that the *mythic epithalamia* do not have an epideictic purpose. Another reason is that the audience knows the protagonists of *mythic epithalamia* beforehand from epic or drama. From these sources, the audience already knows that the spouses are unhappily married or unhappily related in a wedding-like way. Thus, the expectations on the characters direct the reader's understanding in a certain course. More difficult to explain is why wedding-like events in epic and drama are depicted in unhappy colours. One thing that these passages have in common with each other, but not with the other wedding-related texts, is that they depict precisely wedding-*like* events. The events *resemble weddings*, but they are *not true weddings*. I believe that the choice of using an *epithalamium-like* form for the epic passages treated in the preceding chapter is to emphasise duplicity and deceit. The choice of genre(s) is determined by and simultaneously mirrors the events told in the text.[426]

In the following, I will demonstrate how truthfulness between both gods and humans is a key characteristic of weddings portrayed as happy events. Another key characteristic of happy marriages is that the prosperous brides are persuaded to marry by arguments based on both rationalistic and sentimental grounds; sense together with sensibility is revealed as an essential attribute of a happy marriage.[427] Put differently, treachery and sensibility alone characterise the unhappy wedding-like events depicted in epic and drama.

## a. The role of the gods – truthfulness vs. treachery

In the wedding-related texts with human protagonists treated in the previous chapter, gods sometimes appear. Typically, gods appear at two different moments in the texts: (1) in front of each other in the divine world and (2) in front of humans in the human world. The reason why gods talk to each other in the divine world is to plan the wedding (or wedding-like situation) in the human world. In the human world, gods appear with the purpose of convincing the spouses (the bride in particular) about the wedding.

(1) With which attitudes, then, do the gods appear before each other in the divine world? From Statius onwards, more or less every wedding poem contains a central dialogue between Venus and Cupid. In this dialogue the events to come are foreseen, and tasks in preparation for the wedding are given. Venus and Cupid are honest with each other and reveal their true intentions about the spouses. In *anti-epithalamia* too, there is often a central dialogue between gods or, to be more precise, between goddesses. This dialogue is held in the divine world. The events to come in the human world are foreseen and agreements are made about the precise arrangements. There is, however, a major difference between the dialogues in the *epithalamia of occasion* and in the epic *anti-epithalamia.* In the *epithalamia of occasion,* the gods are sincere with

[425] For a list of such poems, see Chapter 8e, footnote 331.

[426] Cf. Conte 1994 pp. 112–113: "genres are matrixes of works, to be conceived not as recipes but as strategies; they act in texts not *ante rem* or *post rem,* but *in re.* [...] the literary genre's communicative strategies help the reader to construct a situation or a whole imaginary world." Cf. also Hinds 1998, the discussions held in chapters 4 and 5 about how authors may manipulate genres and present tendentious readings of the tradition. For a summary of these discussions, see Chapter 5 in this work.

[427] In this chapter, 'sense' and 'sensibility' correspond with the rhetorical terms *logos* and *pathos*.

each other; in the *anti-epithalamia* the goddesses are insincere with each other: Juno seeks to mislead Venus in both the *Aeneid* and the *Argonauticon*, and Venus in both stories only pretends to be tricked. It is well worth noticing that the goddesses try to deceive each other only when treachery will follow among the humans. The tragic outcome of events in the story about Jason and Medea and in the story about Aeneas and Dido must have been well known to the ancient audience; the reader, however, is also reminded of these unhappy endings in the accounts of the foregoing events in the divine world. It seems that the human world can be interpreted as a mirror of the divine world in these stories. When the goddesses are insincere, treachery will follow in the human world too. Consequently, when the gods are sincere (as they are in the late antique *epithalamia of occasion*), the Model Reader may assume that truthfulness will follow also among the humans.

(2) With which attitudes do the gods appear before human spouses? In essentially happy epithalamia, the gods appear with all their characteristic features and reveal their true identities. This is the case in Sappho's and Catullus' poems, as well as in late antique *epithalamia of occasion.* In Sappho's and Catullus' poems, Hymenaeus is invoked and asked to appear with all his characteristic features, thus showing his true identity. Venus, Cupid and Hymenaeus always reveal their true identities whenever they participate in late antique *epithalamia of occasion*. The purpose of the gods' appearance in these poems is nothing else than to favour the weddings and to persuade the brides to marry and love the grooms. The gods display an attitude of truthfulness and sincerity in these poems. In *anti-epithalamia,* things are different. The gods act under disguise in *anti-epithalamia*: Cupid acts under Julus' disguise in the *Aeneid*; Juno acts under Calliope's disguise and Venus acts under Circe's disguise in the *Argonauticon*. The purpose of these disguises is to mislead the female protagonists in the stories (Dido/ Medea) and thereby make them fall in love with the male protagonists (Aeneas/ Jason). It is the protective goddesses (Venus in the *Aeneid,* Juno in *Argonauticon*) of the male protagonists who initiate these plans. Their aim is not to favour the 'wedding' or true love between the 'spouses', and it is certainly not to unite the 'spouses' in a happy marriage. Their aims are in fact not at all concerned with the well-being of the couple. The gods display an attitude of treachery and deceit towards each other and towards the humans in these texts. Consequently, the Model Reader may assume that treachery will follow also among the humans.

## b. Convincing arguments – sense together with sensibility or sensibility alone

An important difference between the happy brides in the *epithalamia of occasion* and the unhappy 'brides' in the *anti-epithalamia* is that the essentially happy brides are persuaded by both rationalistic and sentimental arguments to surrender to the yoke of marriage. As far as can be understood from the texts, the brides in the *anti-epithalamia* on the other hand are persuaded exclusively by sentimental arguments. This is what will make, for example, Medea a potent espousal of Jason, or Dido a potent espousal of Aeneas, but it is also their passionate characters that make them dangerous (for themselves or others) when deceived by false feelings.

In *epithalamia of occasion,* Venus in her attempts to persuade the brides presents them with arguments based on both sense and sensibility. As far as can be told from the texts, the brides are convinced by both kinds of arguments. The brides in Statius' and

Claudian's poems are convinced when Venus tells them to take sensible advantage of their young age and beauty (when they get older, they are less attractive and a good marriage is therefore less likely); when she praises their families and beauty (this applies to both sense and sensibility); when she praises Love ruling all over the world; when she praises the groom for his ancestry (his noble ancestry implies a good social position for the bride: sense) and his youth, but with an old man's virtues (he is sexually attractive, but also prudent: sensibility and sense).[428]

In *anti-epithalamia,* things are different. *Argonauticon* will suffice as example here, but Dido in the *Aeneid* is certainly persuaded on similar grounds. As regards Val. Fl. 7. 153–299, it is well worth noticing that Medea does not surrender to the first kind of argumentation from Venus–Circe. Venus–Circe's first argumentation is based upon rationalistic arguments: the maiden's right age for marriage; the same power of love reigning all over the world and the young man's excellence in comparison to other suitors (these arguments imply a good social position for the bride).[429] Medea is not moved by these arguments; she is convinced only when she hears about Jason's beauty, virtue and ardent devotion for her (his sexual appeal and his passion).[430] I suggest that the reason why Venus–Circe's first argumentation cannot convince Medea is that this argumentation does not correspond to any part of Medea's character. Since Medea is altogether ruled by her feelings, she is not receptive to a rationalistic line of reasoning. She simply misses its point. But she is an easy prey for Venus–Circe's second argumentation. This argumentation is all based upon sentiments, and it therefore thoroughly defeats the unhappy and passionate Medea.

I further suggest that both Medea and Dido are portrayed as warning examples for young girls and women. If a young girl follows Medea's example and rushes off to 'marry' a man whom she loves passionately, but who has not been prudently endorsed (either by her or by her family), things will take a horrible end. The outcome of events is in this case a catastrophe both for the girl herself and for her family, i.e. her own exile and the death of her father, her brother and her children. With regard to Dido, things are a bit different. Dido is older, more experienced and more autonomous than Medea; she is also childless. Her passionate character therefore implies a more limited and personal ruin than Medea's. Nonetheless, Medea and Dido are both passionate women whose fervent characters lead to decline (collective and/or personal); they are both persuaded to 'marry' by arguments exclusively based on sensibility; both their stories can be read as warning examples. Put differently, the brides in *epithalamia of occasion* are persuaded on both sentimental and rationalistic grounds. They are the good examples to follow. We could deduce from this that a happy, long-lasting marriage should be based on a sound balance between sense and sensibility.

[428] eg. Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 162–193; Claud. 10. 251–281.

[429] Val. Fl. 7. 224–236.

[430] Val. Fl. 7. 259–291. Cf. Gärtner 1994 p. 192: "Nachdem Venus' erste Rede (VII 223–236) bei Medea nicht den erwünschen Erfolg gebracht hat (237–250), setzt sie stärkere Mittel ein, um ihr Ziehl zu erreichen."

# PART THREE: WEDDING CENTOS

## 10. The wedding centos *per se*

### a. *Cento Nuptialis*

*Cento Nuptialis* commemorates the marriage between Gratian (359–383) and Constantia (361/362–383).[431] Gratian was the son of the emperor Valentinian I (321–375) and his first wife Marina Severa (dead before 375). Constantia was the daughter of Constantius II (317–361) and his third wife Faustina (her exact years of life are unknown). The wedding took place in 374, but the cento may have been composed later. It was written by order of Valentinian I. The emperor had also written a cento for a wedding and he wanted to measure his talent with Ausonius'; cf. Chapter 1b. The *terminus ante quem* for the original composition can therefore be set to November 375 (when Valentinian died). The cento was revised later and sent in a letter to Paulus, a friend of the author, probably with the intention to have it published. The *terminus ante quem* for this is c. 395 (when the author died).

Decimus Magnus Ausonius (c. 310–395) is the author of *Cento Nuptialis.* In a prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis* he also gives his influential definition of what a cento is; cf. Chapter 1b. Ausonius is the most well-known ancient author of centos; cf. Chapters 1 and 2. His reputation as an author comes from a broad variety of poems, which can be divided into three kinds: personal poetry; descriptive and documentary poetry; so-called gymnastic verse (i.e. poems in which the author takes up the challenge of a difficult topic or a demanding format).[432] *Cento Nuptialis, Griphus Ternarii Numeri* (a riddle on the number three) and *Technopaegnion* (a set of poems in which all lines end with monosyllables) belong to the third kind; cf. Chapter 16e. Today, his best-known poem of all is probably the *Moselle,* a poem depicting the river with the same name. Ausonius was not only a renowned poet, but also a famous rhetorician. He was born in Bordeaux, where he worked as a teacher for several years. One of his most famous pupils during this period was Paulinus, later St. Paulinus of Nola. Valentinian I summoned Ausonius to the imperial court some time in the mid-360s. At the imperial court Ausonius developed connections with influential statesmen such as Symmachus, but his main responsibility was to teach the heir-apparent Gratian. Ausonius also made a political career, which reached its peak when he was elected consul in 379. After Valentinian's death in November 375, the young Gratian was installed as emperor, and during Gratian's early reign Ausonius had a large influence over his former pupil. He lost much of his influence in time, and at the beginning of the 380s he was back in Bordeaux. He died about 395.

*Cento Nuptialis* is 131 hexameters long. It is divided into eight sections with different titles. Between the seventh and the eighth section, there is a part entitled *Parecbasis,* "Digression", written in prose. After the eighth section follow three non-

[431] Much of the information in this chapter comes from Green (ed.) 1991.
[432] Green (ed.) 1991 introduction, p. xiii.

cento lines written by Ausonius. These lines are directed to Paulus and ask him to laugh at the naughty poem.

The structure and subject matter of *Cento Nuptialis* are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| *1. Praefatio,* "Preface"<br>11 lines (1–11) | The poet praises the groom and his family, particularly the groom's father. The poet also tells a reason why he writes the poem, namely that he is bidden to do so. |
| *2. Cena Nuptialis,*<br>"Marriage Feast"<br>21 lines (12–32) | The party is described with special attention to the food, the music and the palace. |
| *3. Descriptio Egredientis Sponsae,*<br>"A Picture of the Bride as she comes forth"<br>13 lines (33–45) | The bride is praised with special attention to her beauty, to her role as Venus' protégée and to her ripeness for marriage. |
| *4. Descriptio Egredientis Sponsi*<br>"A picture of the Bridegroom as he comes forth"<br>11 lines (46–56) | The bridegroom is praised with special attention to his beauty, his youth and his beautiful clothes woven by his mother. Love overwhelms the bridegroom as he approaches his bride. |
| *5. Oblatio munerum*<br>"The offering of presents"<br>10 lines (57–66) | The gifts that the bridegroom gives to the bride are described. |
| *6. Epithalamium Utrique*<br>"The Epithalamium addressed to both"<br>13 lines (67–79) | A traditional epithalamium sung by the wedding guests at the threshold of the wedding chamber. The main themes are matrimonial love and a wish that children will be delivered soon. |
| *7. Ingressus in cubiculum*<br>"The entry into the bedchamber"<br>21 lines (80–100) | The couple enter the wedding chamber. Dialogue between the groom, who wants to fulfil the marriage, and the bride, who wants a night's respite. The groom alone decides to fulfil the marriage. |
| *Parecbasis*<br>"Digression" | The poet excuses himself for the nastiness of the following section and for making Virgil immodest by using his words for such a subject matter. The poet makes reference to traditional wedding poetry (*Fescennini Versus*) and to the old-established tradition of freedom of speech at weddings. This digression is written in prose. |
| *8. Imminutio*<br>"Deflowering" | The violent intercourse (rape) is vividly described. |
| | The poet with his own words asks his friend to laugh at the naughty poem. |

From what can be seen so far, the functions of *Cento Nuptialis* are to commemorate the wedding between Gratian and Constantia, *epithalamium of occasion* (Occasional poem; cf. Chapter 16b) and to display the knowledge and witty capacity of the author in competition with the emperor (Marker of sophistication and social status, Poetic game and Humorous poem; cf. Chapters 16a, 16c and 16e). It is not surprising to find that

*Cento Nuptialis* agrees well with the technical rules for centos that Ausonius describes. There are, however, three quotations that are longer than the recommended 1.5 lines in the cento: line 24 (second half)-line 26; lines 75–76; lines 97–98.[433]

## b. *Epithalamium Fridi*

*Epithalamium Fridi* seems to commemorate the wedding between a certain Fridus and his bride. There is no other evidence that help us identify the spouses, but from the biographical evidence about Luxorius[434] it can be assumed that they belonged to the Vandal upper class in Carthage and that they lived during the late 5th or early 6th century. The late 5th/early 6th century poet Luxorius is the author of *Epithalamium Fridi.*[435]

Next to nothing is known with certainty about Luxorius' life and career, and most evidence must be derived from his own poems. It is fairly sure that he lived in the later years of the Vandals' rule, because of his description of their luxurious way of life, which flourished after Genseric's death in 477 (Genseric was the Vandal king who invaded Carthage in the 430s; he also restrained a too luxurious way of life for his people). Luxorius must have been born in the late 5th or early 6th century. He was a teacher and the titles of honour *clarissimus* and *spectabilis* appear together with his name. He is the author of at least 90 of the poems in the *Anthologia Latina.*

*Epithalamium Fridi* is 68 hexameters long. Its structure and subject matter are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Lines 1–8 | Indication of time: Morning.<br>Venus looks down over the city from Capitolium. |
| Lines 9–17 | Arrival of guests, description of palace, preparation for the party. |
| Lines 18–24 | Music. |
| Lines 25–26 | Carthaginians are invited to take their seats. |

[433] Line 24 (second half)-line 26: *plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt./ Nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos/ obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum.* "They thread the rhythm of dances and sing songs. And also the long-robed Thracian priest matches on his seven strings their various tones." In the cento, these lines describe the music played at the wedding party. The quotation comes from one of few passages in the Aeneid where music is described, *Aen.* 6. 644–646. In the *Aeneid,* the setting is Elysium. Lines 75–76: *omnes ut tecum meritis pro talibus annos/ exigat et pulchra faciat te prole parentem.* "to spend all [her] years with you – because of [your] such [high] merits – and with fair offspring make you a father." In the cento, these lines are part of the epithalamium sung to by the guests to the couple. They are directed to the groom. The quotation comes from a speech from Juno to the wind-god Aeolus, *Aen.* 1.74–75. If Aeolus scatters the Trojan ships, Juno promises that he will have the nymph Deiopea for his wife. Lines 97–98: *Succidimus; non lingua valet, non corpore notae/ sufficiunt vires, nec vox aut verba sequuntur.* "I am overcome; my tongue fails, and its wonted strength deserts my body, and neither speech nor words are at command." In the cento, these lines are directed from the bride to the groom. She asks him not to fulfil the marriage. The quotation comes from *Aen.* 12. 911–912, where the lines describe Turnus' faintness just before being killed by Aeneas.

[434] Luxorius' name may also have been Lisorius. Other names or spellings which have been discussed are Lusorius and Luxurius. Cf. Rosenblum 1961 pp. 36–38.

[435] Much of the information in this chapter comes from Rosenblum 1961.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lines 27–51 | Venus to Cupid: | | | |
| | Lines 28–33 | Praises the bride: | Beauty<br>Youth<br>Family | |
| | Line 34 | Gives Cupid order to shoot. | | |
| | Lines 35–41 | Praises the bride: | Comparisons with: | Venus<br>Precious stone<br>Nymphs |
| | Lines 42–51 | The bride will be one of Venus' companions.<br>Legal marriage.<br>Joint leadership between Venus and Cupid. | | |
| Lines 52–60 | Cupid to Venus: | Puts off his divine appearance.<br>Accepts the commission. | | |
| Lines 61–66 | Bride and groom are subordinated to Cupid.<br>Sexual intercourse. | | | |
| Lines 67–68 | Prediction about coming children and grandchildren. | | | |

From what can be seen so far, the function of *Epithalamium Fridi* is to commemorate the wedding between Fridus and his bride (Occasional poem; cf. Chapter 16b). *Epithalamium Fridi* is one of the centos that agree less well with the technical rules described by Ausonius.[436] The cento contains three lines that are composed from more than two lines in the text of origin.[437] It also contains one insertion of one word by Luxorius[438] and three quotations that are longer than the recommended 1.5 lines.[439]

[436] See Bright 1984 p. 85, table 1 for the number in each cento of 3+ sources' verses; original additions and longer than 1.5–line quotations.

[437] lines 10 (*Aen.* 4.141 or 5. 553, *Aen.* 10. 756, *Aen.* 1. 734); 30 (*Aen.* 11. 375, *Aen.* 9. 583, *Aen.* 5. 295); 57 (*Aen.* 2. 620, *Aen.* 8. 389, *Aen.* 5. 844).

[438] *atque* in line 10.

[439] Lines 23–24: *Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum, / iamque eadem digitis, iam pectine pulsat eburno.,* "matches on his seven strings their various tones, and he strikes them now with his fingers, now with his ivory quill." In the cento, these lines describe the music played at the wedding party. The quotation comes from one of few passages in the Aeneid where music is described, *Aen.* 6. 646–647. In the *Aeneid,* the setting is Elysium. *Aen.* 6. 646 was used (together with *Aen.* 6. 645 and the second half of *Aen.* 6. 644) also in *Cento Nuptialis* to describe the music played at the wedding; cf. above. Lines 25–26*: Nec non et Tyrii per limina laeta frequentes/ convenere, toris iussi discumbere pictis,* "The Tyrians, too, gathered in throngs throughout the festal halls; invited to sit down on the embroidered couches." In the cento, these lines describe how the Tyrians arrive at the wedding party. The quotation comes from *Aen.* 1. 707–708, where the lines describe how the Tyrians arrive at Dido's party for Aeneas. Lines 50–51: *Cui natam egregio genero dignisque hymenaeis/ dat pater et pacem hanc aeterno foedere iungit,* "a peerless son-in-law to whom the father gives [his] daughter in worthy nuptials and confirms this peace with an eternal compact." In the cento, these lines come from Venus' speech to Cupid. Venus tells Cupid that the bride's father gives his daughter away to be married with Fridus. The quotation comes from a speech from Drances to Latinus, *Aen.* 11. 355–356. Drances urges that Latinus should give his daughter Lavinia away to be married with Aeneas, not with Turnus. Luxorius has made three minor alterations in the

Luxorius has also made minor alterations of words when compared to the text of origin in no less than 19 cases.[440]

# 11. The text of origin – Provenance and original context of the quotations

In this chapter, the relationship between the wedding centos and their text of origin will be mapped out. All the quotations used in the centos will be identified and translated, following the order in which they appear in the centos. Texts and translations will be presented in tables. Also the original contexts of the quotations will be explained in the tables and quotations with a length of one line or more will be highlighted. Quotations longer than the average, as well as clusters of quotations coming from the same passage in the text of origin, may serve as points of reference for the Model Reader of the centos; cf. Chapter 6d. I have chosen to use tables for the purpose of clarification. In a table, it becomes very easy to grasp the origin and extent of each quotation. This makes it much easier to understand the cento in relation to its text of origin than it would have been if the Latin text and the English translation had been presented separately. The tables may also compensate for the modern reader's limited acquaintance with the Virgilian texts, since they provide us with the associations that may have come quite spontaneously to the learned reader of the time.

The Latin text of *Cento Nuptialis* follows Green (1991) with very few exceptions, and the Latin text of *Epithalamium Fridi* follows Rosenblum (1961, i.e. Riese 1894).[441] All aberrations from these texts are announced in the footnotes. The footnotes are also used for clarifying comments on the texts; for pointing out divergences from the Virgilian texts, and occasionally for relating different readings in the manuscripts (as related in the *apparatus criticus* of the editions I have used) and in other editions of the centos at points that I have found particularly crucial.[442] Sometimes more than one context in the Virgilian works may be the original context of a quotation in the centos. In these cases, all alternative contexts are listed and explained in the table. I justify my first choices, when I have any, in the footnotes. Some lines used in *Epithalamium Fridi* were used in *Cento Nuptialis* too. I comment on such lines in the footnotes regarding *Epithalamium Fridi*, Chapter 11b.

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quotation: *cui* instead of *quin; dat* instead of *des; iungit* instead of *iungas.* Bright 1984 p. 85, table 1 claims that there are 4 quotations longer than 1.5 lines in *Epithalamium Fridi.* This is not correct.

[440] Minor alterations as compared with the Virgilian works appear in the following lines: 1; 8; 10; 15; 27; 29; 30; 33; 36; 37; 42; 49; 50; 51 (two minor alterations); 54; 60; 61; 65. Possibly a few of these alterations may be explained with reference to divergent textual traditions of the Virgilian works. This issue calls for further scholarly investigation.

[441] I have thus preferred to follow Riese's text rather than the more recent Happ 1986. Happ's text differs from Riese's only in four instances, in none of which I feel altogether convinced: 12 fp (Happ: *quo sacrae*); 17 fp (Happ: *conubii*); 17 sp (Happ: *mensis*); 59 (Happ leaves out *atque*). Happ's list of possible sources of the quotations is however more complete than Riese's and Rosenblum's. I have also sought the sources of the quotations independently, but found no possible source which is not mentioned by either of the editors.

[442] It must be noted that I have tried to be restrictive with the last kind of comments in particular. I have also been restrictive as regards comments that are not clearly relevant for the semantic interpretation of the text. This means that metrical, technical and purely linguistic comments have for the most part been excluded from the footnotes. The interested reader may find much more such information in Green's, Happ's and Riese's editions.

The translation into English follows the Latin text as closely as possible, and surely too much so from an aesthetic point of view. All translations in this chapter are my own; unless otherwise stated, these translations are also re-used wherever quotations from the centos appear in the following chapters. I have translated each quotation in the Latin text separately. Since the aim has nonetheless been to produce a coherent English text, it has occasionally been necessary to add a few words in the English translation. Such words are placed within square brackets […]. To make sense in the English text, it has also been necessary to transfer some words in the Latin text to another quotation in the English translation; these words are presented within parentheses (…) where they make sense in the English text. Words added by the editor are placed within angle brackets <…>. Some lines have a common word at the breakpoint of the verse.[443] Such words are placed between &-signs in the Latin as well as in the English text, &...&.

In the tables, I have also used a few abbreviations which may need to be explained: CN means 'Cento Nuptialis'; EF means 'Epithalamium Fridi'; fp means 'first part' (of the verse); sp means 'second part' (of the verse); tp means 'third part' (of the verse); ins means 'inserted' (by the author of the cento). Quotations with a length of one line or more are printed in bold.

## a. *Cento Nuptialis*

| ***CN*** | **Text and translation** | **Provenance and context in Virgil** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Praefatio*** | | |
| **1** | ***Accipite haec animis laetasque advertite mentes,*** **"Take these [words] to heart and pay cheerful attention,"** | ***Aen.* 5. 304** **Aeneas initiates a contest between Trojan and Sicilian athletes with these words.** |
| **2** | ***Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis,*** **"both of you for courage, both for skilled arms renowned"** | ***Aen.* 11. 291** **About Aeneas and Hector – the bravest of warriors.** |
| 3 fp | *Ambo florentes,* "both in the bloom of life" | *Ecl.* 7. 4 About Corydon and Thyrsis who have driven their flocks together and are ready to meet in a singing match. |
| 3 sp | *Genus insuperabile bello,* "a breed invincible in war:" | *Aen.* 4. 40 Anna to Dido trying to persuade her to give in to her love for Aeneas. The Gaetulian cities, situated next to the Carthaginians, are invincible in war. |

[443] This means that the same word is found in the same position in both lines from the text of origin building up the line in the cento; cf. Chapter 2b.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 fp | *Tuque prior,*<br>"and you especially" | *Aen.* 6. 834<br>Anchises giving advice from the underworld to Aeneas. |
| **4 sp – 5 fp** | ***(nam te maioribus ire per altum auspiciis manifesta fides),***<br>**"(for there is clear assurance that under higher auspices you travel over the deep,)"** | ***Aen.* 3. 374–375**<br>**Seer to Aeneas prophesying coming events.** |
| **5 sp – 6** | ***Quo iustior alter nec pietate fuit nec bello maior et armis,***<br>**"than whom none was ever more strict in reverence of the gods, none greater in war and deeds of arms,"** | ***Aen.* 1. 544–545**<br>**The eldest of the Trojans describing Aeneas to Dido, while Aeneas is still encircled and thus hidden from her in a cloud.** |
| 7 fp | *Tuque puerque tuus,*<br>"you and your son," | *Aen.* 4. 94<br>Juno to Venus trying to make her act for a marriage between Dido and Aeneas. |
| 7 sp | *Magnae spes altera Romae,*<br>"the second hope of a mighty Rome," | *Aen.* 12. 168<br>About Iulus. |
| 8 fp | *Flos veterum virtusque virum,*<br>"flower and excellence of heroes of old time," | *Aen.* 8. 500<br>About the Maeonian youth which was to participate in Aeneas' struggle against Turnus and his men; cf. *CN* 74. |
| 8 sp | *Mea maxima cura,*<br>"my chiefest care," | *Aen.* 1. 678<br>Venus to Cupid giving him order to take Julus' disguise for a night in order to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. |
| **9** | ***Nomine avum referens, animo manibusque parentem.***<br>**"in name his grandfather's double, but in spirit and might his father's."** | ***Aen.* 12. 348**<br>**About Eumedes who has just begun to fight against Turnus.** |
| 10 fp | *Non iniussa cano.*<br>"I do not sing songs that I am not bidden to sing." | *Ecl.* 6. 9<br>Tityrus on his choice to sing bucolic songs. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **10 sp– 11 fp** | ***Sua cuique exorsa laborem; Fortunamque ferent;*** **"To each his own work shall bring toil and event;"** | ***Aen.* 10. 111–112** **Jupiter about the fight between Aeneas' men and the Rutulians.** |
| 11 sp | *Mihi iussa capessere fas est.* "For me it is lawful to get on with my task." | *Aen.* 1. 77 Aeolus, god of winds, to Juno promising to obey her and shatter the Trojan ships. |

***Cena Nuptialis***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 fp | *Exspectata dies aderat* "The looked-for day had come" | *Aen.* 5. 104 The day had come for a festive contest between Trojan ships. |
| 12 sp | *Dignisque hymenaeis* "and at the noble wedding" | *Aen.* 11. 355 Drances proposing that Turnus shall give his daughter to be Aeneas' wife. |
| 13 fp | *Matres atque viri* "mothers and men" | *Aen*. 6. 306 About spirits of the dead gathering at the shores of Styx, cf *CN* 68. |
| 13 sp | *Iuvenes ante ora parentum* "youth under their parents' eyes" | *Geo*. 4. 477 About sons placed at the pyre before their fathers' eyes seen by Orpheus in the underworld. |
| **14–15 fp** | ***Conveniunt stratoque super discumbitur ostro.*** ***Dant famuli manibus lymphas*** **"gather and recline on coverlets of purple. Servants bring water for their hands"** | ***Aen.* 1. 700–701** **About guests reclining and servants attending at Dido's party for Aeneas.** |
| **15 sp – 16 fp** | ***Onerantque canistris*** ***Dona laboratae Cereris.*** **"and load in baskets the gifts of hard-won Ceres."** | ***Aen.* 8. 180–181** **The allied Evander and Aeneas celebrate together for the first time. The feast is initiated to commemorate how Hercules killed Cacus, a monster half human half beast, who dwelled in a cave from which he vexed and killed Evander's people.** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 16<br>sp | *Pinguisque ferinae*<br>"and of fat venison" | *Aen.* 1. 215<br>About the stranded Trojans suppressing their hunger on the Carthaginian shores. |
| **17**<br>**fp** | ***Viscera tosta ferunt.***<br>**"they bear the roasted flesh."** | ***Aen.* 8. 180**<br>**See *CN* 15–16.** |
| 17<br>sp | *Series longissima rerum:*<br>"A very long list of things:" | *Aen.* 1. 641<br>About Dido's rich palace and how in gold are graven the doughty deeds of her sires, a long list of deeds. |
| 18 fp | *Alituum pecudumque genus*<br>"A kind of bird and of sheep" | *Aen.* 8. 27<br>All living creatures are asleep when Aeneas in a dream meets the flood-god Tiberius, who reveals future events to him. |
| 18<br>sp | *Capraeque sequaces*<br>"and wanton goats" | *Geo.* 2. 374<br>Advice to weave hedges around the crop in order to prevent wild animals from getting access to it. |
| 19 fp | *Non absunt illic*<br>"are not missing there" | *Geo.* 2. 471<br>About the richness of farmers. |
| 19<br>sp | *Neque oves haedique petulci*<br>"nor ewes and playful kids" | *Geo*. 4. 10<br>Advice to find a home for the bees where ewes and playful kids do not trample the flowers. |
| 20 fp | *Et genus aequoreum,*<br>"and a tribe of the sea," | *Geo*. 3. 243<br>Every single race on earth – including the tribes of the sea – feel the same love. |
| 20<br>sp | *Dammae cervique fugaces.*<br>"does and timid stags." | *Geo.* 3. 539<br>About the horrible age when does and timid stags stray among the hounds and about the houses. |
| 21 fp | *Ante oculos interque manus sunt*<br>"Before [their] eyes and in [their] hands are" | *Aen.* 11. 311<br>Latinus talking to his people about their defeat against the Trojans. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21<br>sp | *Mitia poma*<br>"mellow apples." | *Ecl.* 1. 80<br>Tityrus to Meliboeus asking him to stay overnight with him under the green leafage – they have mellow apples, mealy chstnuts and a wealth of pressed cheeses. |
| **22** | ***Postquam exempta fames et amor compressus edendi,***<br>**"When hunger had been put away and desire for food was stayed,"** | ***Aen.* 8. 184**<br>**See *CN* 15–16.** |
| 23 fp | *Crateras magnos statuunt*<br>"They set down great mixing bowls" | *Aen.* 1. 724<br>About Dido's party for Aeneas. |
| **23**<br>**sp** | ***Bacchumque ministrant.***<br>**"and they serve wine."** | ***Aen.* 8. 181**<br>**See *CN* 15–16.** |
| 24 fp | *Sacra canunt*<br>"they sing hymns" | *Aen.* 2. 239<br>About boys and unwedded girls singing hymns as they bring the wooden horse into Troy. |
| **24**<br>**sp**<br>**–**<br>**26** | ***Plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.***<br><br>***Nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos***<br><br>***Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum.***<br>**"They tread the rhythm of dances and sing songs. And also the long-robed Thracian priest matches on his seven strings their various tones."** | ***Aen.* 6. 644–646**<br>**About the merry life of the dead in Elysium and about Orpheus playing on his lyre there.** |
| 27 fp | *At parte ex alia*<br>"But from another part" | *Aen.* 10. 362<br>Description of a battle between Aeneas' troops and the Latians; cf. *CN 46*. |
| 27<br>sp | *Biforem dat tibia cantum.*<br>"the pipe utters music from double mouths." | *Aen.* 9. 618<br>Numanus – a prominent Rutulian – mocking the Trojans for being idle and womanish. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 28 fp | *Omnibus una quies operum*<br>"All have the same repose from toil" | *Geo.* 4. 184<br>Old and young bees have different obligations, but the season to rest from labour as well as the season to toil is the same for all. |
| **28 sp – 29 fp** | ***Cunctique relictis***<br>***Consurgunt mensis,***<br>**"And all arising leave the tables,"** | ***Aen.* 8. 109–110**<br>**The Arcadians rise from their tables in fear and are ready to interrupt their offerings as they see the Trojans arriving. The celebration will continue with the Trojans participating; see *CN* 15–16.** |
| 29 sp | *Per limina laeta frequentes*<br>"In throngs over the cheerful thresholds" | *Aen.* 1. 707<br>About the Carthaginians gathering at Dido's party for Aeneas. |
| 30 fp | *Discurrunt variantque vices,*<br>"they scatter and change turns," | *Aen.* 9. 164<br>About Rutulian guards blocking the gates of the Trojan camp confidently awaiting the battle. |
| 30 sp | *Populusque patresque,*<br>"the people and the fathers," | *Aen.* 9. 192<br>Nisos telling Euryalos that he in person wants to go and ask for Aeneas' assistance. Both people and fathers want this to be done. |
| 31 fp | *Matronae, pueri*<br>"the married women, the boys" | *Aen.* 11. 476<br>Latian married women and boys participating from the walls in the fight against the Trojans. |
| **31 sp – 32** | ***Vocemque per ampla volutant***<br>***Atria; dependent lychni laquearibus aureis.***<br>**"And they let their voices roll through the spacious halls; lighted lamps hang down from the fretted roof of gold."** | ***Aen.* 1. 725–726**<br>**Description of a pause in Dido's party for Aeneas.** |

***Descriptio egredientis sponsae***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 33 fp | *Tandem progreditur*<br>"At last comes forth" | *Aen.* 4. 136<br>About Dido arriving at the hunt. |
| 33 sp | *Veneris iustissima cura,*<br>"Venus' most lawful charge," | *Aen.* 10. 132<br>About Iulus fighting the Rutulians. |
| **34** | ***Iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis,***<br>**"already ripe for a man, already of full age for marriage,"** | **Aen. 7. 53**<br>**About Lavina.** |
| 35 fp | *Virginis os habitumque gerens,*<br>"wearing a maiden's look and garb," | Aen. 1. 315<br>About Venus presenting herself under a maiden's disguise to Aeneas and his men. |
| **35 sp – 36** | ***Cui plurimus ignem Subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit,***<br>**"A deep blush set her on fire and ran over her feverish cheeks,"** | **Aen. 12. 65–66**<br>**About Lavinia as she hears her mother asking Turnus to fight hard against the Trojans, since she refuses to accept Aeneas as her son-in-law.** |
| 37 fp | *Intentos volvens oculos,*<br>"looking around her with intensity," | Aen. 7. 251<br>Latinus thoughtfully lets his eyes wander as he contemplates upon whether he will give his daughter Lavinia to be Aeneas' wife or not. |
| 37 sp | *Uritque videndo.*<br>"and she afflames with her gaze." | Geo. 3. 215<br>Advice to keep the bull away from the cow, since she sets him on fire so that he forgets to eat and to toil. |
| **38 – 39 fp** | ***Illam omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus Turbaque miratur matrum.***<br>**"At her the whole company of youths, gathered from house and field, and throng of matrons marvel."** | **Aen. 7. 812–813**<br>**About the Volcian Camilla; cf. *CN* 118, 120, 121, 131.** |

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| **39 sp – 40 fp** | ***Vestigia primi Alba pedis,*** **"The marks on [her] foot[444] [are] white,"** | **Aen. 5. 566–567** **About a white horse upon which one of Aeneas' descendants will ride.** |
| 40 sp | *Dederatque comam diffundere ventis.* "her hair she had given to the winds to spread abroad." | Aen. 1. 319 About Venus presenting herself under a maiden's disguise to Aeneas and his men. |
| **41**[445] | ***Fert picturatas auri subtemine vestes,*** **"She wears robes figured with inwoven gold,"** | **Aen. 3. 483** **Andromache brings gifts to the departing Trojans.** |
| 42 fp | *Ornatus Argivae Helenae* "the garb of Argivian Helen" | Aen. 1. 650 Gift from Aeneas to Dido. |
| **<42 sp> – 43 fp** | ***<qualisque videri> caelicolis et quanta solet*** **"<and such to be seen> and so magnificent as usually is for the lords of heaven"** | **Aen. 2. <591>–592** **About Venus appearing in front of her son Aeneas.** |
| 43 sp | *Venus aurea contra,* "golden Venus." | Aen. 10. 16 Venus replying to Jupiter. |
| 44 fp | *Talis erat species,* "such was the sight," | Aen. 6. 208 Closing the description of the golden bough sought for and found by Aeneas. |
| 44 sp | *Talem se laeta ferebat* "so moved she joyously" | Aen. 1. 503 About Dido arriving with her throng at Latona's temple. |
| 45 fp | *Ad soceros* "towards her parents-in-law" | Aen. 2. 457 Describing a secret passage through which Andromache used to bring her son to the house of her parents-in-law. |

[444] I interpret *prima pedis,* "first (part) of the foot" as a so-called *pars pro toto.* Hence the translation "foot."

[445] Ausonius' manuscripts give *et* for *fert.* Green (ed.) 1991. Cf. also Bonaria 1971.

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| 45<br>sp | *Solioque alte subnixa resedit.*<br>"and sat supported on a lofty throne." | Aen. 1. 506<br>About Dido sitting down in Latona's temple giving laws and ordinances to her people. |

***Descriptio egredientis sponsi***

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| 46 fp | *At parte ex alia*<br>"But from another part" | Aen. 10. 362<br>Description of a battle between Aeneas' troops and the Latians; cf. *CN* 27. |
| 46<br>sp | *Foribus sese intulit altis*<br>"entered by the lofty doors" | Aen. 11. 36<br>Aeneas entering his house where Evander's son lies dead, killed by Ausonians. |
| **47** | ***Ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa,***<br>**"a youth bearing token on his unshorn cheeks of early manhood,"** | **Aen. 9. 181**<br>**About Euryalus, a young Trojan, Nisus' friend.** |
| 48 fp | *Pictus acu &chlamydem&*<br>"his &mantle& embroidered with needlework" | Aen. 9. 582<br>About the clothes of a young Sicilian, Arcens' son. |
| **48 sp – 49** | ***&Chlamydem& auratam, quam plurima circum***<br>***Purpura maeandro duplici Meliboea cucurrit,***<br>**"golden &mantle&, about which ran deep Meliboean purple in a double waving line"** | **Aen. 5. 250–251**<br>**Describing a cloak given as a prize to the winner of a ship race.** |
| **50** | ***Et tunicam, molli mater quam neverat auro:***<br>**"and a tunic, which his mother had woven of soft gold:"** | **Aen. 10. 818**<br>**About the clothes of Lausus, Mezentius' son, an Etruscan prince. Aeneas kills Lausus, although he pities his case.** |
| 51 fp | *Os umerosque deo similis*<br>"in face and shoulders like a god" | Aen. 1. 589<br>Describing Aeneas as the cloud encircling him disappears and he appears for the first time before Dido. |
| 51<br>sp | *Lumenque iuventae*<br>"and in his youthful eye." | Aen. 1. 590<br>See CN 51 fp |

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| **52** | ***Qualis, ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda***<br>**"As the morning-star when bedrenched with the wave of the sea"** | **Aen. 8. 589**<br>**About Evander's son Pallas advancing into battle against Turnus and his men.** |
| 53 fp | *Extulit os sacrum caelo,*<br>"he lifts his sacred head in heaven," | Aen. 8. 591<br>See CN 52 |
| 53 sp | *Sic ora ferebat*<br>"so did launch his face" | Aen. 3. 490<br>Andromache comparing Julus as he departs from her to her dead son Astyanax. |
| 54 fp | *Sic oculos,*<br>"so his eyes," | Aen. 3. 490<br>See CN 53 sp |
| 54 sp | *Cursuque amens ad limina tendit.*<br>"and he runs frantic to the threshold." | Aen. 2. 321<br>Panthus, a Trojan, runs frantic to Aeneas' door, trying to escape from Troy with his little grandchild. |
| **55** | ***Illum turbat amor figitque in virgine vultus:***<br>**"Him does love overwhelm, and on the maid he fixes his gaze:"** | **Aen. 12. 70**<br>**About Turnus looking at Lavinia who cries and blushes as she hears her mother asking Turnus to fight hard against the Trojans, since she refuses to accept Aeneas as her son-in-law.** |
| 56 fp | *Oscula libavit*<br>"he kissed her lips" | Aen. 1. 256<br>About Jupiter kissing Venus' lips promising her that Aeneas will reach Lavinium and succeed in his task. |
| 56 sp | *Dextramque amplexus inhaesit.*<br>"and grasping her right hand he holds it close." | Aen. 8. 124<br>Evander's son Pallas grasps Aeneas' hand as he welcomes him. |

***Oblatio munerum***

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| **57** | ***Incedunt pueri pariterque ante ora parentum***<br>**"The boys advance and all together before their parents' eyes"** | **Aen. 5. 553**<br>**About young boys entering to perform festive contests.** |

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| 58 fp | *Dona ferunt,*<br>"they bring gifts," | Aen. 5. 101<br>About young boys bringing offering to the gods. |
| 58<br>sp | *Pallam signis auroque rigentem,*<br>"a robe stiff with embroidery and gold" | Aen. 1. 648<br>About Aeneas' gifts for Dido. |
| **59<br>–<br>60<br>fp** | ***Munera portantes, aurique eborisque talenta***<br><br>***Et sellam***<br>**"bringing gifts, talents of gold and ivory and a chair"** | **Aen. 11. 333–334<br>Latinus urges peace with the Trojans and proposes these gifts to be given to them as a token of peace.** |
| 60<br>sp | *Et pictum croceo velamen acantho,*<br>"and a veil embroidered with saffron acanthus," | Aen. 1. 711<br>Describing the veil Cupid wears as he participates under Iulus' disguise at Dido's party for Aeneas. |
| 61 fp | *Ingens argentum mensis*<br>"massive silver for tables" | Aen. 1. 640<br>Describing the tables at Dido's party for Aeneas. |
| **61<br>sp<br>–<br>62** | ***Colloque monile***<br><br>***Bacatum et duplicem gemmis auroque coronam.***<br>**"and for the neck a string of pearls and a double crown with gems and gold."** | **Aen. 1. 654–655<br>Aeneas' gifts for Dido.** |
| 63 fp | *Olli serva datur*<br>"She is given a slave-girl" | Aen. 5. 284<br>Aeneas' gift to his friend Sergestus. |
| 63<br>sp | *Geminique sub ubere nati,*<br>"with twin children at her breast," | Aen. 5. 285<br>Aeneas' gift to his friend Sergestus. |
| 64 fp | *Quattuor hic iuvenes, totidem*<br>"here [are] four young men, (and) as many" | Aen. 10. 518<br>About a throng of enemies that Aeneas cuts down in search for Turnus. |
| 64<br>sp | *Innuptaeque puellae.*<br>"unmarried girls." | Aen. 2. 238<br>Description of Trojans dragging the wooden horse into Troy. |

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| 65 fp | *Omnibus in morem tonsa coma*:[446]<br>"All with heads shorn as custom is" | Aen. 5. 556<br>Trojan and Sicilian youth parading before their fathers' eyes after having performed games. |
| **65 sp – 66** | ***Pectore summo Flexilis obtorti per collum circulus auri.***<br>**"High on the breast around the neck is a pliant circlet of twisted gold."** | **Aen. 5. 558–559**<br>**See CN 65 fp.** |

***Epithalamium utrique***

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| 67 fp | *Tum studio effusae matres*<br>"Then, eagerly enthusiastic, the matrons" | Aen. 12. 131<br>Rutulian and Teucrian matrons, the unarmed throng and feeble old men gather in towers and on tops of houses to watch the final battle between Aeneas and Turnus. |
| 67 sp | *Ad limina ducunt.*<br>"lead [the couple] to the threshold." | Aen. 10. 117<br>The gods lead Jupiter to the threshold when he has declared that 'to each his own work shall bring toil and event' in the fight between Aeneas' men and the Rutulians; cf. *CN* 10–11. |
| 68 fp | *At chorus aequalis*<br>"But a choir of peers" | Geo. 4. 460<br>About Eurydice's sister band of Dryads weeping for her as she dies. |
| 68 sp | *Pueri innuptaeque puellae*<br>"boys and unmarried girls" | Aen. 6. 307<br>About the spirits of the dead gathering at the shores of Styx; cf. *CN* 13. |
| 69 fp | *Versibus incomptis ludunt*<br>"make merry with unpolished verses" | Geo. 2. 386<br>About celebrations in Bacchus' honour. |
| 69 sp | *Et carmina dicunt:*<br>"and sing songs:" | Aen. 6. 644<br>About the merry life of the dead in Elysium; cf. *CN* 24–26. |

[446] This verse contains an error of prosody which would be uncharacteristic of Ausonius. This may indicate a *lacuna* in the text; cf. Green (ed.) 1991 p. 523. In the *Aeneid* the whole verse reads: *omnibus in morem tonsa coma pressa corona,* "all have their hair crowned with a trimmed garland, as custom is." *Tonsa* there goes with *corona,* both ending with long syllables.

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| 70 fp | *'O digno coniuncta viro,*<br>"'O you who are wedded to a worthy lord," | Ecl. 8. 32<br>To Nysa who has scorned Damon in order to marry Mopsus; cf. *CN* 73, 74. |
| 70 sp | *Gratissima coniunx,*<br>"most beloved wife," | Aen. 10. 607<br>Jupiter to Juno; cf. *CN* 87 sp. |
| 71 fp | *Sis felix,*<br>"may you be blessed," | Aen. 1. 330<br>Aeneas to the disguised Venus asking for her grace. |
| 71 sp | *Primos Lucinae experta labores,*<br>"when you have felt the first pains of the goddess of birth" | Geo. 4. 340<br>About Lycorias, a young nymph in Cyrene's throng. |
| **72** | ***Et mater. Cape Maeonii carchesia Bacchi.***<br>**"and [are] a mother. Take goblets of Maeonian wine."** | **Geo. 4. 380**<br>**Aristaeus' mother Cyrene calls for Maeonian wine to pour a libation to Ocean. She wants to bring aid to her son who is desolate for the loss of his bees.** |
| 73 fp | *Sparge, marite, nuces,*<br>"Scatter the nuts, bridegroom," | Ecl. 8. 30<br>To Mopsus who marries Nysa; cf. *CN* 70, 74. |
| 73 sp | *Cinge haec altaria vitta,*<br>"wreathe round these altars with a ribbon of wool" | Ecl. 8. 64<br>Alphesiboeus calling for assistance in his preparations for magic rites to bring his beloved Daphnis back from town. |
| 74 fp | *Flos veterum virtusque virum:*<br>"[you] flower and excellence of heroes of old time:" | Aen. 8. 500<br>About the Maeonian youth which was to participate in Aeneas' struggle against Turnus and his men; cf. *CN* 8. |
| 74 sp | *Tibi ducitur uxor,*<br>"for you the bride is brought," | Ecl. 8. 29<br>To Mopsus who marries Nysa; cf. *CN* 70, 73. |

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| **75 – 76** | ***Omnes ut tecum meritis pro talibus annos***<br><br>***Exigat et pulchra faciat te prole parentem.***<br>**"to spend all [her] years with you – because of [your] such [high] merits – and with fair offspring make you a father."** | **Aen. 1. 74–75**<br>**Juno promises the wind-god Aeolus to have the nymph Deiopea for his wife, if he scatters the Trojan ships.** |
| 77 fp | *Fortunati ambo,*<br>"Blessed [be you] both," | Aen. 9. 446<br>About Euryalus and his friend Nisus who have just met death together in a battle. |
| 77 sp | *Si quid pia numina possunt;*<br>"if the righteous gods have any power;" | Aen. 4. 382<br>Dido curses Aeneas as he is about to leave; she says that he will be punished for his betrayal. |
| 78 fp | *Vivite felices.*<br>"live happily." | Aen. 3. 493<br>Aeneas takes farewell of Andromache and her people. |
| **78 sp – 79** | ***Dixerunt "currite" fusis***<br><br>***"Concordes stabili fatorum numine" Parcae.'***[447]<br>**"'Run in agreement with the fixed will of destiny', the Fates said to their spindles.'"** | **Ecl. 4. 46–47**<br>**The Fates said to their spindles that they should continue to produce such blessed ages as when the child is born under whom a golden race will spring up throughout the world.** |

***Ingressus in cubiculum***

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| **80 – 81 fp** | ***Postquam est in thalami pendentia pumice tecta***<br><br>***Perventum,***<br>**"After having come into the bridal chamber with its hanging roof of stone"** | **Geo. 4. 374–375**<br>**Aristaeus arrives at his mother Cyrene's home, the realm of waters; cf. *CN* 72.** |

[447] Green (ed.) 1991 prints *Dixerunt 'currite' fusis/ concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae*. I have preferred to interpret *concordes stabili fatorum numine* as directed from the Fates to their spindles. If so, the *concordia* between groom and bride – a *topos* at this point of epithalamia – is clearly emphasised also in *Cento Nuptialis*; cf. analysis in Chapter 12.

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| 81<br>sp | *Licito tandem sermone fruuntur.*<br>"they enjoy at last permitted talk." | Aen. 8. 468<br>Trojans (Aeneas, Achates) and Latians (Evander and Pallas) meet to agree on an alliance. |
| 82 fp | *Congressi iungunt dextras*<br>"Meeting, they hold hands" | Aen. 8. 467<br>See CN 81 sp. |
| 82<br>sp | *Stratisque reponunt.*<br>"and lie down upon the couch." | Aen. 4. 392<br>Dido's maidens lay her on her bed when she is devastated at Aeneas' betrayal. |
| 83 fp | *At Cytherea novas artes*<br>"But Cytherea (moves and persuades) [them] (to begin) new arts" | Aen. 1. 657<br>Venus revolves new arts in her breast as she plans for how she will make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. |
| 83<br>sp | *Et pronuba Juno*<br>"and Juno, goddess of marriage," | Aen. 4. 166<br>Juno, goddess of marriage and primal Earth give sign when Dido and Aeneas are united in the cave during the thunderstorm. |
| **84** | ***Sollicitat suadetque ignota lacessere bella.***<br>**"moves and persuades [them] to begin wars [hitherto] unknown."** | **Aen. 11. 254**<br>**The Greek hero Diomedes, who has fought against Troy and suffered for this, asks the Latians what chance moves and persuades them to fight against the Trojans.** |
| 85 fp | *Ille ubi complexu*<br>"When he, in [his] (soft) embrace" | Aen. 1. 715<br>Cupid, under Julus' disguise, has hung in embrace on Aeneas' neck. |
| **85**<br>**sp**<br>**–**<br>**86**<br>**fp** | ***Molli fovet, atque repente***<br><br>***Accepit solitam flammam***<br>**"warms [her] up, and suddenly has caught the apposite flame"** | **Aen. 8. 388–389**<br>**Venus caresses her husband Vulcan in order to persuade him to produce arms for her illegitimate son Aeneas.** |
| 86<br>sp | *Lectumque iugalem*<br>"and the bridal bed" | Aen. 4. 496<br>Dido asks her sister Anna to raise a pyre for her and put upon it the arms that Aeneas left hanging in her bedroom, all his attire and the bridal bed that was her ruin. |

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| 87 fp | *'O virgo, nova mi facies,*<br>"'O virgin, a new face to me," | Aen. 6. 104<br>Aeneas says to the Sibylla of Cumae (the virgin) that no new form (face) of toil arises to him. |
| 87<br>sp | *Gratissima coniunx,*<br>"most beloved wife," | Aen. 10. 607<br>Jupiter to Juno; cf. *CN* 70 sp. |
| 88 fp | *Venisti tandem,*<br>"you have come at last, | Aen. 6. 687<br>The dead Anchises to his son Aeneas who comes to visit the underworld. |
| 88<br>sp | *Mea sola et sera voluptas.*<br>"My only joy and so long waited for." | Aen. 8. 581<br>Evander to his son Pallas who goes into battle against Turnus and his men; cf. *CN* 52–53. |
| **89** | ***O dulcis coniunx, non haec sine numine divum***<br>**"O sweet spouse, not without the will of gods this"** | **Aen. 2. 777**<br>**Aeneas' first wife Creusa says to Aeneas that it is not the will of gods that he should take her with him from the burning Troy; cf. Med. 77–78, 243, 275.** |
| 90 fp | *Proveniunt.*<br>"falls out well." | Aen. 12. 428<br>Iapyx, after miraculously having cured Aeneas' wound, says that it has not been done through human power. |
| 90<br>sp | *Placitone etiam pugnabis amori?*<br>"Will you strive even against a pleasing love?" | Aen. 4. 38[448]<br>Dido's sister Anna tries to convince her to give in to her love for Aeneas. |
| **91** | ***Talia dicentem iamdudum aversa tuetur***<br>**"As thus he speaks, all the while she gazes on him askance"** | **Aen. 4. 362**<br>**About Dido hearing Aeneas' justification for walking out on her.** |
| **92** | ***Cunctaturque metu telumque instare tremescit***<br>**"and she hesitates through fear and dreads that the spear will persist."** | **Aen. 12. 916**<br>**Turnus fears Aeneas' final blow against him.** |

[448] This line is used also in *Sat*. 112; cf. Chapter 2a.

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| 93 fp | *Spemque metumque inter*<br>"and between hope and fear" | Aen. 1. 218<br>The shipwrecked Trojans wonder whether their friends are still alive or not. |
| 93 sp | *Funditque has ore loquelas:*<br>"and she pours these words from her mouth:" | Aen. 5. 842<br>Neptune under disguise deceitfully tries to make Aeneas' helmsman Palinurus fall asleep. |
| **94** | ***'Per te, per, qui te talem genuere, parentes,***<br>**"'By yourself, by the parents who begat you such,"** | **Aen. 10. 597**<br>**The Latin Lucagus begs Aeneas to spare his life.** |
| 95 fp | *O formose puer,*<br>"o beautiful boy," | Ecl. 2. 17<br>Corydon to Alexis. |
| 95 sp | *Noctem non amplius unam*<br>"for but a single night" | Aen. 1. 683<br>Venus asking Cupid to take Julus' disguise for a night. |
| 96 fp | *Hanc tu, oro, solare inopem et*<br>"I beg you to comfort this helpless woman and" | Aen. 9. 290<br>When Euryalus leaves together with Nisus in order to fetch Aeneas, he begs Julus to look after his mother. |
| 96 sp | *Miserere precantis.*<br>"take pity with [her] who prays." | Aen. 10. 598<br>See *CN* 94. |
| **97 – 98** | ***Succidimus; non lingua valet, non corpore notae***<br><br>***Sufficiunt vires, nec vox aut verba sequuntur.'***<br>**"I am overcome; my tongue fails, and its wonted strength deserts my body, and neither speech nor words are at command.'"** | **Aen. 12. 911–912**<br>**About Turnus' faintness just before being killed by Aeneas.** |
| **99** | ***Ille autem, 'causas nequiquam nectis inanes,'***<br>**"But he: 'In vain do you weave idle excuses,'"** | **Aen. 9. 219**<br>**Euryalus replies to his friend Nisus who wants to go alone and fetch Aeneas since he is not willing to risk Euryalus' life; cf. *CN* 30, 47, 96.** |
| 100 fp | *Praecipitatque moras omnes*<br>"and he casts all hesitation aside" | Aen. 12. 699<br>Aeneas is eager to fight against Turnus. |

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| 100<br>sp | *Solvitque pudorem.*<br>"and he loses the bonds of shame." | Aen. 4. 55<br>About Dido surrendering for her passion for Aeneas. |

***Parecbasis***

*Hactenus castis auribus audiendum mysterium nuptiale ambitu loquendi et circuitione velavi. Verum quoniam et fescenninos amat celebritas nuptialis verborumque petulantiam notus vetere instituto ludus admittit, cetera quoque cubiculi et lectuli operta prodentur, ab eodem auctore collecta, ut bis erubescamus qui et Vergilium faciamus impudentem. Vos, si placet, hic iam legendi modum ponite; cetera curiosis relinquite.*
"So far, to suit chaste ears, I have wrapped the mystery of wedlock in a veil of roundabout and indirect expression. But since the concourse at a wedding loves Fescennine songs, and also that well-known form of merriment furnishes an old-established precedent for freedom of speech, the remaining secrets also, of bedchamber and couch, will be divulged in a selection from the same author, so that I have to blush twice over, since I make Virgil also immodest. Those of you who so choose, set here and now a term to your reading: leave the rest for the curious."

***Imminutio***

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| 101<br>fp | *Postquam congressi*[449]<br>"After having gone for each other" | Aen. 11. 631<br>Tuscans and Rutulians going for each other. |
| 101<br>sp | *Sola sub nocte per umbram*<br>"beneath the lonely night amid the gloom" | Aen. 6. 268<br>Aeneas and the Sibyl, his guide, enter the underworld. |
| 102<br>fp | *Et mentem Venus ipsa dedit,*<br>"and Venus herself inspired their minds," | Geo. 3. 267<br>About the mad love of horses. |
| 102<br>sp | *Nova proelia temptant.*<br>"they essay new battles." | Aen. 3. 240<br>The Trojans fighting the Harpies. |
| 103<br>fp | *Tollitque se arrectum,*<br>"He rears up," | Aen. 10. 892<br>The horse of the Tuscan king Mezentius is deadly wounded by Aeneas' lance. As it rears up, it throws off its rider who is soon killed by Aeneas. |
| 103<br>sp | *Conantem plurima frustra* | Aen. 9. 398<br>The Trojan Euralys is overpowered and struggles a lot in vain against Rutulians. |

[449] This quotation comes from the center of the Virgilian verse: *tertia sed postquam congressi in proelia totas* (*Aen*. 12. 231).

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| 104<br>fp | *Occupat os faciemque,*<br>"he assails [her] mouth and face (which struggles a lot in vain)," | Aen. 10. 699<br>The Tuscan king Mezentius attacks and kills the Trojan Latagus. |
| 104<br>sp | *Pedem pede fervidus urget.*<br>"hot, he presses [her] foot with [his] foot." | Aen. 12. 748<br>Aeneas runs after Turnus. |
| 105<br>fp | *Perfidus alta petens*<br>"Faithless steering for the deep" | Aen. 7. 362<br>According to Lavinia's mother Amata, Aeneas is a faithless Phrygian pirate who will steer for the deep with the first north wind. |
| 105<br>sp | *Ramum, qui veste latebat,*[450]<br>"the bough, which lay hidden under the robe," | Aen. 6. 406<br>The Sibyl shows Charon the golden bough in order to make him carry her and Aeneas over Styx to Hades. |
| **106** | ***Sanguineis ebuli bacis minioque rubentem***<br>**"crimsoned with vermilion and blood-red elderberries"** | **Ecl. 10. 27**<br>**About Pan coming to blame Gallus for his endless complaint that he has lost his lover Lycoris.** |
| 107<br>fp | *Nudato capite*<br>"with head bared" | Aen. 12. 312<br>About Aeneas who will take the last fight with Turnus. |
| 107<br>sp | *Et pedibus per mutua nexis,*<br>"and with feet intertwined" | Aen. 7. 66<br>About a swarm of bees hanging from a bough. |
| **108** | ***Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum,***<br>**"a monster awful, hideous, huge, blind,"** | **Aen. 3. 658**<br>**About Polyphemus setting after the Trojans.** |
| **109** | ***Eripit a femore et trepidanti fervidus instat.***<br>**"he snatches from his tigh and presses hotly on the anxious [bride].** | **Aen. 10. 788**<br>**About Aeneas attacking the Tuscan prince Lausus with a spear.** |
| 110<br>fp | *Est in secessu*<br>"In an inlet there is" | Aen. 1. 159<br>The location of the Carthagian coast where the shipwrecked Trojans land. |

[450] Diomedes lists this as *cacemphata*. Keil ed. 1961. See also Adams 1981.

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| 110<br>sp | *Tenuis quo semita ducit,*<br>"whereto a narrow path leads" | Aen. 11. 524<br>About a valley apt for stratagems and wiles of war. |
| 111<br>fp | *Ignea rima micans;*<br>"a threatening glowing crack;" | Aen. 8. 392<br>A thunderbolt, to which Venus' power is likened. |
| 111<br>sp | *Exhalat opaca mephitim.*<br>"dark, it breathes forth a poisonous vapour." | Aen. 7. 84<br>About the Albunean forest, where Italian and Oenotrian tribes could get in contact withthe gods and with the lowest parts of the underworld. |
| **112** | ***Nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen.***<br>**"No pure soul may tread the accursed threshold."** | **Aen. 6. 563**<br>**About the deepest site in Hades, where the worst sinners were punished.** |
| 113<br>fp | *Hic specus horrendum:*<br>"Here is an awful cavern" | Aen. 7. 568<br>The cavern where Acheron bursts forth from the underworld. |
| **113 sp – 114 fp** | ***Talis sese halitus atris Faucibus effundens***<br>**"Such a vapour emanating from black jaws"** | **Aen. 6. 240–241**<br>**About the entrance to the underworld.** |
| 114<br>sp | *Nares contingit odore.*<br>"and touches the nostrils with scent." | Aen. 7. 480<br>About the scent emanating from Allecto. |
| **115** | ***Huc iuvenis nota fertur regione viarum***<br>**"Hither the young man travels by a familiar line of road"** | **Aen. 11. 530**<br>**Tunus travels towards a suitable place for secretly attacking Aeneas:**<br>**'There lies a valley with sweeping curve, fit site for stratagems and wiles of war, hemmed in on either side by a wall black with dense leafage. Hither leads a narrow path, with straitened gorge and jealous approach. Above it, amid the watch-towers of a mountain-top, lies a hidden plain and a safe shelter, whether one would charge it from right or left, or take stand upon the ridge and roll down giant stones.'**<br>**This is where the young Turnus goes.** |

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| 116<br>fp | *Et super incumbens*<br>"And leaning above" | Aen. 5. 858<br>Sleep leans above Aeneas' helmsman Palinurus and flungs him headlong into the waters. |
| **116<br>sp<br>–<br>117** | ***Nodis et cortice crudo***<br><br>***Intorquet summis adnixus viribus hastam.***<br>**"Striving with all his might, he hurls his spear over the knots and the unpeeled bark."** | **Aen. 9. 743–744**<br>**The Trojan Pandarus hurls his spear against Turnus.** |
| **118** | ***Haesit virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem.***<br>**"It stood fast and, driven deep, drank her maiden blood."** | **Aen. 11. 804**<br>**About the spear killing Camilla, the Volcian heroine, cf *CN* 120–121, 131.** |
| **119** | ***Insonuere cavae gemitumque dedere cavernae.***<br>**"The vaults rang hollow sending forth a moan."** | **Aen. 2. 53**<br>**About Laocoon hurling his spear into the womb of the wooden horse in Troy.** |
| **120** | ***Illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter***<br>**"She, dying, tugs at the spear with her hand, but between the bones"** | **Aen. 11. 816**<br>**About the dying Camilla; cf. *CN* 118, 121, 131.** |
| 121<br>fp | *Altius ad vivum persedit*<br>"sat firmly deep in the quick" | Geo. 3. 442<br>About scab attacking sheep when chilly rain and winter have sunk deep inte the quick. |
| 121<br>sp | *Vulnere mucro.*<br>"within the wound, the iron point." | Aen. 11. 817<br>About Camilla's lethal wound, cf *CN* 118, 120, 131. |
| **122<br>–<br>123<br>fp** | ***Ter sese attollens cubitoque innixa levavit,***<br><br>***Ter revoluta toro est;***[451]<br>**"Thrice rising, she struggled to prop herself on her elbow, thrice on the bed rolled back;"** | **Aen. 4. 690–691**<br>**Dido dying on the pyre.** |

[451] Virgil has has *adnixa,* Ausonius *innixa.* Both words give the same meaning.

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| 123<br>sp | *Manet imperterritus ille.*<br>"Undaunted he abides." | Aen. 10. 770<br>About Aeneas in battle, moving to meet the Etruscan king Mezentius. |
| 124<br>fp | *Nec mora nec requies,*<br>"No rest no stay [is there]," | Geo. 3. 110<br>About how eager horses are to race. |
| **124<br>sp<br>–<br>125** | ***Clavumque affixus et haerens<br>Nusquam amittebat oculosque sub<br>astra tenebat.***<br>**"and clinging fast to the tiller, never let loose his hold, and kept his eyes upturned to the stars."** | **Aen. 5. 852<br>Aeneas' helmsman Palinurus struggles against overwhelming sleep.** |
| 126<br>fp | *Itque reditque viam totiens*<br>"So many times he comes and goes this way" | Aen. 6. 122<br>About Pollux who comes and goes to the underworld again and again. |
| 126<br>sp | *Uteroque recusso*<br>"and when the womb is shuddered" | Aen. 2. 52<br>See *CN* 119. |
| 127<br>fp | *Transadagit costas*<br>"he pierces through the ribs" | Aen. 12. 276<br>The Rutulian augur Tolumnius fights fiercely against the Trojan enemy. |
| 127<br>sp | *Et pectine pulsat eburno.*[452]<br>"and strikes with his ivory quill." | Aen. 6. 647<br>About Orpheus playing his lyre in the underworld. |
| **128<br>–<br>129<br>fp** | ***Iamque fere spatio extremo<br>fessique sub ipsam***<br><br>***Finem adventabant:***<br>**"And now, almost at the last part [of the race] and tired they neared the very goal:"** | **Aen. 5. 327–328<br>About a running course between athlets.** |
| **129<br>sp<br>–<br>130** | ***Tum creber anhelitus artus<br>Aridaque ora quatit, sudor fluit<br>undique rivis,***<br>**"then rapid panting shakes their limbs and the arid lips, sweat streams in rivers all over."** | **Aen. 5. 199–200<br>About the men rowing as a ship race comes to its end.** |
| 131<br>fp | *Labitur exsanguis,*<br>"She/he sinks bloodless," | Aen. 11. 818<br>About the dying Camilla; cf. *CN* 118, 120, 121. |

[452] Virgil has *iam* instead of *et. Et* is also found in the quotation in schol. Pers. 6. 5. Green (ed.) 1991 p. 524.

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| 131<br>sp | *Destillat ab inguine virus.*<br>"a slime drips from the groin." | Geo. 3. 281<br>About the 'hippomanes', horse madness, dripping from the groin of horses burning with love. |

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| 132<br>133<br>134 | *Contentus esto, Paule me*<br>*Lasciva, o Paule, pagina*[453]<br>*Ridere, nil ultra expeto.*<br>"Be satisfied, my Paulus,<br>The page is naughty, o Paulus.<br>I want you to laugh, that's all." | Cf. Mart. 1. 4. 8:<br>*Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba.*<br><br>"My page is naughty, my life decent." |

## b. *Epithalamium Fridi*

| ***EF*** | **Text and translation** | **Provenance and context in Virgil** |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | ***Sol, qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustrat***[454]<br>**"The sun, who with its rays survey all that is done on earth"** | ***Aen.* 4. 607**<br>**Dido invokes the sun, Juno and Hecate and asks them to take revenge on Aeneas who is leaving Carthage.** |
| **2** | ***Extulit os sacrum caelo tenebrasque resolvit.***<br>**"uplifted in heaven his sacred head and melted the darkness."** | ***Aen.* 8. 591**[455]<br>**About Lucifer, the morning star, who is like Pallas leaving his father to battle against Aeneas and his men.** |
| **3** | ***Laetitia ludisque viae plausuque fremebant,***<br>**"The streets rang with gladness and games and shouting,"** | ***Aen.* 8. 717**<br>**Aeneas looks at a helmet that Venus has given to him. On this helmet are depicted Caesar's coming triumphs and the peoples' joy in the streets.** |
| **4** | ***At Venus aetherios inter dea candida nimbos***<br>**"but Venus, lovely goddess, amid the clouds of heaven,"** | ***Aen.* 8. 608**<br>**Venus descends to Aeneas to give him the helmet where the glorious coming events of his country are depicted.** |

[453] Green (ed.) 1991 has *cruces* around this line.
[454] *Aen. lustras,* "you survey."
[455] The first part of this line (*extulit os sacrum caelo*) is used about the groom in CN 53.

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| **5** | ***Aurea subnectens exertae cingula mammae,***<br>**”binding a golden belt below her naked breast,”** | ***Aen.* 1. 492**<br>**Aeneas looks at pictures in a temple while he waits for Dido. The pictures tell about the Trojan war, about amazones and their leader Pentheselia who fights against the Trojans.** |
| 6 fp | *Dona ferens*<br>”bearing gifts” | *Aen.* 8. 609[456]<br>Venus descends to Aeneas to give him the helmet where the glorious coming events of his country are depicted.<br>Or *Aen.* 1. 679[457]<br>Venus tells Cupid about Iulus who is leaving his father with gifts for Dido.<br>Or *Aen.* 11. 479<br>About Lavinia’s mother who brings gifts and her daughter to Aeneas. |
| 6 sp | *Pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos*<br>”endured peace and a plighted wedlock” | *Aen.* 4. 99<br>Juno to Venus proposing they shall let Dido and Aeneas marry and thus ensure everlasting peace and marriage. |
| 7 fp | *Atque omnem ornatum,*<br>”and all ornament,” | *Aen.* 7. 74<br>A sagesman to Latinus about Lavinia, who is dressed in every kind of ornament and set on fire at an altar. |
| 7 sp | *Capitolia celsa tenebat,*<br>”she held the lofty Capitol,” | *Aen.* 8. 653<br>Aeneas looks at the helmet that Venus has given to him. On this helmet Manlius is depicted guarding the lofty Capitol.<br>Cf. v. 3 |
| **8** | ***Punica regna videns, Tyrios et Agenoris urbem.***[458]<br>**”seeing the Punic realm, the Tyrians and the city of Agenor.”** | ***Aen.* 1. 338**<br>**Disguised Venus to Aeneas telling him that he has arrived to the Punic realm, the Carthagians and the city of Agenor.** |

[456] This alternative is not mentioned by Rosenblum 1961, but I am convinced that this must be where the quotation comes from, given that line 4 comes from *Aen.* 8. 608.

[457] This alternative is not mentioned by Happ 1986.

[458] *Aen*. *vides*, “you see.”

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| 9 fp | *Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades*<br>”Oreads troop to right and left” | *Aen.* 1. 500<br>About Diana’s followers, Diana to whom Dido is likened as she approaches Aeneas who is looking at pictures in a temple while he waits for Dido.<br>Cf. v. 5 |
| 9 sp | *Et bona Iuno.*<br>”And bounteous Juno.” | *Aen.* 1. 734<br>Dido makes a toast for Aeneas and his men and welcomes Jupiter, Bacchus and Juno to the feast. |
| 10<br>fp | *Incedunt*<br>”They come” | *Aen.* 4. 141<br>About the Phrygians riding away to hunt together with Dido and Aeneas.<br>Or *Aen.* 5. 553[459]<br>About young boys entering to perform festive contests. |
| 10<br>sp | *Pariter pariterque*<br>”alike and alike” | *Aen.* 10. 756<br>About the equal battle between the Trojans and the Etruscans.<br>Or *Aen.* 8. 545<br>About Evander and the Trojan youth making sacrifice together to the gods. |
| 10<br>tp | *Ad limina tendunt.*[460]<br>They advance towards the thresholds. | *Aen.* 2. 205[461]<br>About the two serpents which follow Laocoon to the shore where they kill him.<br>Or *Aen.* 2. 321[462]<br>Abouth Apollo’s priest who fled towards the gates of the burning Troy. |
| **11** | ***Tectum augustum*[463]*, ingens, centum sublime columnis,***<br>**”Stately and vast, towering with a hundered columns,”** | ***Aen.* 7. 170**<br>**About Latinus’ castle.** |

[459] This line was used to describe boys bringing gifts to the wedding couple in CN 57.

[460] Rosenblum 1961 suggests *Aen.* 1. 734 (*adsit laetitiae Bacchus dator, et bona Iuno*) as source for this line, but this is evidently not correct.

[461] *Aen. pariterque ad litora tendunt.* I believe that this is Luxorius’ most likely source for the quotation. My reason for this belief is the word *pariterque,* which occurs at the same position in the preceding quotation in the cento; there is thus a common word at the break-point of the verse in the cento.

[462] *Aen. ad limina tendit. Aen.* 2. 321 is used about the groom in CN 54 sp.

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| 12<br>fp | *Hae sacris sedes epulis,*[464]<br>”[here were] the seats for the sacred feasts” | *Aen.* 7. 175<br>About Latinus’ castle. |
| 12<br>ins. | *atque*[465]<br>”and” | |
| 12<br>tp | *Ordine longo*<br>”in long array” | *Aen.* 1. 395<br>Disguised Venus to Aeneas telling him that his men are safe, as far as she can tell from the long array of birds taking ground.<br>Or *Aen.* 1. 703<br>About the long array of dishes served at Dido’s feast for Aeneas. |
| **13** | ***Perpetuis soliti patres considere mensis.***<br>**”the elders used to sit down at the longlasting tables.”** | ***Aen.* 7. 176**<br>**About Latinus’ castle where the elder held offerings and had feasts. Cf. v. 11, 12** |
| 14<br>fp | *Una omnes,*<br>”Together all (come),” | *Aen.* 5. 830<br>About Aeneas’ men striking their sails.<br>Or *Aen.* 8. 105<br>About the Arcadians offering to their ancestors. |
| 14<br>sp | *Magna iuvenum stipante caterva,*<br>”with a vast thronging company of youths,” | *Aen.* 1. 497<br>About the youth surrounding Dido as she approaches Aeneas, who is looking at pictures in a temple while he waits for Dido.<br>Cf. v. 5, 9 |
| 15<br>fp | *Deveniunt* | *Aen.* 4. 166[466]<br>About Dido and Aeneas seeking shelter in the same cave when the thunderstorm comes. |

[463] Rosenblum 1961 prints *angustum*, but translates “a stately and huge house.” I therefore suggest that *angustum* is a misprint for *augustum,* which is found in the Virgilian text and also in Happ’s edition (Happ 1986).

[464] Happ 1986 gives *quo sacrae sedes epulis,* “where the sacred seats [were] for the meals.”

[465] The word *atque* is inserted by Luxorius.

[466] The last part of this line (*et pronuba Juno*) is used about Juno Pronuba who moves and persuades the couple to physical intimacy in CN 83.

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| 15<br>sp | *Faciemque deae vestemque reponunt.*[467]<br>”and the goddesses lay asside their appearance and robe.” | *Aen.* 5. 619<br>About the godess Iris who takes off her divine outfit in order to stir up the Trojan women to rebellion. This is best done under disguise. |
| **16–17<br>fp** | ***Dant signum, fulsere ignes et conscius aether***<br><br>***conubiis***[468]<br>**”They give sign, fires flashed and heaven, the witness to the wedding,”** | ***Aen.* 4. 167–168**<br>**About Gaia and Juno Pronuba giving sign when Dido and Aeneas enter the cave.**<br>**Cf. v. 15** |
| 17<br>sp | *Mediisque parant convivia tectis.*[469]<br>”and within the palace they prepare the feast.” | *Aen.* 1. 638<br>About Dido’s palace and the preparations for her feast for Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 12 |
| **18–19<br>fp** | ***Fit strepitus tectis vocemque per ampla volutant***<br><br>***atria,***<br>**”A din arises in the palace and voices roll through the spacious halls,”** | ***Aen.* 1. 725–726**[470]<br>**About Dido’s palace and her feast for Aeneas.**<br>**Cf. v. 12, 17** |
| 19<br>sp | *Ubi adsuetis biforem dat tibia cantum.*<br>”where to accustomed [ears] the pipe utters music from double mouths.” | *Aen.* 9. 618[471]<br>Numus, a prominent Rutulian, mocking the Trojans for being idle and womanish. |
| **20–21<br>fp** | ***At tuba terribilem sonitum procul aere canoro***<br><br>***increpuit***<br>**”But the trumpet with brazen song rang out afar its fearful call”** | ***Aen.* 9. 503–504**<br>**About the sound of the trumpet as the Volscians come to battle against the Trojans.** |
| 21<br>sp | *Mollitque animos et temperat iras.*<br>”and tames passion and soothes rage.” | *Aen.* 1. 57<br>About the wind god Aiolus who soothes the rage of the winds. |

[467] *Aen. reponit,* “she lays aside.” Luxorius’ alteration of the verb implies that *deae* is best understood as nom. pl., “goddesses”. In the *Aeneid deae* must be understood as gen. sg., “goddess’”.

[468] Happ 1986 gives *conubii.*

[469] Happ 1986 gives *mensis* instead of *tectis* (mensis: *tectis; cf. v. 13 et* Aen. 4. 602 *mensis*).

[470] The second part of *Aen.* 1. 725 and the whole *Aen.* 7. 126 (*vocemque per ampla volutant/ atria; dependent lynchi laquearibus aureis*) is used to describe the palace where the party is held in CN 31–32.

[471] The last part of this line (*biforem dat tibia cantum*) is used to describe the music played at the wedding in CN 27 too.

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|---|---|---|
| 22<br>fp | *It clamor caelo,*<br>”A shout mounts to heaven,” | *Aen.* 5. 451<br>Trojans shout happily as Dares wins over the Sicilian Entellus in a fight. |
| 22<br>sp | *Cithara crinitus Iorpas*<br>”long-haired Iorpas on [his] lyre” | *Aen.* 1. 740<br>About the entertainment at Dido’s party for Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19 |
| **23–24** | ***Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum,***<br><br>***iamque eadem digitis, iamque pectine pulsat eburno.***<br>**“matches on his seven strings their various tones, and he strikes them now with his fingers, now with his ivory quill.”** | ***Aen.* 6. 646–647**[472]<br>**About the merry life of the dead in Elysium and about Orpheus playing on his lyre there.** |
| **25–26** | ***Nec non et Tyrii per limina laeta frequentes***<br><br>***convenere, toris iussi discumbere pictis.***<br>**“The Tyrians, too, gathered in throngs throughout the festal halls; invited to sit down on the embroidered couches.”** | ***Aen.* 1. 707–708**[473]<br>**About the guests arriving at Dido’s party for Aeneas.**<br>**Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22** |
| 27<br>fp | *Tunc Venus*[474]<br>”Then Venus” | *Aen.* 1. 335<br>Disguised Venus to Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 8 |
| **27 sp - 28** | ***Aligerum dictis affatur Amorem:***<br>***Nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia solus,***<br>**”speaks to winged Cupid with [these] words: ’[My] son, my strength, [you, who are] alone my great power,”** | ***Aen.* 1. 663–664**<br>**Venus to Cupid asking him to take Iulus’ place at Dido’s party for Aeneas and make Dido fall in love with Aeneas.**<br>**Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22, 25–26** |

[472] *Aen.* 6. 646 is used to describe the music played at the wedding in CN 26 too. The second part of *Aen.* 6. 647 (*et pectine pulsat eburno*) is used to describe the penetration of the bride in CN 127.

[473] The second part of *Aen.* 1. 707 (*per limina laeta frequentes*) is used about the guests singing a wedding song at the threshold of the wedding chamber in CN 29.

[474] Aen. *tum,* “then.”

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| 29<br>fp | *Huc geminas nunc flecte acies,*<br>”turn now [your] two-eyed gaze here,” | *Aen.* 6. 788<br>Anchises to Aeneas asking him to look at his heirs, the Iulians Caesar and Augustus. |
| **29**<br>**sp –**<br>**30**<br>**fp** | ***Illam aspice contra.***<br><br>***Quae vocat***[475]<br>**”look straight at her. She who calls”** | ***Aen.* 11. 374–375**<br>**Drances to Turnus challenging him to meet Aeneas in a fight man to man instead of risking his people in war.** |
| 30<br>sp | *Insignis facie*<br>”famed for [her] looks” | *Aen.* 9. 336[476]<br>About the young Serranus.<br>Or *Aen.* 9. 583<br>About a young Sicilian, Arcen’s son. |
| 30<br>tp | *Viridique iuventa,*<br>”and for [her] blooming youth,” | *Aen.* 5. 295<br>About Euryalus entering with other young boys to perform festive games.<br>Cf. v. 22 |
| **31** | ***Iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis,***<br>**”now ripe for a husband, now of full age to be a bride,”** | ***Aen.* 7. 53**[477]<br>**About Lavinia.** |
| **32–33**<br>**fp** | ***Cui genus a proavis ingens clarumque paternae***<br><br>***nomen inest virtutis***[478]<br>**”her lineage is noble from [her] fore-fathers and the renown of her father’s worth is glorious” (?)** | ***Aen.* 12. 225–226**<br>**About Camer, to whom Turnus’ sister Juturna is disguised.** |
| 33<br>sp | *Et nota maior imago.*<br>”and [her] appearance is greater than usual.” | *Aen.* 2. 773<br>About the ghost of Creousa as she appears to Aeneas in the burning Troy. |

[475] *Aen*. *illum,* “him”; *qui,* “he, who”.

[476] This alternative is mentioned only by Happ. The words *insignis facie* are found in the middle of the line (*luserat, insignis facie, multaque iacebat*)*;* this makes *Aen.* 9. 336 an unlikely source for the quotation.

[477] The same line is used to describe the bride in CN 34 too.

[478] Aen. *inerat*, “was”.

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| 34<br>fp | *Hoc opus, hic labor est;*<br>”This is the task, this the toil:” | *Aen.* 6. 129<br>The Sibyl to Aeneas saying that it is easy to enter Hades, but difficult to return from there to the earth and to the light. |
| 34<br>sp | *Thalamos ne desere pactos!*<br>”Do not forsake the plighted bridal chamber!” | *Aen.* 10. 649<br>Turnus to the phantom of Aeneas, who seems to leave the battle-field. |
| 35<br>fp | *Credo equidem,*<br>”I believe,” | *Aen.* 4. 12<br>Dido to Anna, saying that she believes that Aeneas is sprung from the gods.<br>or *Aen.* 6. 848<br>The dead Anchises to Aeneas, showing him the coming glory of the Romans. He says that he believes that others will be better in matters related with arts, rhetoric and science, but that the art of the Romans is to rule over other people. |
| 35<br>sp | *Nova mi facies inopinave surgit.*<br>”a new and unexpected form appears before me.” | *Aen.* 6. 104[479]<br>Aeneas to the Sibyl of Cumae saying that no new form of toil arises to him. |
| 36<br>fp | *Nonne vides,*<br>Do not you see, | *Geo.* 1. 56[480]<br>About things coming from various parts of the world.<br>Or *Geo.* 3. 103<br>About horses that are eager to win in races.<br>Or *Geo.* 3. 250<br>About horses overwhelmed with passion. |
| 36<br>sp | *Quantum egregio decus enitet ore?*[481]<br>”how much beauty shines forth from her noble face?” | *Aen.* 4. 150<br>About Aeneas as he leaves for the hunt together with Dido. |

[479] The first part of this line (*o virgo, nova mi facies*) is used by the groom when he addresses the bride in CN 87.

[480] The words used in EF are found in the middle of this line. This makes the line an unlikely source for the quotation.

[481] *Aen*. *tantum,* “so much”.

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|---|---|---|
| 37<br>fp | *Os humerosque deo similis,*<br>”In face and shoulders like a god,” | *Aen.* 1. 589[482]<br>About Aeneas when the cloud that has encircled him diappears and he appears for the first time in front of Dido. |
| **37**<br>**sp –**<br>**38**<br>**fp** | ***Cui lactea colla***<br>***auro innectuntur,***[483]<br>**”her milk-white necks are entwined with gold,”** | ***Aen.* 8. 660–661**<br>**Aeneas sees the Gauls heading for the Capitol. They are depincted on a helmet given to him by Venus.**<br>**Cf. v. 3, 4**<br>**Or 37 sp *Aen.* 10. 137**[484]<br>**About Iulus fighting against the Rutulians.** |
| **38**<br>**sp –**<br>**39** | ***Crines nodantur in aurum,***<br>***aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.***<br>**”her tresses are knotted into gold, a buckle of gold clasps her purple cloak.”** | ***Aen.* 4. 138–139**<br>**About Dido as she leaves for the hunt together with Aeneas.**<br>**Cf. v. 36** |
| 40<br>fp | *Qualis gemma micat, &qualis&*<br>”She glitters like a jewel, &like& | *Aen.* 10. 134[485]<br>About Iulus fighting against the Rutulians.<br>Cf. v. 37 |
| **40**<br>**sp –**<br>**41** | ***&Qualis& Nereia Doto***<br>***et Galatea secant spumantem pectore pontum.***<br>**”&like& Doto, Nereus’ daughter and Galatea [who] cleave with [their] breast the foaming sea.”** | ***Aen.* 9. 102–103**<br>**About the Trojan fleet. Zeus tells his mother that the ship will turn into nymphs once the Trojans have reached their goal.** |
| **42** | ***Cura mihi comitumque foret nunc una mearum!***[486]<br>**”I would that she were now my care and one of my band!”** | ***Aen.* 11. 586**<br>**Diana about Camilla.** |

[482] The same quotation is used about the groom in CN 51.

[483] *Aen. tum,* “then”.

[484] The whole line reads: *lucet ebur; fusos cervix cui lactea crinis,* “ivory gleams; his milk-white neck streaming locks...” Even though the word *cui* here appears in the same position as it does in the cento, I doubt strongly that *Aen.* 10. 137 is the origin of EF 37 sp. It seems much more likely that Luxorius picked a longer quotation (*Aen.* 8. 660–661) to the cento and made a minor alteration in it. Besides, if Luxorius picked EF 37 sp from *Aen.* 10. 137, he must have changed *cervix* for *colla.*

[485] Not mentioned by Happ 1986.

[486] *Aen. cara,* “dear”.

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| **43** | ***Hanc ego nunc ignaram huius quodcumque pericli est,***<br>**”**(In a single night) (when all the land is still,)**I (will link) her, [who is] now without knowledge of any peril”** | ***Aen.* 9. 287**<br>**Euryalus about his mother.** |
| 44<br>fp | *Cum tacet omnis ager,* | *Aen.* 4. 525<br>About the night when Dido feels she has been deceived by Aeneas. |
| 44<br>sp | *Noctem non amplius unam* | *Aen.* 1. 683[487]<br>Venus to Cupid asking him to take Iulus’ place at Dido’s party for Aeneas and make Dido fall in love with Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22, 25–26, 27–28 |
| **45 – 46<br>fp** | ***Conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo.***<br><br>***Hic Hymenaeus erit***<br>**”in sure wedlock and call [her] [my or his?] own. This Marriage will be”** | ***Aen.* 4. 126– 127**<br>**Juno to Venus saying they shall marry Dido with Aeneas.**<br>**Or 45 *Aen.* 1. 73**<br>**Juno asks the wind-god Aiolus to shatter the Trojan ship. In return she promisses him that he shall marry the nymph Deiopeia.** |
| 46<br>sp | *Momentum et pignus amoris.*<br>”a memorial and a pledge of love.” | *Aen.* 5. 538<br>About a bowl that Aeneas gives to Acestes because Acestes has won some festive games with the help of gods. The bowl was once a gift from Cisseus of Thrace to Anchises.<br>Or *Aen.* 5. 572<br>About a horse on which Iulus rides. The horse had been given to him by Dido as a memorial of her and a pledge of love. |
| **47** | ***Incipe si qua animo virtus, et consere dextram.***[488]<br>**“Begin, if there is any courage in our heart, and come to close quarters.”** | ***Aen.* 9. 741**<br>**Turnus to his enemy Pandarus.** |

[487] The same quotation is used by the bride when she asks the groom for one night’s respite in CN 95.

[488] Rosenblum 1961 suggests *Aen.* 11. 741 (*haec effatus equum in medios moriturus et ipse*) as source for this line, but this is evidently not correct.

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| 48<br>fp | *Occultum inspires ignem*<br>”You may breathe [into her?] a hidden fire” | *Aen.* 1. 688<br>Venus to Cupid asking him to take Iulus’ place at Dido’s feast for Aeneas and make Dido fall in love with Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22, 25–26, 27–28, 44 |
| **48<br>sp –<br>49** | ***Paribusque regamus<br>auspiciis: Liceat Frido servire marito,***[489]<br>**”Let us rule with equal sovereignty;<br>Let her serve [her] husband Fridus,”** | ***Aen.* 4. 102–103**<br>**Juno to Venus saying they shall marry Dido with Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 45–46** |
| **50–<br>51** | ***Cui natam egregio genero dignisque hymenaeis***<br><br>***dat pater et pacem hanc aeterno foedero iungit.***[490]<br>**“a peerless son-in-law to whom the father gives [his] daughter in worthy nuptials and confirms this peace with an eternal compact.”** | ***Aen.* 11. 355–356**[491]<br>**Drances to Turnus challenging him to meet Aeneas in a fight man to man instead of risking his people in war.<br>Cf. v. 29–30** |
| **52 –<br>53<br>fp** | ***Paret Amor dictis carae genetricis et alas***<br><br>***exuit et gressu gaudens***<br>**”Cupid obeys his dear mother’s words, lays by his wings and joyous in [his] step”** | ***Aen.* 1. 689–690**<br>**Cupid obeys his mother as she asks him to take Iulus’ place at Dido’s party for Aeneas and make Dido fall in love with Aeneas.<br>Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22, 25–26, 27–28, 44, 48** |
| 53<br>sp | *Sic ore locutus:*<br>”Speaks so with [his] mouth:” | *Aen.* 1. 614[492]<br>Dido to Aeneas, wishing him welcome to Carthage.<br>Or *Aen.* 4. 276[493]<br>Mercury to Aeneas, encouraging him to leave Carthage and head for Italy.<br>Or *Aen.* 9. 319<br>About Nisus speaking to Euryalus. They must be bold, the moment to kill the enemy has come.<br>Or *Geo.* 4. 444[494] Proteus to Aristaeus asking him why he has come. |

[489] *Aen*. *Phrygio,* “Phrygian”.
[490] *Aen*. *quin,* “from”; *des,* “you shall give”; fermes, “you shall confirm”.
[491] The second part of *Aen.* 11. 355 (*dignisque hymenaeis*) is used about the wedding in CN 12 too.

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| 54<br>fp | *Mecum erit iste labor;*<br>”That task shall be with me;” | *Aen.* 4. 115<br>Juno to Venus saying they shall marry Dido with Aeneas. She also promises that she will convince her husband Jupiter about her idea.<br>Cf. v. 45–46, 48–49 |
| 54<br>sp | *Si quid mea numina possunt,*[495] [496]<br>”if my divine powers can accomplish anything,” | *Aen.* 4. 382[497]<br>Dido curses Aeneas when he tells her that he must leave her.<br>Or *Aen.* 9. 446[498]<br>The poet wishes that his songs will give eternal fame to Nisus and Euryalus. |
| **55** | ***Cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet***<br>**”when she/ he embraces him/ her and imprints sweet kisses”** | ***Aen.* 1. 687**<br>**Venus to Cupid asking him to take Iulus’ place at Dido’s party for Aeneas and make Dido fall in love with Aeneas.**<br>**Cf. v. 12, 17, 18–19, 22, 25–26, 27–28, 44, 48, 52–53** |
| **56** | ***Inmiscentque manus manibus pugnamque lacessunt,***<br>**”and they battle hand-to-hand and provoke the fray,”** | ***Aen.* 5. 429**<br>**About the Trojan Dares and the Sicilian Entellus fighting in festive games.**<br>**Cf. v. 10, 22, 30, 48** |
| 57<br>fp | *Nusquam abero,*<br>”I shall never be away,” | *Aen.* 2. 620<br>Aeneas tells about how his mother Venus asked him to leave the burning Troy and promised to always be with him. |

[492] *Aen*. 1. 614 *et sic ore locuta est.* This alternative is mentioned only by Happ 1986.
[493] *Aen*. 4. 276 *Cyllenius ore locutus.* This alternative is mentioned only by Happ 1986.
[494] *Geo*. 4. 444 *tandem ore locutus.* This alternative is mentioned only by Happ 1986.
[495] *Aen*. 4. 382 *pia,* “righteous”.
[496] *Aen*. 9. 446 *carmina,* “verses”.
[497] The second part of this line (*si quid pia numina possunt*) is used by the guests wishing the couple good luck. They do so in the wedding song, which they sing at the threshold of the wedding chamber in CN 77.
[498] The first part of this line (*fortunati ambo*) is used by the guests wishing the couple good luck in the wedding song, which they sing at the threshold of the wedding chamber in CN 77.

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| 57<br>sp | *Solitam flammam*<br>”the wonted flame” | *Aen.* 8. 389[499]<br>Vulcanus feels the wonted fires of passion as Venus embraces him and asks him to make veapons to the Trojans. |
| 57<br>tp | *(datur hora quieti)*<br>”(the hour is given to rest)” | *Aen.* 5. 844<br>Somnus, the god of sleep, is disguised and tries to convince Palinurus, the first mate on the ship, to take some rest. |
| 58<br>fp | *Desuper infundam &et,&*<br>”I will pour down from above &and,&” | *Aen.* 4. 122<br>Juno to Venus saying they shall marry Dido with Aeneas. She now reveals her plans about the thunderstorm and the cave.<br>Cf. v. 45–46, 48–49, 54 |
| 58<br>sp | *&et,& tua si mihi certa voluntas,*<br>”&and,& if your will is sure to me,” | *Aen.* 4. 125<br>Juno to Venus saying they shall marry Dido with Aeneas. She now reveals her plans about the thunderstorm and the cave.<br>Cf. v. 45–46, 48–49, 54, 58 fp<br>Or *Aen.* 7. 548[500]<br>The Fury Allecto to Juno proposing they shall make the Italian wars even more devastating. |
| **59** | ***Omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.***[501]<br>**”I have foreseen everything and gone over it with myself in [my] mind.”** | ***Aen.* 6. 105**<br>**Aeneas to the Cumaean Sibyl asking her to let him visit his father in Hades.** |

[499] The quotation used in EF is found in the middle of the line in the *Aeneid.* The first part of this line (*accepit solitam flammam*) is used about the groom in CN 86.

[500] This line does not contain the word *et.* This, as well as the origin of the previous quotation and the fact that the alternative line (*Aen.* 4. 125) comes from a passage in the *Aeneid* that dominates the cento, makes the line an unlikely source for the quotation.

[501] Happ 1986 leaves out *atque.*

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| 60<br>fp | *Sentiet!*[502]<br>”She will feel!” | *Aen.* 7. 434<br>Allecto is disguised as Calybe, a priestess of Juno, as she tries to convince Turnus to take up his weapons against Latinus. If Latinus does not give his daughter to be married with Turnus, he may feel what it’s like to fight against him! |
| 60<br>sp | *Atque animum praesenti pignore firmat.*<br>”And he comforts her heart with the present pledge.” | *Aen.* 3. 611<br>Anchises comforts the heart of the poor Greek Achemenides, who meets the Trojans on the shore of the Cyclopes’ island. |
| **61** | ***Illa autem (neque enim fuga iam super ulla pericli est)***[503]<br>**”She, however, (for now there is no longer any escape from peril)”** | ***Aen.* 8. 251**<br>**Evandrus tells Aeneas about how Hercules defeated the giant Cacus, who had stolen his cattle and hid it in his cave. Cacus spits out smoke in an effort to blinden Hercules as he enters the cave.** |
| **62** | ***Cogitur et supplex animos summittere amori.***<br>**”is also compelled to humbly submit her pride to Cupid.”**[504] | ***Aen.* 4. 414**<br>**The poet about the cruel power of love and Dido’s feelings as she sees the Trojans prepare their departure.** |
| **63** | ***Spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem;***<br>**“(Cupid) gave hope to her wavering mind and loosed the bonds of shame;”** | ***Aen.* 4. 55**[505]<br>**About Anna’s words to Dido. These words convince Dido to abandon her promise to her dead husband and let herself fall in love with Aeneas.** |
| 64<br>fp | *Illum turbat Amor.*[506]<br>”him does Cupid overwhelm.” | *Aen.* 12. 70[507]<br>About Turnus looking at Lavinia who cries and blushes as she hears her mother asking Turnus to fight hard against the Trojans. |

[502] *Aen*. *sentiat,* “may he feel!”.

[503] Aen. *ille*, “he”.

[504] For a discussion about the translation of this and the subsequent quotation, see Chapter 13.

[505] The last part of this line (*solvitque pudorem*) is used about the groom, who looses the bonds of shame in CN 100.

[506] Rosenblum 1961 and Happ 1986 print: *Spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem*. *Illum turbat amor;* Rosenblum translates “and she gave hope to her wavering mind and cast away her chastity. Love arouses the groom;” Cf. discussion in Chapter 13.

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| 64<br>sp | *Ramum, qui veste latebat*<br>”The bough, which lay hidden under the robe,” | *Aen.* 6. 406[508]<br>The Sibyl shows Charon the golden bough in order to make him carry her and Aeneas over Styx to Hades. |
| 65<br>fp | *Eripit a femine et*<br>”he snatches from his tigh and” | *Aen.* 10. 788[509]<br>About Aeneas attacking the Tuscan prince Lausus. |
| 65<br>sp | *Flagranti fervidus infert.*[510]<br>”hot he inserts [it] into the blazing [bride].” | *Aen.* 9. 72<br>About Turnus, who decides to attack the Trojan fleet with a burning bough. |
| **66** | ***It cruor inque humeros cervix conlapsa recumbit.***<br>**”Blood flows and [his/ her] drooping neck sinks on [his/ her] shoulders.”** | ***Aen.* 9. 434**<br>**About Euryalus’ death.**<br>**Cf. 53, 54** |
| 67<br>fp | *His demum exactis*<br>”This at length performed” | *Aen.* 6. 637<br>About Aeneas who has performed his religious duties upon entering the Blissful Groves and Hades. |
| 67<br>sp | *Geminam dabit Ilia prolem,*<br>”Ilia will bear twins,” | *Aen.* 1. 274<br>Jupiter tells Venus about the future of her kin. Rhea Silvia will give birth to Romulus and Remus. |
| **68** | ***Laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes.***<br>**”happy in a progeny of gods, clasping a hundered grandchildren.”** | ***Aen.* 6. 786**<br>**Anchises tells Aeneas about the future of his kin. The godess of Rome will travel through the cities, happy after having given birth to gods and embracing hundereds of grand-children.** |

[507] The whole line (*illum turbat amor, figitque in virgine vultus*) is used about the groom when he looks at the bride in CN 55.

[508] The same quotation is used about the penis in CN 105 too. Diomedes lists this expression as *cacemphata*. Keil ed. 1961. See also Adams 1981.

[509] The whole line (*eripit a femore et trepidanti fervidus instat*) is used about the groom penetrating the bride in CN 109 too. (The variation between *femine* and *femore* in CN and EF is due to different textual traditions of the Virgilian works; cf. Green ed. 1991 *ad locum.*)

[510] *Aen*. *implet,* “he fills”.

# 12. Analysis of *Cento Nuptialis*

In this chapter, *Cento Nuptialis* will be analysed. The analysis is partly based on the previous analysis of the link between the cento and the original contexts of quotations used in the cento; cf. Chapter 11a. It also includes considerations which go beyond the cento's connection with its text of origin. The most important such considerations concern the literary genre to which the cento belongs (*wedding-related texts, epithalamium of occasion*) and the circumstances under which it was written (the literary competition with the emperor).[511] From a generic viewpoint, the aim of the poem is epideictic; from a competitive viewpoint, the aim is to win the contest in a way which does not unnecessarily offend the emperor; cf. Chapter 10a.[512]

## The double circumstances – the *Praefatio* part

### *The addressees of the* Praefatio

In the *Praefatio*, the author approaches the circumstances under which the cento was written. It becomes likely from line 4 onwards, and certain from line 7 onwards, that the *Praefatio* is directed to the groom and his father, emperor Valentinian I.[513] The poet asks them to accept the cento benignly;[514] he praises them for excellence in warfare, blooming age, perfect reverence of the gods and excellence over ancient men and heroes. This agrees well with the aims to please the emperor and to win the literary contest worthily.

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[511] Ausonius' prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis* lines 8–13: *iussum erat, quodque est potentissimum imperandi genus, rogabat qui iubere poterat. Imperator Valentinianus… nuptias quondam eiusmodi descripserat… experiri deinde volens quantum nostra contentione praecelleret, simile nos de eodem concinnare parecepit*. Cf. also Chapter 1b.

[512] Ausonius' prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis* lines 13–17: *quam scrupulosum hoc mihi fuerit intellege. neque enim anteferri volebam, neque posthaberi, cum aliorum iudicio detegenda esset adulatio inepta, si cederem, insolentia, si ut aemulus eminerem. suscepi igitur similis recusanti feliciterque et obnoxius gratiam tenui nec victo offendi*, "Just picture how delicate a task this was for me! I did not wish to leave him nowhere, nor yet to be left behind myself, since my foolish flattery was bound to be patent to the eyes of other critics as well, if I gave way, or my presumption, if I rivalled and surpassed him."

[513] The genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion* suggest that the spouses are praised together as well as individually – both of which may well be done in the preface. Reverence of the gods, nautical and military skills are commonplaces in the *encomia* of grooms. Based on these circumstances, the Model Reader of *Cento Nuptialis* is most likely to initially assume that the *Praefatio* is directed to the spouses, and that lines 4–6 are specifically directed to the groom. In line 7, these assumptions are thoroughly overthrown. From the words *tuque puerque tuus* onwards, it becomes indisputable that the preface as a whole is directed not to the spouses, but to the groom and his father. It also becomes indisputable that lines 4–6 are directed not to the groom, but to his father. This sudden revelation gives an extra spark of wit to the poem. It is certainly an unexpected twist and it forces the Model Reader to go back in his or her memory and reinterpret the previous lines of the poem. This reinterpretation is done in the light of the new awareness of the true identity of the protagonists of the *Praefatio*. Later in this analysis, it will become clear that similar reinterpretations must be made of many passages in *Cento Nuptialis,* and that this cento gains much of its wit from such reinterpretation.

[514] v. 1: *Accipite haec animis laetasque advertite mentes,*
vv. 10–11: *Non iniussa cano. Sua cuique exorsa laborem;*
*fortunamque ferent. Mihi iussa capessere fas est*.

However, up to line 4 or 7, it remains unclear who are the addressees of the *Praefatio.*[515] In comparision with other extant epithalamia, it is not unique for *Cento Nuptialis* that the central characters of the *Praefatio* are the groom and the father of one of the spouses; cf. below. Nonetheless, prefaces of late antique epithalamia generally aim at the spouses. Therefore, the Model Reader of *Cento Nuptialis* is likely to assume initially that the spouses are the addressees of the *Praefatio*. The initial uncertainty of the identity of the addressees contributes to a general ambiguity and a multiplicity of possible interpretations of the *Praefatio* and of its role in the cento as a whole. [516]

## *The* Praefatio *and the epithalamic tradition*

The *Praefatio* of *Cento Nuptialis* in many parts resembles the *Praefatio* of Claud. *carm. min.* 25.[517] In both these poems, the addressees of the prefaces are not the spouses themselves, but the groom and the father of one of the spouses.[518] Also the social circumstances of the authors and of the recipients of the poems are similar.[519] Moreover, Ausonius was explicitly ordered to write (*non iniussa cano*), while Claudian says that he was unable to deny the groom's father-in law a poem (*Carmina ... negare ... nec potui socero*). Further support for the connection between *Cento Nuptialis* and the epithalamic tradition can be found in contemporary rhetorical prescriptions for wedding speeches. In his prescriptions for the wedding speech, Menander defines two types of *proemia*, one more formal, one relaxed or non-oratorical.[520] The formal *proemium* has a concentrated character and possesses features of 'real oratory'. It is elaborate. If bride and groom are people of distinction, their personalities should be treated at length; if

[515] This observation will be further developed under the heading "Thematic unity within the cento – as suggested by the general disposition."

[516] vv. 2–9: *ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis,*
*ambo florentes, genus insuperabile bello:*
*Tuque prior (nam non te maioribus ire per altum*
*Auspiciis manifesta fides),quo iustior alter*
*Nec pietate fuit nec bello maior et armis,*
*Tuque puerque tuus, magnae spes altera Romae,*
*Flos veterum virtusque virum, mea maxima cura,*
*Nomine avum referens, animo manibusque parentem.*

[517] Claud. *carm. min.* 25 *Praefatio*:
*Carmina per thalamum quamvis festina negare*
*Nec volui genero nec potui socero.*
*Hic socius, dux ille mihi, nostrique per aulam*
*Ordinis hic consors emicat ille prior.*
*Hunc mihi coniungit studiis communibus aetas;*
*Illum praeponit vel senium vel honos.*
*Carmen amor generi, soceri reverential poscit.*
*Officio vatis, militis obsequio.*

[518] In *Cento Nuptialis*, the protagonists are the groom and his father, in Claud. *carm.* 25, the protagonists are the groom and his father-in-law.

[519] Author and groom have a close relationship in both Ausonius' and Claudian's cases; both authors write panegyric poems for friends with a superior social background; both take the opportunity to praise these families abundantly in the prefaces of their poems, and both were to some extent obliged to write their poems.

[520] Men. Rh. 2. 399. 20 – 2. 400. 28. Menander says that this stylistic division should be applied to the whole speech, but gives specific instructions for each type only when discussing the *proemia.*

bride and groom are not people of distinction, the orator shall explain the reason why he has come forward to speak.[521]

The *Praefatio* of *Cento Nuptialis* (as well as of *carm. min.* 25) coheres for the most part with the formal kind of *Proemium* as defined by Menander. Nonetheless, there are two remarkable divergences from Menander's rhetorical prescriptions in the *Praefatio* of *Cento Nuptialis*: (1) There is no *encomium* of the bride or her family. In comparison with prefaces of other wedding poems, however, this is not unique for *Cento Nuptialis;* the Model Reader may assume that the bride and her family will be praised later in the poem. (2) At the very end of the *Praefatio,* Ausonius mentions the reason why he has come forward to speak, although bride and groom were people of distinction. The latter observation will be further developed in the following.

## *The literary competition*

A closer examination of the Praefatio reveals several hints about the literary competition. Besides the meaning as it appears on the surface of the text, this closer examination includes also aspects which can be found beneath the surface of the texts, i.e. possible associations with the text of origin.

In the first lines of the *Praefatio*, the author asks the recipients of the poem to accept it benignly:

> v. 1–3: *Accipite haec animis laetasque advertite mentes,*
> *ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis,*
> *ambo florentes, genus insuperabile bello:*
>
> "Take these words to heart and pay cheerful attention,
> both of you for courage, both for skilled arms renowned,
> both in the bloom of life, a breed invincible in war:"

The author hints at the literary contest already in these first lines of the *Praefatio.* If one goes beneath the surface of the text, it is possible to associate with the literary contest between Ausonius and the emperor already in the very first line. The reason for this is the original context of the first line; originally the first line comes from a speech held by Aeneas to initiate a contest. [522] This contest was between athletes, and I will come back to another possible implication of this below.[523] At this stage of interpretation, the relevant similarity between the context in the text of origin and in the cento is the 'initiation of contests.' Also the first part of line 3 comes from a passage describing a contest, this time the singing match between Corydon and Thyrsis in the 7th *Eclogue*.[524] In this case, the analogy between the contexts in the Virgilian text and in the cento is more striking than the analogy between the first line in the cento and the original context of that line: Corydon and Thyrsis were involved in a singing match; Ausonius and the emperor are involved in this same kind of competition. The close thematic

[521] Possible reasons mentioned by Menander are: "I am a relative…", "I was invited to speak…", "I am returning a service…", "I am indulging friendship…", "When rulers and cities and people gathered together and chose to join the feast, it was absurd to stay silent…" Cf. Cic. *Part. Or.* 72.

[522] *Aen.* 5. 304.

[523] Cf. the following section of the analysis and the section 'Unity in the cento –as suggested by the general disposition.'

[524] *Ecl.* 7. 4.

parallel between the 7th *Eclogue* and the cento is indisputable; this is also most probably a deliberate allusion to the text of origin.

At the very end of the *Praefatio,* Ausonius mentions the reason why he has come forward to speak. The reason Ausonius puts forth is that he was ordered to write; cf. above. This would certainly have been insulting, if the poem had been written only for the occasion of the marriage. It can be concluded that Ausonius undoubtedly refers to the literary competition with the emperor at the end of the *Praefatio*.[525]

Based on the previous discussions, it can be argued that Ausonius aims at the literary competition both at the very beginning and at the very end of the *Praefatio.* If so, the whole *Praefatio* is hemmed in by hints at the literary competition. To begin with, the hints are subtle and found only beneath the surface of the text; at the end, the hints are less subtle and rise towards the surface of the text (although they never fully emerge). If the initial hints at the contest are accepted, there is a very neat structure of the *Praefatio.* This neat structure of the *Praefatio* supports the idea that the *Praefatio*, and with it the whole cento, primarily aims at the literary competition.

## *Further possibilities – the role of the* Praefatio *in the cento as a whole*

Does the suggested neat structure of the *Praefatio,* with hints pointing in the same direction at the beginning and at the end, have a possible parallel in the structure of *Cento Nuptialis* as a whole? I believe that it is possible to see such a parallel. As briefly mentioned above, the competition in the original context of the first line of the cento is a competition between athletes; this agrees well with how the coitus is described at the end of *Cento Nuptialis.* This suggestion will be further developed later in the analysis, in the section 'Unity within the cento – as suggested by the general disposition.' I further believe that the double-edged nature of the *Praefatio,* and particularly of its first line(s), reflects the double-edged nature of *Cento Nuptialis* as a whole. Because of its similarities with the double-edged *Cento Nuptialis,* the interpretation of the *Praefatio* is particularly crucial for the general understanding of the cento.

# The first seven sections – general examination

## Cena Nuptialis *(vv. 12–32)*

The second section of *Cento Nuptialis* treats the wedding feast and is entitled *Cena Nuptialis.* In *Cena Nuptialis,* the arrival of guests is described first;[526] thereafter follows the description of the sumptuous meal;[527] after the meal, wine is served and there is

[525] So also McGill 2005 p. 95. Cf. also prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis.*

[526] vv. 12–12: *Exspectata dies aderat dignisque hymenaeis*
*matres atque viri iuvenes ante ora parentum*
*conveniunt stratoque super discumbitur ostro*.

[527] vv. 14–21: *Dant famuli manibus lymphas onerantque canistris*
*dona laboratae Cereris. Pinguisque ferinae*
*viscera tosta ferunt. Series longissima rerum:*
*Alituum pecudumque genus capraeque sequaces*
*non absunt illic neque oves haedique petulci*
*et genus aequoreum, dammaeque cervique fugaces.*
*Ante oculos interque manus sunt mitia poma*.

music and singing;[528] eventually, the guests joyously leave the table and celebrate with clamour throughout the spacious palace.[529]

The detailed description of the food served at the dinner distinguishes this part of the poem from descriptions of wedding feasts in other epithalamia. The description of the lavish meal is congruent with the panegyric scope of the poem, since it reveals the luxury that the family can afford. Animals living in the air, on land and in sea, as well as bread and apples, are served. Menander recommends that stories of creatures that swim, stories of creatures of the land and of creatures that fly should be incorporated in the second part of the wedding speech. The main purpose with this part of the speech, however, is not to praise the spouses and their families, but to praise the god of marriage and to approve of marriage as a good thing.[530] Despite the different purposes of the second section of the wedding speech as defined by Menander and the second section of the cento, there are indisputable superficial similarities, namely portraits of creatures that swim, that live in the air and that fly. Menander's recommendations suggest that such portraits were commonplaces in contemporary wedding speeches. Their new application in the second part of the cento may appeal as particularly witty to the cento's Model Reader. This agrees with the poem's aim to entertain the audience. It may thus be argued that these descriptions not only fill the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion,* but that they also agree with the author's ambition to display his witty capacity in the competition with the emperor. It may be concluded that these descriptions agree with both the functions of the poem.

As would be expected, many quotations in *Cena Nuptialis* come from passages describing meals or festivities in the *Aeneid.*[531] It is no less unexpected to find that among such quotations one third (4 quotations) comes from the description of Dido's party for Aeneas. This is probably the most well-known description of a meal in the *Aeneid;* moreover, it is generically linked with the epithalamium; cf. Chapter 8c. It is much more surprising to find that just as many quotations come from the far less well-known description of how the allied Evander and Aeneas celebrate together for the first time. This description is found in the 8th book of the *Aeneid.* It seems that this book was less studied than the 1st, 4th and 6th book also in antiquity; cf. Chapter 3a. This would imply that the learned empirical readers of the time were more likely than the average reader to identify a possible association with Aeneas' and Evander's celebration. The initial reason for Aeneas' and Evander's celebration was to commemorate how Hercules killed Cacus, a monster half human half beast, who dwelled in a cave

[528] vv. 22–27: *Postquam exempta fames et amor compressus edendi,*
*crateras magnos statuunt Bacchumque ministrant.*
*Sacra canunt, plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.*
*Nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos*
*obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum.*
*At parte ex alia biforem dat tibia cantum*.

[529] vv. 28–32: *Omnibus una quies operum cunctique relictis*
*consurgunt mensis, per limina laeta frequentes*
*discurrunt variantque vices, populusque patresque,*
*matronae, pueri, vocemque per ampla volutant*
*atria; dependent lynchi laquearibus aureis*.

[530] Men. Rh. 2. 400. 29 – 2. 402. 20. It is noteworthy that CN 20fp, *et genus aequorum* (*Geo.* 3. 243), comes from a Virgilian passage praising Love that rules all over the world. It should also be noticed that Sappho compares the bride to an apple (Sappho frg. 105), and this recommendation is found also in Menander (Men. Rh. about the *encomium* of bride and bridegroom*,* Men. Rh. 2. 403. 26 – 2. 404. 14).

[531] 12 of 31 quotations come from such passages: CN 12fp; 14–15fp; 15sp–16fp; 16sp; 22; 23fp; 23sp; 24fp; 24sp–26; 28sp–29fp; 29sp; 31sp–32.

from which he vexed and killed Evander's people. The possible implications of this association will be discussed later in the analysis; cf. 'The first seven sections re-considered in the light of the *Imminutio.'*

## *The descriptions of bride and groom*

After *Cena Nuptialis* follow the sections *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* and *Descriptio egredientis sponsi.* These sections thematically resemble the praising of bride and groom which is most often found in a central dialogue between Venus and Cupid in late antique *Epithalamia of occasion.* But Venus and Cupid do not participate in *Cento Nuptialis*, and the sections *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* and *Descriptio egredientis sponsi* are purely descriptive.

### ***Descriptio egredientis sponsae*** **(vv. 33–45)**

The third section of *Cento Nuptialis* is entitled *Descriptio egredientis sponsae*. It describes the bride as she appears at the wedding party. The bride is Venus' protégée, and she is ripe for husband and marriage.[532] Her appearance is that of a maiden; she blushes.[533] She is described as looking around her with intensity; she inflames with her gaze.[534] The crowd admires her; her foot is white and her hair is spread to the winds.[535] She wears Helen's garb which is figured with inwoven gold, and her strength and beauty when she joyously approaches and sits down with her parents-in-law on a throne are likened to Venus' as she appears in front of the other gods.[536]

The bride's young age and her ripeness for husband and marriage are epithalamic commonplaces. The bride further resembles Venus, as she is traditionally depicted in the visual arts. The association with Venus too is commonplace in late antique *epithalamia of occasion*. In such poems, comparisons with other women or deities are also usual. In *Descriptio egredientis sponsae*, the only woman to whom the bride is explicitly linked is Helen; the bride wears Helen's garb. Helen is the emblematic figure above others for the beautiful adulteress in Roman literature.[537] Also in Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2, the bride is linked with Helen in a comparison between the spouses and Helen and Paris.[538] In Statius' poem, this comparison does not only fill the purpose of glorifying the bride's beauty, but is also part of a consistent doubt of her spousal fidelity, a doubt which is based on this and other associations throughout the poem.[539] In *Cento Nuptialis,* no doubts are cast upon the bride's spousal fidelity. Nonetheless, the fact that

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[532] vv. 33–34: … *Veneris iustissima cura,*
*iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis*,
[533] vv. 35–36: *Virginis os habitumque gerens, cui plurimus ignem*
*Subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit*
[534] vv. 37: *Intentos volvens oculos, uritque videndo*.
[535] vv. 38–40: *Illam omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus*
*Turbaque miratur matrum,vestigia primi*
*alba pedis, dederatque comam diffundere ventis*,
[536] vv. 41–45: *Fert picturatas auri subtemine vestes,*
*ornatus Argivae Helenae <qualisque videri>*
*caelicolis et quanta solet Venus aurea contra*
*talis erat species, talem se laeta ferebat*
*ad soceros solioque alte subnixa resedit*.
[537] Cf. Chapter 8c. Th. *Id.* 18. See also Ov. *epist.* 16. 17; Hor. *epod.* 17. 42, *sat.* 1. 3. 107; Sen. *Tro.*
[538] Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 43–44.
[539] Roberts 1989 p. 325.

Helen is the only woman with whom the bride is explicitly associated casts the picture of the bride in *Cento Nuptialis*, too, in an ambiguous mode.

The description of the bride suggests that she is excited. She blushes, looks around her with intensity and inflames with her gaze; she is magnificent and joyous. Why is the bride excited? The genre-expectations make the Model Reader assume that she is young and sexually inexperienced; as a consequence of this, it may be assumed that she is excited because she is frightened by the new situation. Such an interpretation would in a complimentary way agree with the epithalamic commonplace that the bride is shy. The description of the bride at this point of the cento may, however, also suggest that she is sexually attracted to her husband. Her blushing, her intense gaze and incinerating stare, as well as her magnificent joy, may well be signs of sexual attraction; incinerating staring and magnificent joy at any rate suggest potency rather than shyness. The portrait in *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* could thus be the portrait of a fervent young woman. Would a portrait of a fervent bride be complimentary in a late antique conjugal context?

In order to answer this question, we turn first to ancient medical considerations, then to other literature. When ancient medical considerations as regards fertility are considered, we learn that a woman's blushing may reveal that she burns with such strong desire that she can destroy a man's seed.[540] The bride's sudden blushing may thus pose a threat against the groom and his sexual potency. It may also be understood as a bad sign as regards her ability to become pregnant; if so, the girl is not apt for marriage, since an important aim of the ancient marriage is to produce children. It should also be remembered that 'brides' in *anti-epithalamia* are portrayed as fervent. Fierce ardour is a chief characteristic of anti-epithalamic 'brides;' passionate women like Dido or Medea could certainly not be considered apt brides; cf. Chapters 8c and 9. These considerations lead to the conclusion that a portrait of a passionate bride in a late antique conjugal context must be understood as non-complimentary.

A non-complimentary portrait of the bride is of course highly remarkable in an *epithalamium of occasion.* Nonetheless, the portrait given of her in this section of the cento *may well* suggest that the bride is a fervent young woman who is sexually attracted to her groom. However, she *may also* be excited because she is frightened by the situation. Both interpretations are *possible.* Both can be seen as *complimentary;* it is certainly possible that she is simultaneously shy and sexually attracted. One of the interpretations (the picture of the inexperienced bride) agrees more with the genre-expectations; the other interpretation (the picture of the fervent bride) may agree more with the intention to amuse the emperor.[541] The overall picture of the bride given in this section is *ambiguous.*

The absence of an *encomium* of the bride's family is most remarkable; such an *encomium* is commonplace both in wedding speeches and in late antique *epithalamia of occasion.* Groom and bride had socially equal backgrounds; this makes the absence of an *encomium* of the bride's family particularly noteworthy. The lack of an *encomium* of her family is not congruent with the *epithalamium of occasion.* I will come back to this

[540] Cf. Rousselle 1988 p. 21 on ancient medical considerations as regards fertility.

[541] It may of course be doubted that the emperor was amused by the suggestion that his daughter-in-law might be a non-apt bride; cf. the preceding discussion about her as fervent. Nonetheless, the unexpected incongruity with the genre-expectations on the bride as shy and sexually inexperienced (*epithalamium of occasion*) may be perceived as witty; cf. discussion about the 'incongruity theory' of humour and laughter as presented in the analysis of the *Imminutio* part. Cf. also 'The first seven sections reconsidered in the light of the *Imminutio'*.

observation in the section 'The first seven sections reconsidered in the light of the *Imminutio:* The picture of the bride – *Descriptio egredientis sponsae.'*

Through the first quotation in *Descriptio egredientis sponsae,* the bride is linked with Dido as she appears at the hunt.[542] The quotation comes from one of the passages in the *Aeneid* that have been identified as *wedding-related* in the preceding part of this work; cf. Chapter 8c. Possibly, the first line of *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* also suggests the bride's supposed attitude towards the wedding as similar to Dido's attitude towards her relationship with Aeneas.

### *Descriptio egredientis sponsi* (vv. 46–56)

In the section *Descriptio egredientis sponsi,* the groom is described and praised. His youth and his beauty are particularly emphasised. Like the bride, he too is beautifully dressed and his beauty too is likened to that of a mythic figure, namely Lucifer, the morning star. We recognise these commonplaces from earlier wedding poetry.[543] When the groom sees his bride, he is overwhelmed with love and he rushes forth to kiss her. He also takes over the traditional role of *Venus Pronuba* when he grasps her right hand in his:[544]

> vv. 55–56: *Illum turbat amor figitque in virgine vultus:*
> *Oscula libavit dextramque amplexus inhaesit.*
>
> "Him does love overwhelm, and on the maid he fixes his gaze: He kissed her lips and grasping her right hand he holds it close."

*Dextrarum iunctio* was part of the Roman wedding ceremony, and it symbolized the union of bride and groom.[545] This is a typically Roman element in Ausonius' poem. In other epithalamia, *Venus Pronuba* unites the right hands of bride and groom; this becomes commonplace in *epithalamia of occasion* from Claudian onwards. It is unique for *Cento Nuptialis* that the groom himself acts as *Pronuba.*

On the surface of the text, there is a striking parallelism in the descriptions of groom and bride. The number of verses used for the descriptions is roughly the same (11/13) and also the commonplaces from the genre are the same. In this part of the poem, there is no *encomium* of the groom's family, but his family (his father in particular) is abundantly praised in the *Praefatio* part.[546]

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[542] CN 33fp, *Aen.* 4. 136.

[543] Cf. Sappho and Catullus.

[544] vv. 46–56: *at parte ex alia foribus sese intulit altis*
*ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa,*
*pictus acu chlamydem auratam, quam plurima circum*
*purpura maenandro duplica Meliboea cucurrit,*
*et tunicam, molli mater quam neverat auro:*
*os humerosque deo similis lumenque iuventae*
*quails, ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda*
*extulit os sacrum caelo, sic ora ferebat*
*sic oculos, cursuque amens ad limina tendit.*
*Illum turbat amor figitque in virgine vultus:*
*Oscula libavit dextramque amplexus inhaesit.*

[545] Grimal 1967 p. 56.

[546] If the poet had praised the groom's family at this moment, but omitted the *encomium* of the bride's family in the description of the bride, he would almost certainly have been criticized for *adulatio inepta* towards the emperor and he would also have offended the bride's family in an insensitive and unnecessary way.

The description of the groom is much more straightforward than the description of the bride. The section agrees altogether well with the genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion.* Of the 16 quotations used to describe the groom in *Descriptio egredientis sponsi,* 12 come from passages describing Aeneas or his allied in the *Aeneid.* This further underlines the heroic picture of the groom, a picture which is thus found both on and beneath the surface of the text. The heroic portrait of the groom is congruent with the genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion.* The first quotation in this part of the poem comes from a battle scene in the *Aeneid.* Possibly this quotation forecasts the battle-like events described in the *Imminutio* part. Or possibly, it suggests the groom's supposed attitude to the wedding.

**The descriptions of bride and groom – summary**

Both bride and groom are described as young and beautiful; they are also both likened to mythic figures. This agrees well both with the genre-expectations and with the epithalamic scope of the *epithalamium of occasion.*

The portrait of the groom is almost altogether congruent with the genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion.* The groom is portrayed as a hero; he is young, beautiful and independent. The only unexpected feature of the groom's portrait is that he acts as *Pronuba* when he grasps the bride's hand on his own initiative. This can however be explained as a consequence of Venus' absence in the poem. Basically, the groom's initiative is also congruent with the complimentary picture of a brave and heroic young man.

Unlike the portrait of the groom, the portrait of the bride is not altogether congruent with the genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion*. Nor is it altogether complimentary. Among mortal women, the bride is explicitly linked only with Helen. Helen is the emblematic figure of the beautiful adulteress in Roman literature; this makes the sole association with her ambiguous from an epideictic viewpoint. The excitement of the bride is also ambiguous. The bride's blushing, intense gaze, incinerating staring and magnificent joy may well indicate sexual attraction. The portrait of a passionate young woman is threatening in an antique literary context; cf. Dido, Medea *et al.* According to ancient medical texts, passionate women also pose a threat against a man's seed, thus impeding pregnancy and childbirth. In a late antique conjugal context, the portrait of a fervent bride must therefore be understood as non-complimentary. Remarkable is also the absence of an *encomium* of the bride's family.

## Oblatio munerum *(vv. 57–66)*

The precious gifts described in the *Oblatio munerum* part of the poem show that the spouses come from socially prestigious, wealthy families. This suits well the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion*. The presentation of the gifts is also in accordance with this prestige: talents of gold and ivory, a throne, a veil embroidered with saffron acanthus, massive silver for tables, a string of pearls, a double crown, a slave girl with twin children at her breast, four male and four female slaves with golden rings around their necks.[547]

[547] vv. 57–66: *Incedunt pueri pariterque ante ora parentum*
*dona ferunt, pallam signis auroque rigentem*
*munera portantes, aurique talenta*
*et sellam et pictum croceo velamen acantho,*

The double crown can be understood as a symbol for the union between the eastern and the western parts of the empire, which was a result of the wedding between Gratian and Constantia.[548] There are however also other possible connotations. Jason gave a similar crown to Medea in Val. Fl. *Arg.* 8. 217–317; cf. Chapter 8c. Considering the unhappy outcome of this liaison, the reference to a double crown in *Cento Nuptialis* may well forebode an unhappy outcome of this marriage too. The original context of the quotation links the double crown given to the bride with the double crown given to Dido by Aeneas.[549] Whether deliberately provoked or not, this association too casts considerable doubts on the coming bliss of the present wedding. Although the description of the gifts gives a general impression of luxury which suits the epideictic scope of the *epithalamium of occasion,* there is thus a dubious association in this section of the cento too. This association suggests the *possibility* of an unhappy outcome of events.

It is not surprising to find that about half of the quotations used in the *Oblatio munerum* part of the poem come from passages in the *Aeneid* where gifts are described.[550] The section is hemmed in by quotations coming from descriptions of young men participating in a celebration of Aeneas' and Achestes' forefathers in the *Aeneid*. Perhaps the association with a celebration of forefathers underlines the importance of a wedding for the families involved.

## Epithalamium utrique *(vv. 67–79)*

The *Epithalamium utrique* tells how matrons bring the couple to the bedroom and how their peers sing an epithalamium at the threshold to celebrate the occasion.[551] Apart from the *Praefatio,* the peers' song is the first part of the poem which contains direct speech. Unlike in the *Praefatio,* the peers' song is directed to the spouses. The peers' song also has a quasi-dramatic character; the peers turn first to the bride, then to the groom and finally to both of them together. A song sung by the friends of bride and

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*ingens argentum mensis colloque monile*
*bacatum et duplicem gemmis auroque coronam.*
*Olli serva datur geminique sub ubere nati,*
*quattuor hic iuvenes, totidem innuptaeque puellae.*
*Omnibus in morem tonsa coma: pectore summo*
*flexilis obtorti per collum circulus auri*.

[548] The same interpretation is perhaps also valid as regards the twin children. Twins may also symbolise fertility; this interpretation would fit well with the wished-for outcome of the wedding. The birth of twins may also be regarded as a generally prosperous omen.

[549] *Aen*. 1. 655.

[550] 6 of 13 quotations: CN 58fp; 58sp; 59–60fp; 61sp–62; 63fp; 63sp;.

[551] vv. 67–79: *Tum studio effusae matres ad limina ducunt.*
*At chorus aequalis pueri innuptaeque puellae*
*versibus incomptis ludunt et carmina dicunt:*
*'O digno coniuncta viro, gratissima coniunx,*
*sis felix, primos Lucinae expertae labores,*
*et mater. Cape Maeonii carchesia Bacchi.*
*Sparge, marite, nuces, cinge haec altaria vitta,*
*flos veterum virtusque virum: Tibi ducitur uxor,*
*omnes ut tecum meritis pro talibus annos*
*exigat et pulchra faciat te prole parentem.*
*Fortunati ambo, si quid pia numina possunt;*
*vivite felices. Dixerunt "currite" fusis*
*"concordes stabili fatorum numine" Parcae.'*

groom was probably part of the ancient wedding ceremony; it can be traced in Catullus' wedding poems, and perhaps also in Sappho's; cf. Chapters 8a and 8b. Thematically, the song in *Cento Nuptialis* resembles the advice given by Venus to the couple at the end of many late antique *epithalamia of occasion.* Spousal love and wish for children are commonplaces in *epithalamia of occasion*; these themes occur in *Epithalamium utrique* too.[552]

In the *Epithalamium utrique,* almost half of the quotations come from the *Georgics* or the *Eclogues.*[553] This is more than in any other section of the cento. Possibly, the many quotations from the *Eclogues* in this section are motivated by the close relationship between bucolic poetry and early wedding poetry, such as the singing matches between boys and girls which the wedding song in the cento resembles. Particularly interesting as regards the generic interplay in the cento are the four quotations from the 8th Eclogue. In the 8th Eclogue, Damon complains that Nysa has spurned him in order to marry Mopsus. In his complaint, Damon incorporates many epithalamic elements, although his song as a whole is not an epithalamium. Some of these elements are brought back to the epithalamic genre in *Epithalamium utrique*.[554] Besides *Descriptio egredientis sponsi, Epithalaimum utrique* is the section in *Cento Nuptialis* which most straightforwardly agrees with the preceding epithalamic tradition.

Through associations with the original contexts of the quotations in the Virgilian texts, the bride in *Epithalamium utrique* is linked with Juno, Venus and various nymphs. The groom is linked with shepherds, the wind-god Aeolius and Aeneas' allies. Bride and groom together are linked with Aeneas and Turnus, Jupiter, Euryalus and Nisus, and Andromache and her people. The first quotation in *Epithalamium utrique* links the wedding with the final battle between Aeneas and Turnus.

## Ingressus in cubiculum *(vv. 80–100)*

The section *Ingressus in cubiculum* describes the couple's first moments in the bedroom. The events of the bedroom are sometimes suggested, but not openly portrayed in other *epithalamia of occasion. Ingressus in cubiculum* begins with a descriptive passage. The couple may finally talk with each other; they hold hands and lie down on the couch where Venus and Juno teach them hitherto unknown arts and wars.[555] Thereafter follows a dialogue between groom and bride. This dialogue is the only

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[552] A thread representing the fate of one person was spun on each of the Fates' spindles. Accordingly, the groom's fate was spun on one spindle, the bride's on another. Therefore, if the phrase *currite... concordes stabili fatorum numine* is understood as direct speech from the Fates to the spindles spinning the fates of groom and bride, the epithalamic commonplace of concord between the spouses is also clearly expressed in *Epithalamium utrique*:

vv. 78–79: *... Dixerunt 'currite' fusis*
*'concordes stabili fatorum numine' Parcae.*

"'Run in agreement with the fixed will of destiny,' the Fates said to their spindles." (Green ed. 1991 prints: *... Dixerunt 'currite' fusis/ concords stabili fatorum numine Parcae.* White 1919 translates: "The Parcae, one in heart with the unwavering power of destiny, cried to their spindles, 'Speed on!'")

[553] 11 quotations come from the *Aeneid,* 4 from the *Georgics,* 5 from the *Eclogues.*

[554] Cf. McGill 2005 p. 95 on CN 73–74.

[555] vv. 80–84: *Postquam est in thalami pendentia pumice tecta*
*perventum, licito tandem sermone fruuntur.*
*Congressi iungunt dextras stratisque reponunt.*
*At Cytherea novas artes et pronuba Juno*
*sollicitat suadetque ignota lacessere bella*.

passage in *Cento Nuptialis* which has a clearly dramatic character. The dramatic character of the dialogue has some general implications for the following analysis.

**The dramatic character of the dialogue – general implications**

The following analysis reveals a new potential of the cento-technique, a potential which is an immediate consequence of the dramatic character of the dialogue. The Model Reader may trace the interpretations that the spouses in the cento make of each other's intentions and of the present situation in the cento through the lens of the original context of quotations. This kind of reading deepens the Model Reader's understanding of the plot in the cento.

The following analysis of the dialogue between groom and bride is based upon these axioms:

> 1. A main task for the Model Reader of the cento dialogue is to understand the interpretations that the cento's protagonists make of the situation and of each other's intentions; this is an important task for the Model Reader of all kinds of dialogues.
>
> 2. However, unlike in other kinds of dialogues, the Model Reader of a cento dialogue must assume that the original contexts of the quotations influence not only his or her own interpretation of the situation in the cento, but also the interpretations that the cento's protagonists make of the situation and of each other's intentions.
>
> 3. This implies that the Model Reader's understanding of the cento's protagonists is coloured not only by the situation in the cento, but also by their supposed interpretations of the situation in the text of origin.
> The Model Reader of a cento dialogue must therefore interpret the cento dialogue from a meta-perspective; he or she must try to imagine how the cento's protagonists interpret each other's intentions not only as they appear on the surface of the text in the cento, but also as they appear when the cento's protagonists consider the original contexts of the quotations.
>
> 4. The Model Reader of a cento must assume that the cento's protagonists' interpretations of each other's intentions through the lens of the original contexts of quotations may influence their subsequent reactions. As a consequence of this, the original contexts of the quotations may indirectly influence the plot in the cento as a whole.
>
> 5. The cento's protagonists' interpretations may differ from the Model Reader's interpretations, both with regard to the situation in the cento and with regard to the situation in the text of origin. (One reason for this is that the Model Reader may be better informed about the present situation than the protagonists in the cento are; cf. dramatic irony.)

**Analysis**

In the dialogue, the groom speaks first. He gives his bride some indirect advice for the wedding night (i.e. to give in voluntarily) when he rhetorically asks her if she will struggle even against a pleasing love:

> vv. 87–90: *'O virgo, nova mi facies, gratissima coniunx,*
> *venisti tandem, mea sola et sera voluptas.*
> *O dulcis coniunx, non haec sine numine divum*
> *proveniunt. Placitone etiam pugnabis amori?*
>
> " 'O virgin, a new face to me, most beloved wife, you have come at last, my only joy and so long waited for. O sweet spouse, not without the will of gods this falls out well. Will you strive even against a pleasing love?'"

Advice for the wedding night is the last commonplace which is usually found in Venus' final speech to the spouses in late antique *Epithalamia of occasion*. In *Cento Nuptialis,* it is the groom who gives his wife advice for the wedding night. Thus, at this moment of the poem the groom again takes the role of *Venus Pronuba*, just as he did when he seized the bride's right hand on his own initiative in *Descriptio egredientis sponsi.*

The groom's plea to his bride also agrees with the advice given by Venus to the spouses in Claud. *carm. min.* 25.[556] In Claudian's poem, Venus asks the groom to persuade his bride verbally rather than use physical violence against her. Venus also asks the bride to surrender to her husband voluntarily. In the groom's first lines, he acts in agreement with the advice given in the epithalamic tradition; he tries to persuade his bride verbally. Unlike the groom, the bride's response to the groom's plea in *Cento Nuptialis* does not agree with Venus' advice in Claudian's poem. Instead of giving in voluntarily to her husband, the bride despairingly asks him to spare her for a single night.

On the surface of the text, the bride appears as a suppliant and helpless young woman when she asks for his compassion:

> vv. 93–98: ... *Funditque has ore loquelas:*
> *'Per te, per, qui te talem genuere, parentes,*
> *o formose puer, noctem non amplius unam*
> *hanc tu, oro, solare inopem et miserere precantis.*
> *Succidimus; non lingua valet, non corpore notae*
> *sufficiunt vires, nec vox aut verba sequuntur.'*
>
> "... and she pours these words from her mouth: 'By yourself, by the parents who begat you such, o beautiful boy, for but a single night I beg you comfort this helpless woman and take

[556] Claud. *carm. min.* 25. 130–136:
*'Vivite concordes et nostrum discite munus.*
*Oscula mille sonent; livescant bracchia nexu;*
*labra ligent animas. Neu tu virtute proterva*
*confidas, iuvenis: non est terrore domanda,*
*sed precibus placanda tibi. Concede marito*
*tu quoque neu Scythicas infensis unguibus iras*
*exercere velis: vinci patiare rogamus.*
'Live as one and fulfil all my rites. Give a thousand kisses, let arm be bruised with enfolding arm, and lips so join that soul may meet soul. And thou, husband, put not thy confidence in rude love-making; thy wife's love cannot be won by threats, but must be gained by entreaty. And do thou yield to thy husband nor seek to show anger; use not thy nails as weapons like the women of Scythia. I beg thee submit to conquest.'

> pity with her who prays. I am overcome; my tongue fails, and its wonted strength deserts my body, and neither speech nor words are at command.'"

Beneath the surface of the text, a largely different picture appears, pointing towards the *possibility* that the bride is not a suppliant and helpless young woman who asks for compassion; *it may be* that she is really hostile and that she tries to deceive her husband with the intention to avoid sexual intercourse. Such suggestions repeatedly appear when the original contexts of the quotations used in her speech are considered.

The original context of the quotation announcing the bride's speech (*funditque has ore loquelas*) links her speech with a speech held by Neptune in the *Aeneid* with the purpose of making Aeneas' helmsman Palinurus fall asleep.[557] Neptune acts with an evil end; he is disguised and he tries to mislead the wakeful Palinurus. It seems reasonable to assume that the cento's advanced Model Reader wonders whether the original context of the quotation suggests that the situations in the cento and in the *Aeneid* are similar. Perhaps the bride tries to mislead her husband? Perhaps she deceitfully tries to make him fall asleep?[558] The advanced Model Reader may also wonder if this is how the groom interprets the situation. The bride's speech as such begins with a quotation from a passage where an enemy begs Aeneas for mercy in the *Aeneid.* The cento's advanced Model Reader may ask himself or herself whether the bride is really the groom's enemy. The last quotation, two lines long, comes from a likening in the *Aeneid* between the dying Turnus and sleeping people struggling in vain, since neither body nor words are at command.[559] This long quotation firmly links the bride with Aeneas' chief enemy. As mentioned above, the groom is linked throughout the cento with Aeneas and his allies. The cento's Model Reader may assume that the link between the bride and Turnus at this point of the cento suggests that the bride is really the groom's chief enemy. Because such suggestions are so frequent beneath the surface of the text, the Model Reader may also assume that the idea that the bride is really his enemy is a plausible interpretation for the groom.

Furthermore, the suggestions made beneath the surface of the text in the cento should be compared to what Menander says in his prescriptions for the wedding speech, in connection with the exhortation to intercourse. Here, Menander mentions the possibility that the bride tries to deceive the groom with 'guileful chatter'; cf. Chapter 8d. Menander's warnings apparently involve pretexts against sexual intercourse. Thus, in the contemporary discussion about married life, the idea that the newlywed wife deceitfully tries to avoid sexual intercourse is in vigour. This contemporary belief increases the possibility that the cento's Model Reader accepts the suggestions made beneath the surface of the text. From these suggestions the Model Reader may conclude that the bride in *Ingressus in cubiculum* is probably not as honest as the surface of the text suggests; she probably presents her husband with alleged reasons against sexual intercourse.

Apparently, the groom considers the portrait of the bride which is repeatedly suggested beneath the surface of the text to be more truthful than her words as they appear on the surface of the text. He concludes that the bride tries to deceive him. His

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[557] v. 93sp=*Aen.* 5. 597.

[558] The sleepy Menelaus from Th. *Id.* 18 also comes to our mind; it is no good to sleep on the wedding night; cf. Chapter 8b.

[559] Turnus is much portrayed as an epic heroine in the last book of the *Aeneid,* where his gender is also portrayed in an ambiguous mode; cf. Reed 2008 pp. 44–72. The sensual descriptions of him and his effeminate qualities facilitate identification between Turnus and the bride at this moment of the cento.

answer to her prayers is very clear; her prayers do not at all convince him, since he considers them false:

v. 99: Ille autem, 'causas nequiquam nectis inanes,'

"But he: 'In vain do you weave idle excuses,'"

At this moment of the poem, the groom casts all hesitation aside and loses the bonds of shame.[560] This is where the violent events described in the *Imminutio* part of the poem take their beginning.

Almost all quotations used in the three speeches related above (vv. 87–90; 94–98; 99) come from passages of direct speech in the Virgilian works.[561] In both of the groom's speeches (vv. 87–90; 99), all the conversational partners in the original contexts of the quotations seem at first glance to be on friendly terms with each other. By contrast, in the bride's speech (vv. 94–98), half of the characters in the original contexts of the quotations are open enemies. From this it could be concluded that the bride is really hostile towards the groom; cf. above. At any rate, the groom apparently perceives falseness and suppressed hostility from the bride (v. 99); he justifies his subsequent actions with the bride's presumed attempts at deceit. The subsequent events and the groom's open aggression, as described in the following section of the cento, can therefore be seen as a result of the groom's interpretation of the bride's hidden intentions towards him.

It is likely that the Model Reader of the cento interprets the groom's subsequent actions as a result of his interpretation of the bride's hidden intentions. It is also likely that the Model Reader of the cento shares the groom's interpretation of the bride's true intentions. As a consequence of this, the Model Reader may conclude that it is basically the bride who is responsible for the groom's subsequent acts of violence against her. If the bride is really hostile towards the groom, as the contexts in the text of origin suggest, could anything in the groom's preceding actions or words motivate her mistrust? In order to answer this question, we must return to the groom's first speech.

The first words of the groom's first speech are: *o virgo, nova mi facies*.[562] In their original context, Aeneas uses these words to say to the Cumaean Sibyl that no new form of toil arises for him when he approaches Hades; he has foreseen it all in his mind.

> Aen. 6. 103–105: *... non ulla laborum,*
> ***o virgo, nova mi facies*** *inopinave surgit;*
> *omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.*
>
> "For me no form of toil arises, o maiden, strange or unlooked for; all this have I foreseen and debated in my mind."

[560] v. 100: *praecipitatque moras omnes solvitque pudorem*.

[561] The last quotation in the bride's speech is the only quotation not coming from direct speech. It describes Turnus' faintness just before being killed by Aeneas.

[562] A semantic change takes place when the phrase is reused in the cento. In the cento, the whole phrase is used as an apposition to describe the bride.

vv. 87–88: ***O virgo, nova mi facies,*** *gratissima coniunx,*
*venisti tandem, mea sola et sera voluptas*.

"O virgin, a new face to me, most beloved wife, you have come at last, my only joy and so long waited for." Lamacchia 1958: 4 describes similar semantic changes in Hosidius Geta *Medea*.

If some non-explicit part of the meaning in the original context of the quotation extends to the meaning in the cento, it would probably be that the groom has foreseen the coming events and secretly planned for them in his mind. It would almost certainly be that he considers the coming events as analogous with a descent to Hades.

When the cento's Model Reader tries to imagine how the bride may interpret the groom's words through the lens of the original context of the quotation, he or she is likely to assume that the bride finds the groom's words offensive; the bride's conclusion is probably that the groom considers love-making with her as analogous with a descent to Hades. Although a descent to Hades was not necessarily considered a bad thing in late antiquity,[563] it is not difficult for the Model Reader to imagine that the bride may find such a suggestion aggressive. When the bride takes the original context of the quotation into account, she is also likely to conclude that the groom, on his own and without any considerations about her feelings, has planned for the coitus. If this is how she (mis-?)interprets the groom's intentions, her subsequent hostility is comprehensible for the Model Reader of the cento.[564]

Doubtful associations can be found also in the description of the groom's first non-verbal actions:

> vv. 85–86: *Ille ubi complexu molli fovet, atque repente*
> *accepit solitam flammam lectumque iugalem*[565]
>
> "When he in his soft embrace warms her up, and suddenly has caught the apposite flame and the bridal bed:"

All quotations used at this moment of the cento come from passages in the *Aeneid* where humans or gods act under disguise or with the purpose of deceit.[566] Possibly the advanced Model Reader of the cento identifies these associations, too, as motivating factors lying behind the bride's scepticism, as revealed in her speech (cf. above) and in the following lines describing her non-verbal reactions to the groom's speech:

> vv. 91–93: *Talia dicentem iamdudum aversa tuetur*
> *cunctatur metu telumque instare tremescit*
> *spemque metumque inter...*
>
> "As thus he speaks, all the while she gazes on him askance and she hesitates through fear and dreads that the spear will persist. And between hope and fear..."

These lines portray the bride's scepticism and fear. As if to underline her fear, the original contexts of the quotations link her with similarly desperate characters in the

[563] E.g. Fulgentius.

[564] Moreover, the last quotation in the groom's first speech comes from Anna's speech held in order to persuade Dido to give in to her love for Aeneas in the *Aeneid* (v. 90 … *Placitone etiam pugnabis amori?*). Although Anna was Dido's sister and therefore ought to act for her best, her role in the *Aeneid* is characterised by a striking ambiguity. If the bride is suspicious, she may thus find doubtful associations as regards the groom's sincerity both at the beginning and at the end of his speech.

[565] Green (ed.) 1991 suspects (rightly, I believe) a *lacuna* between verses 86 and 87. Schenkl 1883 proposes *tum breviter super aspiciens sic fatur ad aurem* to fill the *lacuna* (*Aen*. 10. 251; *Aen.* 5. 547) (Green ed. 1991). Green proposes *desuper ostentat fatur devinctus amore* (*Aen.* 6. 678; *Aen.* 8. 394) or *observans oculis fatur devinctus amore* (*Aen.* 11. 726; *Aen.* 8. 394).

[566] 85fp=*Aen.* 1. 715 (Cupid acting under Julus' disguise); 85sp–86fp=*Aen.* 8. 388–389 (Venus caressing Vulcan in order to persuade him to produce arms for Aeneas); 86sp=*Aen.* 4. 496 (Dido asking Anna to raise a pyre).

*Aeneid:* Dido upon hearing Aeneas' justification for walking out on her, Turnus before Aeneas' final blow against him, the shipwrecked Trojans.[567] In this passage, the connections with desperate characters in the *Aeneid* are so frequent that the Model Reader of the cento almost certainly notices them.

Although the situations as they appear on the surface of the texts in the cento and in the text of origin are very different, the original contexts of the quotations most likely make the Model Reader assume that the bride in the cento feels as desperate as the characters in the *Aeneid*. In the bride's mind, her situation is emotionally analogous with Dido's. The groom certainly approaches his bride physically, while Aeneas physically leaves Dido. Nonetheless, from a psychological viewpoint both Dido and the bride seem to feel equally desperate, although for very different reasons. The Model Reader of the cento may also understand that the bride's sensation of subsequent death links her situation firmly with the situation of the frozen Turnus. Although the situations as they appear on the surface of the text are very different (the groom talks about subsequent love-making, not death) they are analogous in the bride's mind.[568] Similarily, she considers her situation as analogous to that of the desperate shipwrecked Trojans.

All these interpretations are *possible* interpretations of associations which can be made with the original contexts of quotations. They are *not the only possible* interpretations, and they are certainly not 'true' in any absolute sense of the word. Nonetheless, these interpretations would explain the bride's reactions. The Model Reader of the cento may therefore assume that they are 'true' for the bride. For similar reasons, the Model Reader is likely to assume that the groom's interpretations of the bride's speech are 'true' for the groom.

From a dialectical viewpoint, the groom's interpretation of the bride's true intentions determines the following events in the cento. Whether adequate or not, the spouses' sad responses to each other's words and actions are best explained as a consequence of their interpretations of the suggestions which can be found beneath the surface of the text. From a dialectical viewpoint, the spouses respond more in agreement with the Virgilian context than with the immediate context as it appears on the surface of the text in the cento. This implies that the protagonists' interpretations of the Virgilian contexts and their connections with the situation in the cento to a large degree determine the plot that follows in the cento.

## The literary competition – the *Imminutio* part

After *Ingressus in cubiculum,* the cento shows no clear similarities with any preserved wedding poetry. However, in Claud. *carm.* 14 attitudes congruent with the subsequent events in the cento are expressed. In this poem, the groom is encouraged to force his bride by physical violence.[569] Claud. *carm.* 14 also provides good examples of how

[567] The identification between the bride and Turnus as well as the use of nautical metaphors continue throughout the remainder of the cento.

[568] Cf. the notion of "la petite mort," "little death."

[569] He should not hesitate to be close in his attacks, even though she may oppose him savagely with her fingernail; no one can enjoy the scents of spring, nor steal honey, if he fears that thorns may scratch his face; thorns arm the rose and bees defend their honey; the refusals of squabbling increase the joy and the desire for a Venus who flees increases; sweeter is the kiss snatched through tears. He will often say 'better this than ten victories over the yellow-haired Sarmatae.'

Claud. *carm*. 14. 5–15: *ne cessa, iuvenis, comminus adgredi,*

military metaphors are used in descriptions of sexual activities. Beside *Cento Nuptialis, carm.* 14 is one of few examples of verses where such metaphors are used in a conjugal context.

In his *Parecbasis,* which is inserted between *Ingressus in cubiculum* and *Imminutio,* Ausonius justifies the audacity of the *Imminutio* part of the cento with reference to *Fescennini versus* and "an old-established precedent for freedom of speech."[570] He also warns the chaste reader against further reading. His warnings recall similar warnings from Martial,[571] one of the authors with whom Ausonius compares himself in the last part of his letter to Paulus. In the last part of the letter, Ausonius also defends his morals. He claims that his immodest verse does not reflect his decorous life-style. Beside Martial, he also recalls Juvenal, Pliny, Sulpicia, Apuleius, Cicero, Plato, Annianus (writer of *Fescennini versus*), Laevius (writer of erotic poems), Evenos (writer of erotic poems), Menander, 'all the comic poets,' and finally Virgil himself. Yet, no preserved writings by these or other authors are as rude as the *Imminutio* part of the cento. In the last lines of his letter to Paulus, Ausonius makes reasonable use of the indisputable connection between the wedding and the coitus in order to defend his inclusion of the *Imminutio* part; the consummation of the wedding, which is described in the *Imminutio* part, is certainly part of the wedding, like it or not.[572]

Regardless of the author's explanations, since there is no evidence of similar audacity in other ancient wedding poetry, the inclusion of the *Imminutio* part is best understood as a result both of the *de facto* connection between the wedding and the coitus and of the author's wish to display his witty capacity in the competition with the emperor. Probably the latter reason was the more important.

## *The humour of the* Imminutio *part*

As was seen already in the analysis of the first seven sections of the cento, there is throughout *Cento Nuptialis* a tension between the events described on the surface of the text and the meaning which can appear to the Model Reader when he or she associates with the Virgilian context where the quotations used in the cento come from. In the following analysis, I will demonstrate that this tension is accentuated in the *Imminutio* part of the cento; in this section, there is an increased thematic distance between the context in the cento and the original contexts of the quotations.

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*inpacata licet saeviat unguibus.*
*non quisquam fruitur veris odoribus*
*Hyblaeos latebris nec spoliat favos,*
*si fonti caveat, si timeat rubos:*
*armat spina rosas, mella tegunt apes.*
*Crescunt difficili gaudia iurgio*
*accenditque magis, qui refugit, Venus.*
*Quod flenti tuleris, plus sapit osculum.*
*Dices o quotiens 'hoc mihi dulcius*
*quam flavos deciens vincere Sarmatas!'*

[570] *Hactenus castis auribus audiendum mysterium nuptiale ambitu loquendi et circuitione velavi. Verum quoniam et fescenninos amat celebritas nuptialis verborumque petulantiam notus vetere instituto ludus admittit, cetera quoque cubiculi et lectuli operta prodentur, ab eodem auctore collecta, ut bis erubescamus qui et Vergilium faciamus impudentem. Vos, si placet, hic iam legendi modum ponite; cetera curiosis relinquite.*

[571] Mart. 3. 68.

[572] Cf. the last lines in Ausonius' letter to Paulus: *etenim fabula de nuptiis est: et velit nolit aliter haec sacra non constant.*

The result of this wider thematic distance between the cento and its text of origin in the *Imminutio* part is *comic*.[573] The humour lies precisely in the harsh contrast between the meaning as it appears on the surface of the text and the meaning which may be found beneath the surface of the text, when the original contexts of the quotations are considered. The *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* demonstrates better than any other preserved cento-passage how humour may be found in the core of a cento.[574] The humour in the *Imminutio* part is based on the Model Reader's perception of incongruity between the original and the new contexts of quotations. This kind of humour can be explained through the so-called 'incongruity theory' of humour and laughter:

> "[The incongruity theory] claims that humour and humorous laughter are caused by the perception of incongruity, i.e. a pairing of ideas, images, or situations that are not ordinarily joined, and that in most cases the incongruity is first perceived and then resolved in a two-stage process."[575]

When the cento's Model Reader perceives incongruity between the original and the new context of the quotations used in the cento, he or she is likely to be amused and to laugh. The wish to amuse the audience with humorous incongruity coheres primarily with the author's aim to win the literary competition. The inclusion of the *Imminutio* part in the cento is therefore best understood as a result of this competition.

## *Analysis*

### The first lines of the *Imminutio* (vv. 101–104)

As mentioned above, there is an increased thematic distance between the cento and the original contexts of quotations in the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis.* Although there is an increased thematic distance between the texts, the new context of the quotations used in the *Imminutio* part corresponds in a consistent way with the original contexts. In their original contexts, many of the quotations describe contests or battle-like events; in the cento, they describe the coitus. This implies that the coitus is firmly linked with a notion of combat.

Already the first quotation in the *Imminutio* part comes from a description of the beginning of a battle in the *Aeneid* (v. 101: *postquam congressi...*).[576] In the second line, it is explicitly said that the spouses essay new battles (v. 102: *... nova proelia temptant.*)[577] Thus, in the *Imminutio* part, the connection between the coitus and battle

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[573] It is the reader's choice to decide whether the humour which is displayed in the *Imminutio* part is tasteful or not; present-day readers will probably find that it is not. In any case, wittiness and humour are evidently striven for.

[574] Cento-like passages with a similar humour are found in *Sat.*; cf. Chapter 2a.

[575] Plaza 2000, p. 7.

[576] The groom's first move is also described exclusively through the use of quotations from battle scenes in the *Aeneid,* vv. 103–104: *Tollitque se arrectum conantem plurima frustra*
occupat os faciemque, pedem pede fervidus urget.

[577] Venus alone inspires the spouses to attempt their new battles:
vv. 101–102: *Postquam congressi sola sub nocte per umbram*
*et mentem Venus ipsa dedit, nova proelia temptant*.
In other epithalamia, Venus sometimes uses violence to tear the bride away from her mother, but the degree of violence is very moderate in comparison with the violence described in the *Imminutio.* Possibly Venus' role was different in ancient *Fescennini versus*, but there is no convincing proof for this, given the scarce fragments of such verses; cf. Annianus Faliscus (ed. Buechner 1982): *pergat amica Venus modo iocis.*

very rapidly moves from beneath the surface of the text and up to the surface of it. In the remainder of the poem, combat and sexual activities are very closely connected at all textual levels.

**The descriptions of the genitalia (vv. 105–109; 110–114)**

As would be expected in a description of sexual intercourse, there is much focus on the genitalia in the *Imminutio*. The initial description of the penis links the male genitalia with visually similar objects in the text of origin.[578] Through associations with the original contexts of quotations, the penis is linked with the golden bough, Pan, Aeneas, a swarm of bees hanging from a bough, Polyphemus and a spear.[579] The golden bough, a hanging swarm of bees, and a spear have a form which is similar to a penis; Pan is similarly "crimsoned with vermilion and blood-red elderberries"; Polyphemus is similarly "blind." Aeneas and the penis in the cento are similarly described as bare-headed. It is further worth noticing that half of the quotations used to describe the penis link it with characters in the *Aeneid*. It has been shown by earlier scholars that personifications are common as regards male genitalia in Roman sexual vocabulary. It has also been shown that the attitudes to male genitalia are often those of fear, admiration and pride.[580]

The vagina is described through the use of quotations which link it with a bay, a valley, a thunderbolt, a cavern, various parts of the underworld and with the scent of Allecto in the text of origin.[581] Some of these have visual similarities with a fervent vagina: a bay, a valley and a cavern have similar shapes; a glowing thunderbolt gleams similarly. In the description, there is much focus on a bad scent emerging from the vagina and the passage also stresses its threatening licentiousness. In other pieces of Roman literature, vaginas are also described with various repulsive characteristics. They may for instance contain soil, they often smell bad and descriptions of them often allude to diseases. There is no favourable direct portrayal of female genitalia in Latin literature; they are only described as part of repulsive women.[582] The negative attitudes and the fear expressed towards the bride's vagina agree with portraits of sexually active old women in other pieces of Roman literature.[583] They do not, however, agree with the

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[578] Ausonius' poems often depict objects with visual accuracy and detail, e.g. the description of the river *Mosella*.

[579] vv. 105–109: *Perfidus alta petens ramum, qui veste latebat,*
*sanguineis ebuli bacis minioque rubentem*
*nudato capite et pedibus per mutua nexis,*
*monstrum horrendum, informe, cui lumen ademptum,*
*eripit a femore et trepidanti fervidus instat*.

[580] Adams 1982 pp. 29–34; 77–79.

[581] vv. 110–114: *Est in secessu tenuis quo semita ducit,*
*ignea rima micans; exhalat opaca mephitim.*
*Nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen.*
*Hic specus horrendum: talis sese halitus atris*
*faucibus effundens nares contigit odore.*

[582] Richlin 1984 pp. 71–72. Cf. Adams 1982 p. 79.

[583] Cf. Richlin 1983 pp. 109–116 on Hor. *epod.* 8; 12; *App. Virgil.* 83 ed. Büchler. The latter poem expresses very similar thoughts about the old woman, her vagina and the coitus as does *Cento Nuptialis* about the bride, her vagina and the coitus. In *App. Virgil.* 83, the old woman is represented to the penis only by her vagina; the vagina is dark and hidden, loose, cold and filthy; it will consume the penis and it makes repulsive noices during the sexual act; the penis is personified, whereas the vagina is described as a hollow cavern. Much the same ideas are expressed in the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis*. See also Richlin 1984 pp. 69–70 on *Pr* 12; *Pr.* 57; Mart. 3; Mart. 7; Mart. 10; Mart. 11. In these poems, the old

pictures given of attractive women in other Latin literature; even less do they agree with the portraits of wives in other wedding poetry.

**The description of the coitus (vv. 115–127)**

The remainder of the poem treats the coitus. First, the groom's actions are described.[584] He travels on a familiar road towards the depths of the vagina. No less than five immediately preceding quotations link the vagina with the underworld and with Allecto. It is therefore difficult not to understand this passage as depicting the coitus in analogy with a descent to the underworld. The passage treating the groom's actions ends with a long quotation linking him with a Trojan and the bride with Turnus.

Next, the penis' actions and the responding sound of the vagina are described with one line each.[585] The penis stood fast and drank the maiden blood. The vagina is described as hollow caverns. It is worth noticing that the penis is again portrayed as an active and personified subject, whereas the vagina is portrayed as a hollow part of the landscape. The original contexts of the quotations link the penis with the spear killing Aeneas' enemy Camilla, and the vagina with the womb of the Trojan horse.

The bride's actions are described in the following lines of the cento.[586] She tries in vain to remove the penis from her vagina and three times she tries in vain to raise herself from the bed. The penis is described as a spear and as an iron point, both of which have visual similarities with it. The vagina is described as a wound, probably because of the penis-spear that penetrates it, and possibly also because of the virgin blood running from it.[587] Through associations with the original contexts of the quotations, the bride is linked with the dying Camilla and with the dying Dido. Both these heroines get in Aeneas' way in the *Aeneid.*

The following lines describe the actions of the groom and his penis.[588] Through associations with the original contexts of the quotations, the groom is linked with Aeneas and his helmsman Palinurus who struggles to overcome sleep. The latter of these associations comes about through the use of a long quotation from the same passage in the *Aeneid* as the quotation announcing the bride's speech held with the purpose of persuading the groom to abstain from sexual intercourse in the previous

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woman's status as no-wife and/or the partner's crude rejection of her as a sexual partner are particularly emphasised.

[584] Vv. 115–117: *Huc iuvenis nota fertur regione viarum*
*et super incumbens nodis et cortice crudo*
*intorquet summis adnixus viribus hastam*.

[585] Vv. 118–119: *Haesit virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem.*
*Insonuere cavae gemitumque dedere cavernae.*
Also in Mart. 7. 18, a vagina is described as noisy during sexual intercourse. The noisy vagina is repulsive; cf. Richlin 1984 p. 71.

[586] Vv. 120–123: *Illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter*
*altius ad vivum persedit vulnere mucro.*
*Ter sese attollens cubitoque innixa levavit.*
*Ter revoluta toro est; …*

[587] It should also be noticed that the descriptions of vaginas in satire often allude to diseases; cf. Richlin 1984 p. 71.

[588] Vv. 123–127: … *Manet imperterritus ille.*
*Nec mora nec requies, clavumque affixus et haerens*
*Nusquam amittebat oculosque sub astra tenebat.*
*Itque reditque viam totiens uteroque recusso*
*Transadagit costas et pectine pulsat eburno*.

section of the cento.[589] The use of this quotation may suggest that the groom is tired and that he is about to give in to the bride's prayers, as portrayed in the previous section. The groom, or possibly his penis, is also linked with Pollux coming and going to the underworld again and again; with Laocoon hurling his spear into the womb of the wooden horse in Troy; with a Rutulian augur; and with Orpheus playing his lyre in the underworld. It is worth noticing that all these associations may equally well refer to either the groom or his penis, which are very closely connected in this part of the cento. Through associations with the original contexts of the quotations, the female genitalia are again linked with the underworld and with the womb of the Trojan horse; and the spouses are linked with horses that are eager to race.

**The description of the climax of the coitus (vv. 128–131)**

The last lines of the cento deal with the shared finale of the coitus. The spouses are near the goal; rapid panting shakes their limbs and arid lips; sweat streams all over; he or she sinks bloodless; slime drips from the groin.[590] Through associations with the original context of two longer quotations, the coitus is again firmly linked with races (a running course between athletes and a ship race). The sperm is linked with 'hippomanes' (i.e. 'horse madness' dripping from the groin of horses burning with love). From the context in the cento, it remains unclear whether it is the groom or the bride who sinks bloodless, as well as from whose groin the sperm drips. If we consider the original context of the quotation *labitur exsanguis* ("he/she sinks bloodless"), we would assume that the bride is the subject of the phrase. This is because Camilla, with whom the bride has been linked many times in the cento, is the subject of the phrase in the *Aeneid.* Nonetheless, the uncertainty as regards the subject of the last line in the cento can be read as emphasising the final unification of the spouses.

It is highly remarkable that there is no reference to the coming offspring of the couple at the end of *Cento Nuptialis.* In other *epithalamia of occasion,* a wish for children at the end of the poem is commonplace. It would have been very reasonable to include such a wish also in *Cento Nuptialis,* both from a generic viewpoint and from a logical viewpoint; the coitus, which is described in the *Imminutio* part, is after all the first precondition for subsequent childbirth. What does the absence of a reference to childbirth at the end of *Cento Nuptialis* indicate? What does the portrait of a fruitless ejaculation at the end of the poem indicate? In order to answer these questions, contemporary medical advice may first be considered. A large part of the contemporary medical expertise regarded excessive ejaculation as a threat against a man's health.[591] This was because the sperm was supposed to contain the finest kind of air, which was the most obvious characteristic of life. For medical reasons, some doctors therefore recommended total sexual abstinence for men. Other doctors argued that men should withdraw just before ejaculation at all times except when they wanted to produce an heir.

[589] In this quotation, the bride was linked with Neptune who deceitfully tried to make Palinurus fall asleep; cf. above.

[590] Vv. 128–131: *Iamque fere spatio extremo fessique sub ipsam*
*finem adventabant: Tum creber anhelitus artus*
*Aridaque ora quatit, sudor fluit undique rivis,*
*Labitur exsanguis, destillat ab inguine virus*.

[591] Rousselle 1988 pp. 12–15.

**Conclusion of the poem – beginning of the re-evaluation**

The conclusion of *Cento Nuptialis* is most puzzling: *Cento Nuptialis* ends with a vivid description of the potentially dangerous ejaculation; there is no concluding reference to childbirth, as the epithalamic genre would suggest. Instead, the groom's fruitless ejaculation is portrayed as the final outcome not only of the coitus, but of the wedding as a whole. This is highly remarkable and certainly not congruent with the epideictic purpose of the *epithalamium of occasion.* This epithalamic anomaly at the end of *Cento Nuptialis* is actually so remarkable that it must cast the Model Reader's general interpretation of the whole poem in a new mode. The last part of the poem leads to the conclusion that the general picture given of the wedding in *Cento Nuptialis* agrees less with other *epithalamia of occasion* and more with *anti-epithalamia. Cento Nuptialis* is thus an *anti-epithalamium,* although it is (at least on the surface of the text) written to commemorate a contemporary wedding. It can be called an *anti-epithalamium of occasion. Cento Nuptialis* is the only preserved late antique Latin occasional wedding poem which could be labelled an *anti-epithalamium of occasion,* in agreement with the argumentation above. Why did Ausonius write an *anti-epithalamium* for Gratian's wedding?

I have found no altogether convincing answer to this crucial question, but I believe that it can be partly explained as a result of the literary competition with the emperor. As argued above, the inclusion of the *Imminutio* part as a whole is best explained as a result of the literary competition. Its aims are to display the author's witty capacity and to amuse the audience with unexpected incongruity. Humorous incongruity was repeatedly found between the original and the new context of the quotations. Probably, the very absurdity of an *anti-epithalamium of occasion* also aims at provoking amusement and laughter from the audience. The very idea of writing an *anti*-epithalamium with the purpose of celebrating a wedding is most absurd. This absurdity is quite likely to provoke amusement and laughter from the audience. The possibility to provoke amusement and laughter from the audience with an *anti-epithalamium* agrees well with the 'incongruity theory' of humour and laughter as described above.[592] When people in the audience perceive the incongruity between the expected epithalamic 'happy end' and the unexpected anti-epithalamic 'unhappy end', they are likely to laugh. In this case, however, the incongruity is not between the original context of quotations and the context in the cento (cf. above), but between the expected branch of the genre (*epithalamium of occasion*) and the factual one (*anti-epithalamium of occasion*). This leads to the conclusion that humour based on incongruity of two different kinds may be found in the *Imminutio*, both when the cento is read in relationship to its text of origin and when it is read in relationship to its genre.

The links between centos, genres and texts of origin will be further discussed in the fourth part of this study; cf. Chapter 15a. The following parts of the present analysis deal with the Model Reader's re-evaluation of the preceding parts of *Cento Nuptialis* through the lens of the *Imminutio* section.

[592] It probably also agrees with the so-called 'relief theory' of humour and laughter. This theory deals with the psychological aspects of humour and laughter. Its most famous theorist is Sigmund Freud. He claims among other things that a joke may function as a safety valve for feelings or thoughts of aggression or sexuality which are ordinarily repressed; cf. Plaza 2000 pp. 7–8. This may well be applicable to the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis.*

## The first seven sections reconsidered in the light of the *Imminutio*

The subsequent part of the analysis reconsiders the first seven sections of the poem in the light of the *Imminutio* part. This reconsideration is made in order to search for unity within the poem. The general hypothesis which underlies this part of the analysis is that the inherent unity of the poem emerges more clearly when the Model Reader reconsiders the poem through the lens of the *Imminutio* part.

Is it reasonable to assume that the cento's Model Reader should reconsider the poem through the lens of the *Imminutio* part? I believe that it is. At any rate, it is reasonable to assume that the cento's Model Reader in various ways searches for unity within the poem. An important reason for this assumption is that scarce unity is an unwelcome feature in ancient poetry in general. Scarce unity is also uncommon in Ausonius' texts; cf. introduction to this chapter. Furthermore, unity seems to be the core of Ausonius' discussion on cento; cf. Chapter 1b. However, in *Cento Nuptialis* there are certain elements which inevitably cause difficulties in a first search for unity within the poem. One such element is the fact that the first seven sections of the poem to a large degree cohere with the preceding epithalamic tradition, whereas the last section does not. The aberrations from the expected epithalamic pattern in the first sections may also trouble the Model Reader. The double circumstances lying behind the composition of the poem (the competition and the wedding) almost certainly enfeeble the sense of unity within the poem. I believe that these difficulties are likely to stimulate the advanced Model Reader to intensify the search for unity. The advanced Model Reader's intensified search for unity may also find new, unexpected ways. One such way can be to go back in the text[593] with the intention to trace hints in the first sections of the cento which point forward towards the unique, and therefore particularly puzzling, *Imminutio* section.

## *The picture of the bride* – Descriptio egredientis sponsae

A striking feature in the *Imminutio* section is that the spouses are consistently portrayed as each other's enemies; beneath the surface of the text, the groom is repeatedly linked with Aeneas and his allies, and the bride with Aeneas' enemies. Such associations occur also earlier in the poem; cf. the previous general analyses of 'The descriptions of bride and groom' and *Ingressus in cubiculum*.

Already in the previous analysis of *Descriptio egredientis sponsae,* various doubtful associations were noticed with regard to the bride. The sole connection with Helen among human women was one such doubtful association; the suggested possibility that the bride was sexually attracted to her husband must also be understood as non-complimentary. The absense of an *encomium* of the bride's family was noticed as particularly noteworthy. When the original contexts of quotations used in *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* are reconsidered in the light of the *Imminutio* part, two further associations are found which more precisely cohere with the bride's sexuality as it is portrayed in the *Imminutio* part.

[593] Or back in one's memory if one listens to a recitation. It is however worth noticing that it is probably easier to reconsider the first seven sections in the light of the *Imminutio* if the cento was read in private than if it was recited; cf. Chapter 6a, 'Oral performance or private reading?'

The first of these negative associations occurs in line 37 sp, where we are told that the bride inflames with her gaze (*uritque videndo*). Originally, this quotation comes from a piece of advice to keep the bull away from the cow, since she sets him on fire so that he forgets to eat and toil.[594]When applied to the context in the cento, this association would suggest that it is best to keep the groom away from the bride, since she sets him on fire so that he forgets to eat and toil.[595] The advanced Model Reader of the cento may conclude from this that the bride's sexuality is potentially dangerous for the groom. Moreover, the phrase *uritque videndo* undergoes an interesting semantic change when it is reused in the cento. In the Virgilian context, the cow is the object of the verb *videndo;* the bull is the imagined subject who stares at her. In the cento on the other hand, the bride is the implicit subject of *videndo;* the bride stares at the wedding guests (and presumably also at the groom) and sets them on fire with her gaze. I believe that this semantic change between the Virgilian context and the cento suggests that the bride can pose a more active threat against the groom than the cow does against the bull. Thus, the semantic change further increases the deceptiveness of the bride's sexuality, which can turn out to be forceful.

The second association, which agrees with the events described in the *Imminutio* part, occurs in line 39 sp–40 fp, where we are told about the bride's foot (*vestigia primi alba pedis*).[596] Originally, this quotation describes a white horse upon which Aeneas' descendants will ride.[597] As repeatedly mentioned above, the association between horses and sexual activities occurs in Latin erotic literature, but only very rarely in conjugal contexts.[598] As was seen in the analysis of the *Imminutio* part, the coitus is linked there with horses and horse races several times. In lines 39–40, the bride is linked to a horse for the first time in the poem.

The two associations analysed above show that the *Imminutio* part's picture of the bride's sexuality, as threatening towards the groom, has parallels beneath the surface of the text in *Descriptio egredientis sponsae*. These parallels are achieved through associations with the Virgilian passages from which quotations are borrowed for the cento. The associations with the text of origin in a non-complimentary way link the bride with animals in the Virgilian works.[599] They point in the same direction as the portrait openly given of her and her sexuality in the *Imminutio* part. One of them also suggests that the bride is potentially dangerous for the groom. Taken together, there are strong indications which point in this same direction; the bride is strongly associated with her sexuality and she is potentially dangerous for the groom. The traces of a potential danger which is connected with the bride's sexuality become indisputable when the section is reconsidered in the light of the *Imminutio.*

I further believe that the strong connection between the bride and her potentially dangerous sexuality provides the most convincing explanation for the remarkable absence of an *encomium* of her family in the poem. The reason for this suggestion is

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[594] *Geo.* 3. 215.

[595] Rousselle 1988 pp. 12–15 discusses the warnings of ancient doctors as regards excessive sexual activity. One such danger was the draining away of a man's vital spirit. Draining away of a man's vital spirit could be a result of ejaculation; there was a general belief that sperm contained a pure form of air, which was the most obvious characteristic of life.

[596] I interpret *prima pedis,* "first (part) of the foot" as a so-called *pars pro toto.* Hence the translation "foot."

[597] *Aen.* 5. 566–567.

[598] Cf. Chap. 8c. Th. *Id.* 18. See also Spies 1930 p. 41.

[599] Richlin 1984 p. 70 notices that animal invective is unusual in Latin and that by far the most extreme examples apply to women.

that the negative picture of the bride would have extended to her family, if it had been portrayed in the poem. This would have been even more insulting than the absence of an *encomium*. Admittedly, the competition with the emperor, and with the thereto related panegyric scope of the poem towards the emperor, can partly explain the absence of an *encomium* of the bride's family; by omitting the bride's family from the poem, Ausonius gives more emphasis to the importance of the groom and his father. He also avoids the risk of being criticised for foolish flattery (*adulatio inepta*); he would probably have been thus criticised if he had chosen to compare openly the families of the spouses with each other, and if in this comparison he had let the groom's family stand out in excellence over the bride's. Considering the author's duties towards the emperor, he would have had to let the groom's family excel in such a comparison. Nonetheless, these circumstances do not alone provide a satisfactory explanation of the remarkable absence of an *encomium* of the bride's family. As argued above, the main reason why there is no *encomium* of the bride's family in *Cento Nuptialis* is that if the bride's family had been portrayed in the poem, the negative picture given of the bride would have extended to it.

## *The picture of the wedding* – Cena Nuptialis

There are resemblances between the negative attitudes revealed towards the bride and towards the wedding as such in *Cento Nuptialis*. Like the negative associations regarding the bride, the negative associations regarding the wedding too are strongly connected with hostility and with the bride's sexuality. They are also first revealed through possible associations with the original contexts of the quotations in the first sections of the poem, and emerge on the open surface of the text only in the *Imminutio* part.

In order to exemplify this, the resemblance between how Hercules killed the monster Cacus, who dwelled in a cave, and the events told in the *Imminutio* part of the cento may be considered. In the *Imminutio* part of the cento, the penis is frequently described as a monster; the vagina is no less frequently described as a cave; the penis-monster dwells in this cave. In the final lines of the cento, the penis-monster falls. In *Cena Nuptialis,* i.e. many sections before the *Imminutio* part, there are frequent allusions to the feast commemorating the killing of Cacus; many quotations in the cento come from the description of this feast in the *Aeneid;* cf. the previous analysis of *Cena Nuptialis.* When the advanced Model Reader of the cento reconsiders *Cena Nuptialis* in the light of the *Imminutio* part, he or she may conclude that the killing of Cacus is analogous with the outcome of the wedding, and with the fruitless ejaculation as described in the *Imminutio* part of the cento.

Beneath the surface of the text, there are also further possible connections between the events described in *Cena Nuptialis* and in the *Imminutio* part. One quotation in *Cena Nuptialis* links the wedding feast with the celebrations held when the Trojans bring the wooden horse into Troy.[600] The Trojans' celebrations are certainly not followed by prosperous events for them. Possibly the association with the original context of this quotation, too, suggests that the outcome of the wedding may be disastrous for the spouses and their families. The quotation associating the wedding with the Trojan horse may also be seen as forecasting the associations with horses and horse races in the *Imminutio* part. Moreover, the advanced Model Reader may explicitly link the Trojan

[600] CN 24fp: *sacra canunt*.

horse, and its negative associations as regards the coming bliss of the wedding, with the bride and her vagina. The reason for this conclusion is that the bride and her vagina are repeatedly linked with the Trojan horse beneath the surface of the text in the *Imminutio* part.[601] These negative suggestions as regards the coming bliss of the wedding find further support from the original context of the quotation which follows in the cento. This quotation is two and a half lines long and it comes from a description of festivities held among the dead.[602] The unusual length of this quotation is likely to make its original context more important for the Model Reader's interpretation; as a consequence of this, he or she is likely to associate the wedding feast with a festivity held among the dead. When the advanced Model Reader of the cento reconsiders *Cena Nuptialis* in the light of the *Imminutio*, he or she will thus probably notice a strong association with death.[603]

### *Summary of the reconsidered pictures of the bride and of the wedding*

Associations with the original contexts of quotations used earlier in the cento cohere with the pictures of the bride and of the coitus given openly in the *Imminutio* part. Such associations contribute to thematic unity within the cento; they constitute a link between the *Imminutio* part, which has no known antecedent in the genre, and the rest of the poem. The impression that *Cento Nuptialis* is an epideictic anomaly is strengthened; the poem is an *anti-epithalamium* which was (in part) written for a contemporary wedding. Nonetheless: also when considering the literary contest with the emperor, which could explain the inclusion of the *Imminutio* part, the question *why* Ausonius chose to write an *anti-epithalamium* for Gratian's wedding remains to a large degree unexplained.

## Thematic unity within the cento – as suggested by the general disposition

As repeatedly discussed in the previous parts of the analysis, the coitus is largely described as a physical combat between the spouses in the concluding *Imminutio* section of *Cento Nuptialis.* In the analysis of the *Praefatio* part, it was noticed that the initial line of *Cento Nuptialis* in its original context describes the initiation of a contest between athletes. It is thus possible to argue that *Cento Nuptialis* as a whole is hemmed in by associations with physical combat.[604] This structure may indicate that the 'notion of combat' is an important key for the Model Reader's interpretation of the poem as a

[601] Cf. CN 119 and 126.

[602] CN 24 sp–26: … *plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt*
*nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos*
*obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum*.

[603] Also the first quotation in *Cena Nuptialis* may be linked with the *Imminutio* part; the first quotation in *Cena Nuptialis* comes from a passage in the *Aeneid* where a festive contest between ships is described. Nautical metaphors as well as metaphors linking the coitus with competitions are frequent in the *Imminutio* part of the cento. When the Model Reader of the cento resonsiders *Cena Nuptialis* in the light of the *Imminutio* part, he or she will probably notice these parallels too.

[604] Cf. 'The double circumstances, the *Praefatio* part;' 'Further possibilities – the role of the *Praefatio* in the cento as a whole.'

whole. The hypothesis that the 'notion of combat' is the unifying theme of *Cento Nuptialis* will be examined in the following.

In the initial line of *Cento Nuptialis,* the notion of physical combat appears only beneath the surface of the text in the cento; it appears only as a *possible* association with combat in the text of origin. At the end of the poem, the coitus is openly described as a battle on the surface of the text in the cento. This kind of progression, *from possible associations* to the text of origin *to manifest evidence* on the surface of the text of the cento, is of the same kind as the progressions as regards the picture of the bride and of the wedding which were discussed in the previous section of the analysis. In *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* and *Cena Nuptialis,* aggressive associations were for the most part found beneath the surface of the text; in the concluding *Imminutio* section, such associations emerged on the surface of the text. A similar progression was suggested for the *Praefatio*; cf. the analysis of this part of the poem. In the *Praefatio*, associations with the contest with the emperor moved from beneath the surface of the text at the beginning of the section up towards the surface of the text at the end of the section. Similar kinds of progression, from possible associations to combat found beneath the surface of the text to more sure evidence of combat found on the surface of the text, are thus found on three different occasions of the poem (*Praefatio;* pictures of bride and wedding; general disposition). This leads to the conclusion that the thematic progression is most likely deliberate. It also strengthens my initial hypothesis that the 'notion of combat' should play an important role for the general interpretation of *Cento Nuptialis.*

Two objections can nonetheless be raised against the suggestion that *Cento Nuptialis* is hemmed in by associations pointing towards physical combat. (1) The first objection is that the first line of the cento has already been interpreted in a way which makes perfect sense; as argued in the analysis of the *Praefatio* part, it aims at the literary competition between Ausonius and the emperor. (2) The second objection is that the *Praefatio* is directed to the emperor and his son; it is not directed to the groom and his bride, as would be expected if a parallel were intended with the *Imminutio* part, where groom and bride are the protagonists.

(1) The first objection can be easily rejected; the circumstance that a line in the cento has been interpreted in a way which makes perfect sense does not exclude other *possible* complementary interpretations. As has been demonstrated throughout the analysis, ambiguity and multiple possible meanings are fundamental characteristics of *Cento Nuptialis.* From this viewpoint, multiple meanings of the first line are not only possible, but also plausible. The first line of a poem often reflects the character of the poem as a whole. This seems to be so also in *Cento Nuptialis.*

(2) It is perhaps more difficult to explain how there can be an intended parallel between the *Imminutio* part and the first line of the *Praefatio*, given the fact that the spouses are the protagonists of the *Imminutio*, whereas the *Praefatio* aims at the groom and his father. But, it is initially far from evident that the *Praefatio* is directed to the groom and his father. As mentioned in the analysis of the *Praefatio*, the prefaces of *epithalamia of occasion* generally aim at the spouses; the genre-expectations are thus likely to make the Model Reader initially assume that the spouses are the protagonists of the *Praefatio* also in *Cento Nuptialis.* Actually, it does not become clear that the *Praefatio* is directed to the groom and his father until in the fourth, or possibly even the seventh, line. Up to line four, it is perfectly possible to read the *Praefatio* as if it were directed to the spouses. The recipients of the poem are described as happy (v.1) and in the bloom of life (v. 3); this agrees well with epithalamic genre-expectations on the

spouses. They are also described as renowned for courage and skilled in arms (v. 2) and as invincible in war (v. 3).

Admittedly, these latter descriptions do not agree with the genre-expectations on the *epithalamium of occasion* as regards the description of the bride. Nonetheless, as was seen in the analysis of the *Imminutio* section, they are most congruent with the picture of the bride and of the coitus given in the *Imminutio* section. When the advanced Model Reader of the cento reconsiders the *Praefatio* in the light of the *Imminutio* section, he or she is therefore likely to notice parallels not only between the *Imminutio* and the cento's first line, but between the *Imminutio* and the cento's first three lines. I further suggest that because the reader has once assumed that the first lines of the poem aim at the spouses, he or she is also more likely to see a parallel between the events hinted beneath the surface of the text of the *Praefatio* and the events openly told in the *Imminutio.* I believe that this can be so even though the reader has corrected his or her initial assumptions as regards the identity of the protagonists in the *Praefatio,* as he or she must have done at line 4 or 6. My reason for this belief is a conviction that an initial assumption is rarely altogether ruled out by the human memory; it remains a *possibility*. Although this possibility has been proven wrong in its immediate context (i.e. in the *Praefatio*), it may still have some influence over the reader's mind during a second reading, i.e. when the reader is fimiliar with how the coitus is described in the *Imminutio* part.

Finally, it should be noticed again that it is possible to see a parallel between the structures of the *Praefatio* and of *Cento Nuptialis* as a whole. Associations with the literary competition between Ausonius and the emperor hem in the *Praefatio;* cf. the analysis of this section. Associations to physical combat hem in the poem as a whole. The first line of the poem can be read in multiple ways. In its immediate context, i.e. in the *Praefatio,* it certainly refers to the literary contest and it is certainly directed to the emperor and his son. When the whole poem is taken into account, it is however also possible to see a connection with the spouses and with the violent consummation of the wedding as described in the *Imminutio* part. Both the literary competition and the coitus may fall under the more general heading 'combat.'

All the arguments presented above lead to a confirmation of the initial hypothesis of this part of the analysis: the 'notion of combat' is the unifying theme of the poem as a whole.

## The picture of another former pupil's wife

In the previous parts of this analysis, it has been concluded that *Cento Nuptialis* is best described as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion.* It has also repeatedly been noticed that the pictures given of the bride and of the wedding are for the most part negative. The wish to amuse the audience of the literary competition with an unexpected generic incongruity of the poem has been identified as a plausible reason for Ausonius' choice to write an *anti-epithalamium* for Gratian's, his former pupil's, wedding. In the following, the portrait which Ausonius gives in some of his letters of another former pupil's wife, Terasia, will be examined. Terasia was the wife of Pontius Merpius Paulinus (later known as Paulinus of Nola). The purpose of the following examination is to search for parallels between the pictures of Terasia and of the bride in *Cento Nuptialis*. From such parallels, some supplementary conclusions may be drawn as regards Ausonius' reasons to write an *anti-epithalamium* for Gratian's wedding.

From the correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus, it can be deduced that Ausonius was very attached to his former pupil. However, after his marriage with Terasia, Paulinus adopted an ascetic life-style, and his correspondence with Ausonius decreased. As a consequence of this, Ausonius writes several letters where he laments Paulinus' silence and unwillingness to visit him.[605] These letters date from 390–394, i.e. some years after the assumed date of composition of *Cento Nuptialis.*[606] In one of his letters, Ausonius gives Paulinus advice about how to conceal his writings from his wife, and the attitudes expressed towards Terasia are similar to the attitudes revealed towards the bride in *Cento Nuptialis.* Terasia and the bride in *Cento Nuptialis* are both portrayed as threatening enemies which their husbands must overcome:

> *Ep.* 22. 10–12: *Vel si tibi proditor instat aut quaestoris gravior censura timetur, occurre ingenio, quo saepe occulta teguntur.*
>
> Or if an informer is beside you, and if 'tis an inquisitor's too stern rebuke is feared, baffle it with a device whereby secrets are oft concealed.[607]

In another letter, Ausonius calls Paulinus' wife 'Tanaquil', a name with which he blames her unsuitable dominance.[608] This too is congruent with the negative attitudes revealed towards the bride in *Cento Nuptialis,* attitudes of misogyny without any known parallels in contemporary wedding poetry.

One possible, supplementary, answer to the recurrent question *why* Ausonius wrote an *anti-epithalamium* for Gratian's wedding may be that he simply did not like it when his former pupils married. Perhaps he feared that his own influence over his ex-pupils would decrease to the benefit of their wives. He may have seen the wives as his rivals as regards his former pupils' attention; the pictures of Gratian's and Paulinus' hostile wives may primarily reflect Ausonius' own hostility towards these same wives.

## *Damon as Ausonius'* alter ego?

In *Epithalamium utrique* many quotations come from the 8th *Eclogue,* where Damon in an epithalamium-like way complains that Nysa has spurned him in order to marry Mopsus. Damon's complaint may be read as an *anti-epithalamium.* If the cento's reader assumes that Ausonius displayed jealousy towards his ex-pupils' wives, he or she may suppose that there is an intended parallel between Ausonius and Damon; perhaps Ausonius complains that Gratian has spurned him in order to marry Constantia, just as Damon complains that Nysa has spurned him in order to marry Mopsus. If this is how the reader interprets the situation, he or she may conclude that Damon should be regarded as Ausonius' *alter ego* beneath the surface of *Cento Nuptialis.* Further support for this belief is found in the circumstance that it agrees with the general suggestion that

[605] *Ep.* 21–23 (Green ed. 1991).
[606] Pastorino (ed.) 1971 p. 103.
[607] Letter 28 in the Loeb edition.
[608] *Ep.* 22. 31. Cf. Liv. 1. 34. Paulinus defends his wife in Aus. *Ep.* 30 (ed. White 1919) and *Paul. Carm.* 10, a poem dedicated to Ausonius. Aus. *Ep.* 30. 4–7: *Formidatamque iugalem obicis et durum iacis in mea viscera versum. Parce, precor, lacerare tuum, nec amara paternis admiscere velis, ceu melle absinthia, verbis*. "And tauntest me with terror of my spouse, launching a cruel line against my very heart. Cease, I prithee, to wound thy friend, and seek not to mingle bitterness – as wormwood with honey – with a father's words." Carm. 10. 192: *Nec Tanaquil mihi, sed Lucretia coniunx.* "And I do not have Tanaquil, but Lucretia as my wife."

the cento as a whole is characterized by a notion of combat; perhaps there is rivalry between Ausonius and Constantia as regards Gratian's attention (just as there is literary rivalry between Ausonius and the emperor, and sexual rivalry between groom and bride).

I suggest that this kind of interpretation may have been laid open for Gratian, the emperor, or some of the judges at the competition; they may have been Ausonius' intended Ideal Reader(s) at this moment of *Cento Nuptialis.*

## Conclusions of the chapter

*Cento Nuptialis* belongs to the kind of *wedding-related texts* called *epithalamia of occasion* in this work.[609] From this viewpoint, the function of the poem is epideictic. But *Cento Nuptialis* is not only an *epithalamium of occasion;* it is also a poem written in competition with another author of wedding-centos, Emperor Valentinian I. From this viewpoint, the function of the poem is to win the contest in a way which does not unnecessarily offend the emperor. In order to win the contest worthily, the author must display his knowledge and witty capacity. Probably the competition with the emperor was Ausonius' immediate reason for writing the poem;[610] the competition and the crucial situation in which Ausonius found himself almost certainly influenced Ausonius' way of writing at several points.

The first seven sections of *Cento Nuptialis* thematically resemble the late antique *epithalamium of occasion*, although with a different structure. Major differences between *Cento Nuptialis* and the late antique *epithalamium of occasion* are the absence of gods and the more descriptive character of the cento. The first part of the poem also agrees with rhetorical advice on wedding speeches and we recognise commonplaces from earlier wedding poetry, Catullus' poems in particular. The last section of the poem (the *Imminutio* part) has no known antecedents among the *wedding-related texts.* Earlier scholars have therefore generally treated the *Imminutio* part separately from the first seven sections; since the *Imminutio* part is unique among *wedding-related texts,* this is logical from a generic viewpoint.

Throughout *Cento Nuptialis* there is a tension between the events described on the surface of the text and the meaning which can appear to the Model Reader when he or she associates with the Virgilian context where the quotations used in the cento come from. As was suggested in Chapters 5 and 6, the meaning of a cento in relation to its text of origin appears neither in the cento as presented to us, nor in the text of origin, but in the gap between the cento and its text of origin. In the tension between the cento and its text of origin, new possible meanings appear.

The preceding analysis suggests the double circumstances lying behind the composition of the cento (the wedding and the competition) as an important key for the interpretation of the cento as a whole; *Cento Nuptialis* must take the form of a credible wedding poem, but it also had to be witty in its competitive context with the emperor.[611] These aims were difficult to combine at some points; such difficulty may be traced in the cento. Another main issue of the analysis was to claim that there is unity within

[609] Cf. the discussion about terminology in the introduction to Chapter 8 in this work.

[610] Cf. the prefatory letter and the *Praefatio* part of *Cento Nuptialis*. Cf. also McGill 2005 pp. 96–97; 98.

[611] McGill 2005 too emphasises the double function of the poem in his analysis (pp. 92–114, pp. 92–98 in particular).

*Cento Nuptialis*, despite its double functions. Scarce unity, i.e. a non-coherent poem,[612] could be a possible result of the double functions of the poem. Scarce unity is however a generally unwelcome feature in ancient poetry. It is certainly uncommon in Ausonius' texts; moreover, unity seems to be the core of Ausonius' description of cento; cf. Chapter 1b. It was argued that the Model Reader therefore is likely to search for unity within *Cento Nuptialis*. In the search for unity, possible associations with the text of origin in the first seven sections which forecast the events told in the *Imminutio* are useful.

The 'notion of combat' was identified as the unifying theme of the poem as a whole. Beneath the surface of the text in the first seven sections of *Cento Nuptialis*, there are unmistakable traces of combat. In the *Imminutio* section of the cento, the notion of combat moves from beneath the surface up to the surface of the text. The poem ends with a portrait of the groom's fruitless ejaculation, without any reference to subsequent childbirth. In a contemporary context, this is so noteworthy that it most probably elicits the Model Reader's reinterpretation of the poem as a whole; as a result of this reinterpretation the cento is best understood not as an *epithalamium of occasion,* but as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion.* It was further suggested that the puzzling conclusion of the cento is likely to make the Model Reader go back in the text to search for hints which point towards the *Imminutio* part. Thereby, the possible negative associations with the text of origin will be further highlighted, and perceived as more meaningful than before. It was shown that the 'notion of combat' characterises the relationship between the spouses throughout the poem, and particularly so in the *Imminutio* section. The groom is portrayed as a hero, and often identified with Aeneas and his allies. In contrast, the bride is portrayed as potentially dangerous, and is often identified with persons who get in Aeneas' way in the *Aeneid;* the bride's dangerousness is for the most part linked with her sexuality, which may pose an active threat to the groom. This agrees well with how 'brides' are portrayed in *anti-epithalamia.* The 'notion of combat' is however also essential for the immediate circumstances lying behind the composition of *Cento Nuptialis,* i.e. Ausonius' literary competition with the emperor. The two kinds of battle (sexual and literary) imply two different interpretations of the poem's first lines; and this duplicity reflects a double-edgedness of the poem as a whole.

Throughout the analysis, it has been shown that *Cento Nuptialis* relates both to the genre *wedding-related texts* (of different kinds) and to its text of origin. For the most part, the passages in the text of origin where the quotations come from are in themselves not *wedding-related;* this implies that the two nodes 'genre' and 'text of origin' are for the most part clearly kept apart in this poem.

In the *Imminutio* section, the humorous side of the cento is striking. Although the events are portrayed as essentially analogous through consistent associations in the cento with battle-scenes in the text of origin, the Model Reader perceives a harsh contrast between the situation in the cento (love-making) and in the text of origin (battle). This simultaneous analogy and contrast between cento and text of origin is perceived as comic; the humour of the *Imminutio* was explained through the so-called incongruity theory of humour and laughter.

[612] Earlier scholars' procedure of treating the *Imminutio* part separately from the first seven sections of *Cento Nuptialis* suggests that they do not accept the poem as coherent.

# 13. Analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi*

In this chapter *Epithalamium Fridi* will be analysed. Like the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis* in the preceding chapter, this analysis is partly based on the previous analysis of the link between the cento and the original contexts of quotations used in the cento; cf. Chapter 11b. It also includes considerations which go beyond the cento's connection with its text of origin. Such considerations concern, for example, the literary genre to which the cento belongs: *wedding-related texts, epithalamium of occasion.*

## *The location – a unifying element in* Epithalamium Fridi

The geographic setting of *Epithalamium Fridi* is emphasised already at the beginning of the poem. Venus resides on 'the lofty Capitol,' which is an eminent place very close to the palace housing the wedding. The Punic realm, the Carthaginians and the city of Agenor are all within sight:

> vv. 7–8:
> *... Capitolia celsa tenebat,*
> *Punica regna videns, Tyrios et Agenoris urbem.*
>
> "She held the lofty Capitol, seeing the Punic realm, the Tyrians and the city of Agenor."

This early passage is, I believe, the only passage in the whole poem where Venus' location is confirmed beyond doubt. At the beginning of other *epithalamia of occasion,* Venus dwells within or close to her palace. The genre thus suggests a close resemblance, possibly even an identification, between the divine world and the Capitole from which Venus beholds Carthage in *Epithalamium Fridi.* The divine sphere where Venus dwells at this moment is close enough to almost merge with the city of Carthage. The close connection between Venus' dwelling and the location of the wedding could probably explain why the location of the dialogue between Venus and Cupid is not clearly defined in *Epithalamium Fridi.* It could perhaps also explain how it is still unclear whether Venus participates in the wedding at all.

Earlier scholars have taken Venus' participation in the wedding for granted; they have also assumed that her dialogue with Cupid takes place in the human world, although there is no evidence in any part of the preceding literary tradition (i.e. other *wedding-related texts* or the text of origin) of such dialogues taking place in the human world.[613] I am unsure of her presence at the wedding, and of the location of the dialogue. Support for the belief that Venus participates in the wedding is however found in other *epithalamia of occasion.* In Statius' and Claudian's poems, Venus travels from the divine world to the wedding immediately after the central dialogue. After her journey, she participates actively in the weddings. On the other hand, support for the belief that Venus does not participate in the wedding is found in the *Aeneid.* In the *Aeneid,* Venus remains in the divine sphere after the dialogues. Cupid participates alone at Dido's party for Aeneas (*Aen.* 1. 663–689); neither Venus nor Juno participates at the hunt or during the wedding-like events in the cave (*Aen.* 4. 90–127).

[613] Morelli 1910 p. 416; Pavovskis 1965; McGill 2005 p. 100.

In *Epithalamium Fridi*, Cupid's immediate departure after Venus' speech is briefly suggested, vv. 52–53; but nothing suggests that Venus travels after the dialogue or that she participates actively in the subsequent events. If Venus participates at the wedding, she is thus likely to be there already before talking to Cupid. This would imply that the dialogue between her and Cupid takes place in the human world, regardless of preceding literary tradition. The first lines of *Epithalamium Fridi* do suggest that Venus prepares her departure for the wedding. She binds a golden belt beneath her naked breast; she brings gifts, everlasting peace and the marriage covenant, and every kind of splendid ornament (vv. 5–7). Yet, in the description of the arrival of the guests at the wedding (vv. 9–15), she is not explicitly mentioned. Other scholars have assumed that she is one of the goddesses who lay aside their appearance and garment in line 15.[614] Although this is possible, it is certainly not explicit in the poem.

Further support for the belief that Venus participates at the wedding, and that the dialogue between her and Cupid takes place in the human world, may perhaps be found in the circumstance that a description of the palace housing the wedding (vv.10–26) immediately precedes the central dialogue in *Epithalamium Fridi* (vv. 26–60). In other *epithalamia of occasion,* the central dialogues between gods are preceded by *tableaux* encapsulating "the mood and play of emotions in the scene that follows."[615] An interpretation of the description of the palace in *Epithalamium Fridi* as such a *tableau* for the following dialogue would support both the belief that Venus participates at the wedding and the belief that the dialogue between her and Cupid takes place in the human world. In contrast, however, in *Aen.* 1. 657–726, a passage which is very similar to the cento as regards Venus' speeches and Cupid's responses (cf. below), there is no such *tableau* preceding Venus' speech; nor is there a *tableau* preceding the dialogue between Venus and Juno in *Aen.* 4. 90–168. It is also noteworthy that the palace housing the wedding in *Epithalamium Fridi* is first described in very general terms; it is "stately and vast, towering with a hundred columns."[616] This description would fit any stylish palace; it resembles Venus' palace as known from other poems and visual arts; it resembles Dido's palace as described in *Aen.* 1. 699–727; it certainly resembles Latinus' castle, which is portrayed in the original context of most of the quotations used.[617] Although it is evidently the palace housing the wedding which is portrayed in *Epithalamium Fridi*, the description remains too schematic to set the reader in any kind of sensual mood similar to those provoked by the *tableaux* in other *epithalamia of occasion.* The only part of the description of the palace which is somewhat less general is the part referring to the illustrious history of the location; cf. below.

The preceding considerations lead to the conclusion that the geography of *Epithalamium Fridi* remains unclear in all its details except one, Carthage. The city of Carthage is portrayed as the blissful space where human and divine spheres as well as present and historic events congregate. If divine and human spheres are so closely located as the first lines of the poem suggest, it remains unnecessary to mark any clear boundaries between them. It could even have a panegyric aim not to distinguish too clearly between them; what could be more panegyric than the idea that Venus

[614] In footnote 54, McGill explains his interpretation of lines 14–15 in the cento. He interprets *deae* as *nom. pl.*, and he assumes that Venus is one of the goddesses intended. I agree with the interpretation of *deae* as *nom. pl.*, but am not sure about which goddesses are intended.

[615] Roberts 1989 p. 323.

[616] vv. 11–13: *Tectum augustum, ingens, centum sublime columnis,*
*hae sacris sedes epulis, atque ordine longo*
*perpetuis soliti patres considere mensis*.

[617] *Aen*. 7. 170; 7. 175; 7. 176.

practically resides in the palace where the wedding is celebrated? To express such an idea openly would have been unsuitably presumptuous. However, to suggest it by means of the cento's inherent potential of doubleness is rhetorically extremely efficient.

## *The time – a unifying element in* Epithalamium Fridi

Support for the suggestion that Carthage unites human and divine spheres, as well as present and historic events, is found in the general structure of the whole passage describing the initial stages of the wedding party (vv. 9–26). Gods and humans participate in the wedding together in *Epithalamium Fridi,* as well as in other *epithalamia of occasion.* In *Epithalamium Fridi,* the arrival of the gods is described first, vv. 9–15. At the very end of the description, the Carthaginians are mentioned explicitly:

> vv. 25–26:
> *Nec non et Tyrii per limina laeta frequentes*
> *Convenere, toris iussi discumbere pictis.*
>
> "The Tyrians, too, gathered in throngs throughout the festal halls, invited to sit down on the embroidered couches."

This phrase is found at an extremely important position in the poem; the phrase concludes the description of the wedding party and it gives the setting for the following dialogue between Venus and Cupid. It contributes much both to the historic connection between the present wedding and Dido's party for Aeneas, and to the blissful connection between human and divine worlds in the poem. In their original context, these lines describe the arrival of the Carthaginians at Dido's party for Aeneas.[618] The two-line quotation firmly links the wedding described in the cento with this party. At Dido's party for Aeneas, humans and gods celebrated together and they do so in the cento too. The identical geographic setting of the present wedding and the historic feast is particularly stressed in the cento through the explicit reference to the Carthaginians. In addition, other glimpses into past times contribute to the panegyric scope of the poem. Such glimpses can be perceived throughout the poem and they emphasise the geographic connection between the present wedding and the illustrious love story between Dido and Aeneas. The renowned history of Carthage is thereby brought to the Model Reader's mind and the city housing the present wedding is celebrated again. Above all, the glimpses into past times suggest that the present wedding-events harmonize with the romantic events from the past.

First I would like to draw attention to the general chronology of the poem: *Epithalamium Fridi* begins with a description of the sunrise, vv. 1–2.[619] The morning described is evidently the morning of the wedding day. The next independent indicator of the time of day is found in vv. 16–17, where torches lighting the sky are described.[620] The dark sky reveals that the evening has come. The last lines of the poem describe the coitus. In connection with this, no independent phenomena of nature are mentioned that may help us decide the time of the day. Nonetheless, it may be safely assumed that the

[618] *Aen*. 1. 707–708.
[619] Vv. 1–2: *Sol qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustrat*
*extulit os sacrum caelo tenebrasque resolvit.*
[620] Vv. 16–17: *Dant signum, fulsere ignes et conscious aether*
*conubiis mediisque parant convivia tectis*.

coitus takes place during the late evening or during the night after the wedding day. The events told in *Epithalamium Fridi* thus follow a straight chronological pattern, beginning from the morning of the wedding day and ending with the subsequent night. Such a straight chronological composition is used in most other *epithalamia of occasion* too; cf. Chapter 8e. It is also used in the epithalamium-like passages *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and *Aen.* 4. 102–168.

However, within the straight chronological composition of the poem, glimpses recalling past times can be perceived. I suggest that the first such glimpse recalling past times is found in the following sentence:

> vv. 11–13:
> *Tectum angustum, ingens, centum sublime columnis,*
> *Hae sacris sedes epulis, atque ordine longo*
> *Perpetuis soliti patres considere mensis.*
>
> "Stately and vast, towering with a hundred columns,
> here were the seats for the sacred feasts and in long array
> the elders used to sit down at the long-lasting tables."

This sentence is found in the passage describing the arrival of guests and the preparations for the wedding party, vv. 9–17. The sentence describes the palace housing the wedding. The first part of it is very general; cf. above. This last part is more specific; it refers to the illustrious past of the location by describing how the elders used to sit down and celebrate sacred feasts there. Most of the quotations used in this part of the description come from the account of Latinus' palace in the *Aeneid.* Nonetheless, the context in *Epithalamium Fridi* makes Dido's palace first come to the Model Reader's mind. The main reason for this is the previously given information that the wedding described in the cento takes place in Carthage (v. 7–8). The original context of the majority of the quotations used earlier in the cento also supports the association with Dido's palace. Most of these quotations come from the first or the fourth book of the *Aeneid* and these books tell the story of Dido and Aeneas.[621]

The primary effect of the association between the palace housing the wedding and Dido's palace is a sense of perpetuity. The sense of perpetuity fits the panegyric scope of the epithalamium. The infinity of the passage is particularly highlighted through the very word *perpetuis.* This word is used to describe the tables at which the forefathers used to sit down, and it may be translated as either long or long-lasting/eternal. In the original context of the quotation, it is probably best translated with the word 'long'. The reason for this is that it primarily describes the size of the tables in the *Aeneid*. In the cento, however, I would suggest the translation long-lasting/ eternal. This translation emphasises the sense of infinity which is characteristic for the passage as a whole. It also reflects some of the inherent ambiguity of the cento.

The next interesting glimpse recalling earlier times in Carthage is found in the middle of the description of the music performed at the wedding:

> vv. 18–24:
> *Fit strepitus tectis vocem per ampla volutant*
> *Atria ubi adsuetis biforem dat tibia cantum.*
> ***At tuba terribilem sonitum procul aere canoro***
> ***Increpuit*** *mollitque animos et temporat iras.*

[621] Nine out of 15 quotations: v. 1; 5; 6fp; 6sp; 8; 9fp; 9sp; 10fp; 10 tp.

*It clamor caelo, cithara crinitus Iorpas*
*Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum,*
*Iamque eadem digitis, iamque pectine pulsat eburno.*

"A din arises in the palace and voices roll through the spacious halls, where to accustomed ears the pipe utters music from double mouths. **But the trumpet with brazen song rang out afar its fearful call** and tames passion and soothes rage. A shout mounts to heaven, long-haired Iorpas on his lyre matches on his seven strings their various tones, and he strikes them now with his fingers, now with his ivory quill."

The description of the music begins with a reference to the double flute and ends with a reference to the lyre. The same instruments were portrayed in *Cento Nuptialis.* It is plausible that Luxorius found inspiration from Ausonius for the passage describing the music. Although the verses do not describe music in their original contexts, two of the quotations describing music in *Cento Nuptialis* are used to describe music in *Epithalamium Fridi* too.[622] It is also worth noting that in comparison with other wedding-poems, both centos describe the music performed at the weddings in more detail.

In *Epithalamium Fridi*, the reference to the trumpet is very strange. There is no parallel to this reference in other epithalamia or in *Aen.* 1. 657–726 or 4. 90–168. In other pieces of Roman literature, the trumpet is only mentioned in military contexts or in connection with contests, religious ceremonies or funerals. In their original context, the verses describing the trumpet in *Epithalamium Fridi* describe the sound of the trumpet announcing a military attack in the *Aeneid.*[623] I suggest that the trumpet, just like the description of the palace, also links the present events with Carthage's past. From a Roman perspective, Carthage must have been primarily associated with Dido and with the Carthaginian wars. Military music could certainly be associated with Carthage also after the wars against the Romans; the Vandal conquest of North Africa, which took place only decades before the wedding, may well be the military event primarily intended in the cento. However, I do not consider it fruitful, or necessary, to try to determine exactly which war the trumpet may refer to in *Epithalamium Fridi.* The important consideration is that it almost certainly refers to war and hostility.

The trumpet in *Epithalamium Fridi* is described as it "rang out afar its fearful call and tames passion and soothes rage." This whole phrase suggests that there is no war going on at the immediate time of the wedding. The phrase may also suggest that the memory of wars tames passion and soothes rage. The idea that the wedding is connected with and may contribute to peace is congruent with the genre; cf. Claud. *carm.* 11. Also the concord of the spouses, which is a *topos* of the genre (cf. Chapters 8d and 8e), agrees well with the suggestion that there is no war going on in connection with the wedding. However, most important for the interpretation of the cento is again the context of the quotation in the cento itself. In the context of the cento, the absence of war and hostility is best understood in connection with Venus' wedding gifts as described in the beginning of the poem. Venus' first gift is "endured peace and a plighted wedlock."[624] This phrase suggests a close connection between peace and wedlock in the poem. It is also noteworthy that Venus' gifts of peace and wedlock are linked with the love story between Dido and Aeneas. In its original context, the quotation "endured peace and a plighted wedlock" describes the positive consequences

[622] *Aen.* 6. 646=CN 26= EF 23; *Aen.* 9. 618= CN 27sp= EF 19sp.
[623] *Aen.* 9. 503–504.
[624] v. 6sp (*Aen.* 4. 99)

that Juno suggests of the marriage between Dido and Aeneas. Again, the present wedding is linked with the love story between Dido and Aeneas, and again this connection brings about altogether positive connotations in *Epithalamium Fridi*.[625]

An interesting glimpse into the past is also found at the end of the poem, in the description of the coitus:

> vv. 61–66:
> *Illa autem (neque enim fuga iam super ulla pericli est)*
> *cogitur et supplex animos summittere amori.*
> ***Spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem;***
> *illum turbat Amor. Ramum, qui veste latebat*
> *eripit a femine et flagranti fervidus infert.*
> *It cruor inque humeros cervix conlapsa recumbit.*
>
> "She, however (for now there is no longer any escape from peril), is also compelled to humbly submit her pride to Cupid. **Cupid gave hope to her wavering mind and loosed the bonds of shame;** him does Cupid overwhelm. The bough, which lay hidden under the robe, he snatches from his thigh and hot he inserts it into the blazing bride. Blood flows and his/her drooping neck sinks on his/her shoulders."

At this moment of the analysis, the interesting phrase in this passage is: *spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem.* In its original context, this quotation describes how Anna persuades Dido to relent to her love for Aeneas.[626] Unless Dido relents to her love, the plot cannot develop in accordance with the will of the gods. The words *solvitque pudorem* in the *Aeneid* suggest that the girdle shall be loosened.[627] The similarities between the plots in the *Aeneid* and in the cento are obvious. If the bride does not surrender for her love for the groom and if the girdle is not loosened, the plot in the cento cannot develop in accordance with the will of the gods. At this point, the very climax of the wedding is linked with Dido's and Aeneas' love story.

Unlike in the *Aeneid,* however, the subject of the phrase is not immediately evident in the cento. Rosenblum 1961 prints: *Spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem*. He translates: "and she gave hope to her wavering mind and cast away her chastity". Rosenblum thus makes the bride, who was the subject of the previous phrase in the cento, the subject of this phrase too. But, the construction *spem dare sibi* has no parallels in Roman literature. Moreover, in no other *epithalamium of occasion* does the bride encourage herself to take a sexual initiative. The genre suggests that the bride is encouraged by Venus or, more rarely, by Cupid. My suggestion is to understand Cupid as the implicit subject of the phrase in the cento. This interpretation fits with the genre-expectations. More important for the interpretation is however the fact that Cupid provoked Dido's first love for Aeneas in the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 1. 717–722). The similarity with the plot in the *Aeneid* strongly supports the suggested interpretation in the cento; again, the present wedding is linked with the romantic events of the past. Strongest support for the interpretation of Cupid as the implicit subject of the phrase is nonetheless found in the cento itself. Cupid is the subject of the subsequent phrase in the cento (*illum turbat Amor*); this facilitates the suggested interpretation. Another important reason to understand Cupid as the implicit subject is that such an interpretation agrees well with his promises to Venus in the preceding dialogue.

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[625] For the well-known negative connotations, cf. Chapter 8c, 'The *Aeneid.'*
[626] *Aen*. 4. 55.
[627] cf. Pease 1935 *ad locum.*

The preceding discussion shows that the wedding described in *Epithalamium Fridi* is repeatedly linked with Dido's and Aeneas' love story. According to tradition, this love story took place centuries earlier in the same geographic setting as the present wedding. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* the love story between Dido and Aeneas has altogether lost its elsewhere negative connotations. The glimpses into Carthage's past contribute to a sense of perpetuity in the poem; they also contribute to the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion.*

## *The dialogue between Venus and Cupid*

The dialogue in *Epithalamium Fridi* is characteristic for the genre. Gods predict and foresee subsequent events in the human world in epic *anti-epithalamia* as well as in *epithalamia of occasion*; cf. Chapters 8c, 8e and 9. In their dialogues, gods plan what will happen among humans; they instruct each other how to act in the human world; they fulfil each other's commands and the plot develops in accordance with their plans. This is the case regardless of the kind of wedding-related text (*anti-epithalamium* or *epithalamium of occasion*) and regardless of the kind of chronological composition in the text (a straight chronological pattern or a chronological circle-composition). In *Aen.* 1. 657–726, as well as in most *epithalamia of occasion* from Statius onwards, this kind of dialogue takes place between Venus and Cupid. In some *epithalamia of occasion*, Venus talks to Hymenaeus instead of to Cupid. Juno and Venus talk to each other in *Aen.* 4. 90–168.

In *Epithalamium Fridi,* Venus and Cupid talk to each other (vv. 27–60). Venus praises the bride and asks for Cupid's assistance in realising the wedding (vv. 27–51). In doing so, he must elicit the bride's love, *occultum inspires ignem* (v. 48). This quotation comes from Venus' speech in which she asks Cupid to take Julus' place at Dido's party for Aeneas and thereby incite Dido's first love for Aeneas, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 (*Aen.* 1. 663–690).[628] As noticed above, the plots are very similar in the *Aeneid* and in the cento, as regards both Venus' speech and its effects. Cupid is eager to help, and he rapidly promises to provoke passionate love. This is also what he does in the following, not only in the *Aeneid*, but, as I suggested above, also in the cento.

Cupid's answer to Venus in *Epithalamium Fridi* further shows that he had contemplated the wedding already beforehand, and that he had awaited information about Venus' will:

> vv. 54–60:
> *'Mecum erit iste labor; si quid mea numina possunt,*
> *cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet*
> *inmiscentque manus manibus pugnamque lacessunt,*
> *nusquam abero, solitam flammam (datur hora quieti)*
> *desuper infundam et, tua si mihi certa voluntas,*
> *omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi,*
> *sentiet!'*
>
> 'That task shall be with me; if my divine powers can accomplish anything, when she/he embraces him/her and imprints sweet kisses and they battle hand-to-hand and provoke a fray, I shall never be away, the wonted flame (the hour is given to rest) I will pour down from above and, if your good will is sure to me, I have foreseen everything and gone over it with myself in my mind. She will feel!'

[628] *Aen*. 1. 688.

The situation in Claud. *carm. min.* 25 is similar.[629] In both *Epithalamium Fridi* and Claud. *carm. min.* 25, Venus' conversation partners know about the wedding and wait for her orders. Some similarities with the vivid description of the events of the wedding night in *Epithalamium Fridi* are also found in *carm. min.* 25, in Venus' advice to the bride near the end of the poem.[630] One major difference between *Epithalamium Fridi* and Claud. *carm. min.* 25 is however that Venus acts as *Pronuba* in Claudian's poem; in *Epithalamium Fridi* on the other hand, Cupid is asked to act as *Pronuba.* [631] Venus asks him to unite the right hands of bride and groom; he also promises to inspire conjugal love and to assist the spouses during the wedding night. As repeatedly noticed above, his role in *Epithalamium Fridi* thus greatly resembles his role in the first book of the *Aeneid.*

Noteworthy is further the close connection between central dialogue as a whole in *Epithalamium Fridi* and Venus' speech and Cupid's response in *Aen.* 1. 663–690. This broad connection is announced by the use of three unusually long quotations in the cento. The first of these quotations occurs at the very beginning of the dialogue between Venus and Cupid:

> vv. 27–28:
> *... aligerum dictis affatur Amorem:*
> *'Nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia solus,*
>
> "speaks to winged Cupid with these words: 'My son, my strength, you, who are alone my great power,"

This quotation comes from the beginning of Venus' speech to Cupid in *Aen.* 1. 663–690.[632] In her speech to Cupid in the *Aeneid,* Venus asks him to take Julus' disguise and to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. The similarity with the plot in the cento is unmistakable; and it is further emphasised through the next long quotation from *Aen.* 1. 663–690:

> vv. 52–53:
> *Paret Amor dictis carae genetricis et alas*
> *exuit et gressu gaudens...*
>
> "Cupid obeys his dear mother's words, lays by his wings and joyous in his step..."

In *Epithalamium Fridi,* as well as in the *Aeneid,* this phrase introduces Cupid's response to Venus. Together with the quotation in vv. 27–28 it hems in Venus' speech to Cupid in both works.[633] The locations of this phrase and of the phrase used in vv. 27–28 are thus extremely important in both works and the use of them in the cento suggests again

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[629] In Claud. *carm. min.* 25. 56–58, Hymenaeus answers Venus:
*Ille refert: 'Equidem dudum te, diva, morantem*
*mirabar, quod adhuc tanti secura maneres*
*coniugii.'*
"He replied: 'Long have I been wondering, goddess, at thy delay, and marvelled that thou didst take no notice of so world-famed a union.'"

[630] Claud. *carm. min.* 25. 130–136.

[631] v. 47; Claud. *carm. min.* 25 128–129.

[632] *Aen.* 1. 663–664.

[633] *Aen.* 1. 689–690.

a close analogy between the plot in *Aen.* 1. 663–690 and the dialogue between Venus and Cupid in *Epithalamium Fridi.*[634]

The third long quotation from *Aen.* 1. 663–690 in the dialogue between Venus and Cupid in the cento is found in Cupid's answer to Venus:

> v. 55:
> *cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet*
>
> "when she/he embraces him/her and imprints sweet kisses"

In the *Aeneid,* Venus uses this phrase to describe how Dido will embrace the disguised Cupid and imprint her sweet kisses on him. Her actions will provoke her love for Aeneas.[635] The subject of the phrase is thus a woman in the *Aeneid.* In other late antique *epithalamia of occasion* than *Epithalamium Fridi,* the repressed passion of grooms-to-be is a recurrent *topos,* and occasionally we read about grooms embracing and kissing their brides, or about spouses embracing and kissing each other.[636] The repressed passion of brides-to-be is never explicitly mentioned, nor do brides embrace and kiss their grooms on their own initiative.[637] Thus, our genre-expectations from other *epithalamia of occasion* lead us to believe that the phrase in the cento should have a masculine subject. This interpretation has been taken for granted by earlier scholars; Rosenblum 1961 translates "when he embraces her and gives her sweet kisses." On the other hand, our acquaintance with the text of origin leads us to believe that the phrase should have a feminine subject. Which is the right interpretation?

I suggest a vague and 'double' interpretation which is based precisely upon the doubleness of the text. Both groom and bride can be regarded implicit subjects of the phrase. I believe that the *sine qua non* for admitting such a 'double' interpretation is that both interpretations, semantically, are equally convincing in the cento. In this case, the most relevant issues are whether the active performance of caressing and kissing can provoke the bride's passionate love, and whether the passive sensation of being caressed and kissed can do the same thing. I believe that the answers to both these questions are affirmative. As discussed above, there is also evidence for events of both kinds in the wedding-related texts which most closely resemble the cento, i.e. *Aeneid* 1. 657–726 and late antique *epithalamia of occasion*. A result of the suggested 'double' interpretation of the phrase is a close connection between groom and bride in the cento. This close connection continues throughout Cupid's answer, where he talks about the couple battling hand-to-hand and provoking a fray together. The close connection between the spouses continues also in the subsequent description of the coitus.

The preceding discussion shows that the dialogue between Venus and Cupid in the cento is moulded upon the dialogue between Venus and Cupid in *Aen.* 1. 663–690. The negative connotations in the Virgilian dialogue, however, are altogether absent from the cento dialogue. The pictures given of bride and groom in the dialogue are characterised by a sense of closeness.

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[634] Moreover, I suggest that this is a generic implication which goes beyond the immediate context of the cento; cf. Chapters 14b and 15.

[635] *Aen*. 1. 687.

[636] E.g. *Cento Nuptialis*, Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.

[637] Cf. the discussions about the negative pictures of passionate women in *anti-epithalamia,* Chapters 8c and 9. Cf. also analysis of *Cento Nuptialis,* Chapter 12.

## *The close connection between groom and bride in the description of the coitus*

As regards the description of the coitus, I suggest that the phrase *It cruor inque humeros cervix conlapsa recumbit* (v. 66) is open for the same kind of 'double' interpretation as the previously discussed phrase *spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem* in Cupid's speech. The most relevant issue at this point is whether the drop of neck of groom or bride is equally probable at the climax of the coitus. I believe that both are most probable. Perhaps however, the association with blood flowing from the virgin's vagina makes the association with the bride's neck slightly more probable.[638] On the other hand, the groom is the subject of the preceding sentence in the cento; this would support a connection with the groom's neck. In its original context, the verse describes the dying Euryalus.[639] The description in the *Aeneid* has evident erotic overtones; it may be regarded as thematically related with the passage in the cento.[640] The ambiguous portrait given by Euryalus in the *Aeneid* supports my belief that the association with him leaves it open whether a man or a woman should be regarded as the implicit subject of the phrase in the cento.

*It cruor inque humeros cervix conlapsa recumbit* is the last phrase in the description of the coitus. If both groom and bride may be regarded as its implicit semantic subjects, this would imply that they are very closely connected at the climax not only of the coitus, where they can be seen as reciprocally falling on each other's shoulders, but also of the poem as a whole. As regards the close connection between the spouses, it is also worth noticing that many phrases in Cupid's speech as well as in the description of the coitus have the bride as their implicit subject, although the subject in the *Aeneid* is masculine.[641] Such phrases too contribute to a sense of closeness between groom and bride.

## *The portrait of the bride earlier in the poem*

The bride in *Epithalamium Fridi* is however not primarily linked with her groom earlier in the poem. In Venus' speech to Cupid, she is firmly connected with Venus and her throng:

> vv. 35–45:
> *Credo equidem, nova mi facies inopinave surgit.*
> *Nonne vides, quantum egregio decus enitet ore?*
> *Os humerosque deo similis, cui lactea colla*
> *auro innectuntur, crines nodantur in aurum,*
> *aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.*

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[638] Rosenblum 1961 translates: "Blood flows, her neck droops and sinks on her shoulder."

[639] *Aen*. 9. 434.

[640] Lyne 1987 p. 229. Worth noticing is also that the following lines in the *Aeneid* link Euryalus with a flower which is cut down by a plough; this simile derives from Sappho (105c) and was used also by Catullus (62. 39 ff). Sappho's context was probably epithalamic, and Catullus' certainly was; cf. Chapters 8a and 8b.

[641] 57sp; 60fp; 61. It could perhaps be argued that the subject of the phrase is unclear – or open for a 'double' interpretation – in Cupid's last word to Venus, *sentiet!* (v. 60fp) Is it the groom or the bride who will feel? I am inclined to believe that the bride is intended. The reason for this is the context in the cento: in the preceding lines, Cupid has admittedly more focus on both spouses than Venus has. Nonetheless, his speech is delivered as a response to Venus' speech, and her whole focus is on the bride. I believe that this renders the bride a more plausible subject of the phrase.

*Qualis gemma micat, qualis Nereia Doto*
*et Galatea secant spumantem pectore pontum.*
*Cura mihi comitumque foret nunc una mearum!*
*Hanc ego nunc ignaram huius quodcumque pericli est,*
*cum tacet omnis ager, noctem non amplius unam*
*conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo.*

"I believe a new and unexpected form appears before me. Do not you see how much beauty shines forth from her noble face? In face and shoulders like a god, her milk-white necks are entwined with gold, her tresses are knotted into gold, a buckle of gold clasps her purple cloak. She glitters like a jewel, like Doto, Nereus' daughter and Galatea, who cleave with their breast the foaming sea. I would that she were now my care and one of my band! In a single night when all the land is still I will link her, who is now without knowledge of any peril, in sure wedlock and call her my/his own."

In this passage, Venus compares the bride to a jewel and to the Nereids, who are often portrayed as Venus' followers. Such comparisons are commonplaces of the genre. Venus also wishes that the bride were one of her band and her plans for the future accord with this wish. The whole passage is so similar to Venus' praising of the bride in Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2 that it has been suggested that Luxorius consciously imitates Statius. It has further been suggested that Venus expresses anxiety that the bride's beauty may surpass her own, and that she has diminished her own beauty with the purpose of acting under human disguise.[642] In Statius' poem, she diminishes her beauty and expresses some rivalry towards the bride.

The belief that Venus expresses rivalry towards the bride in *Epithalamium Fridi* is primarily based on the phrase *cura mihi ... foret*. Pavloviskis (1965) claims that this phrase suggests that the bride will be a troublesome care and danger for Venus.[643] The phrase may, however, just as well suggest that Venus will care for the bride.[644] This meaning fits well with the context in the cento, and it is congruent with our genre-expectations. It also has some parallels in *Cento Nuptialis,* where the groom is described as *mea maxima cura* and the bride as *Veneris iustissima cura.*[645] Pavlovskis further claims that Luxorius has changed the Virgilian *cara* in *Aen.* 11. 586 for *cura* in the cento*,* a change that he believes would support the idea of rivalry in *Epithalamium Fridi.* It can however be questioned whether Luxorius changes the Virgilian text at this point, since there is some evidence for the reading *cura* in the Virgilian tradition.[646] Other arguments than the context in *Epithalamium Fridi* can thus be successfully used against the belief that Venus expresses rivalry towards the bride in the poem. Support against this suggestion can however also be found from the poem itself; neither the idea that Venus participates at the wedding, nor the idea that she diminishes her beauty, is clearly expressed anywhere in *Epithalamium Fridi*.

Although evident traces of rivalry between Venus and the bride are not found in *Epithalamium Fridi,* the influence from Statius at other points of the *encomium* of the

[642] Pavlovskis 1965 pp. 173–174.
[643] Pavloviskis 1965 p. 173.
[644] Cf. the construction *Cura alicui est*. The Latin word *cura* may be equivalent with: (I) *studium*, *labor*, *opera*, *industria*, *diligentia*, *intentio*, *vigilantia*, *providentia*, *sedulitas*, or with (II) *angor animi*, *anxietas*, *aerumna*, *dolor omnino de quaelibet re quam aliquis secum anxie reputat volvitque animo*, *cogitatio*. (*TLL*: *cura*).
[645] Auson. *Cento Nuptialis* v. 8; 33.
[646] Heyne & Wagner (ed.) 1833 mentions the mss. Goth. Tert. giving *cura*.

bride is indisputable. The following quotation comes from a passage in *Silvae* 1. 2 where Venus talks to Cupid about the bride:

Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2. 112–118:

*... Mihi dulcis imago*
*prosiluit. Celsae procul aspice frontis honores*
*suggestumque comae. Latias metire quid ultra*
*emineat matres, quantum Latonia nymphas*
*virgo premit quantumque egomet Nereidas exsto.*
*Haec et caeruleis mecum consurgere digna*
*fluctibus et nostra potuit considere concha.*[647]

"She has grown up my own sweet image. Behold even from here the lofty beauty of her brow and high-piled hair. Reckon how far she doth tower above the matrons of Rome: even so far as the Latonian maid tops the nymphs, or I myself stand out above the Nereids. This girl is worthy of rising with me from out of the dark-blue waves; she could sit with me upon my chariot-shell."

The initial words of this quotation from Statius' poem and of the preceding quotation from *Epithalamium Fridi* are similar enough to suggest a conscious imitation by Luxorius. This belief is supported by significant similarities between others of Luxorius' and Statius' poems.[648] In both *Silv.* 1. 2. and *Epithalamium Fridi,* Venus also mentions the Nereids in close connection with herself and the bride. This too strengthens the suggestion of conscious imitation. Yet, just as with the imitation of *Aen.* 1. 657–726, where the unhappy outcome of events in Dido's and Aeneas' love-story should not be considered, the potentially negative notes from Statian's poem should, I strongly believe, not be considered in *Epithalamium Fridi.*

Also noteworthy is the close resemblance between Venus and the bride in both *Epithalamium Fridi* and *Silv.* 1. 2. Their close resemblance is moreover a panegyric *topos* of the genre as a whole. In her speech to the bride in Silv. 1. 2, Venus says:

Stat. Silv. 1. 2. 167–168:

*... tibi tale decus vultusque superbos*
*meque dedi,*

"… did I give thee such charm and pride of countenance and my own spirit,"

This phrase suggests a very close identification between Venus and the bride in Statius' poem. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* Venus praises the golden ornament of the bride at unusual length:

vv. 37–39:

*Os humerosque deo similis, cui lactea colla*
*auro innectuntur, crines nodantur in aurum,*
*aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.*

"In face and shoulders like a god, her milk-white necks are entwined with gold, her tresses are knotted into gold, a buckle of gold clasps her purple cloak."

[647] Courtney (ed.) 1990 has *cruces* around *potuit* v. 118.
[648] Pavlovskis 1965 pp. 173–174; McGill 2005 pp. 101–102.

This may perhaps reflect the description of how the goddess herself binds a golden belt below her naked breast at the beginning of the poem:[649]

> v. 5:
> *aurea subnectens exertae cingula mammae,*
>
> "binding a golden belt below her naked breast,"

Identification based upon Venus' and the bride's similar beauty becomes a panegyric *topos* of the genre from Statius onwards. In Stat. Silv. 1. 2, the identification between them is strong enough to suggest that Venus should be regarded as a symbol for the bride.[650] The portraits of both Venus and the bride are too schematic to allow any such conclusions in *Epithalamium Fridi.* Although schematic and vague in its details, the resemblance between them remains nonetheless indisputable also in the cento.

Schematic and vague in its details is also the description of the other deities present in *Epithalamium Fridi.* In the first part of the poem, goddesses lay aside their appearance and robe and prepare for the wedding:

> vv. 15–17:
> *... faciemque deae vestemque reponunt.*
> *Dant signum, fulsere ignes et conscius aether*
> *conubiis mediisque parant convivia tectis.*
>
> "... and the goddesses lay aside their appearance and robe. They give sign, fires flashed and heaven, the witness to the wedding, and within the palace they prepare the feast."

I believe that it remains unclear exactly which goddesses are intended in this passage. As discussed above, other scholars have assumed that Venus is one of the goddesses intended. I believe that it can only be assumed with certainty that Juno and the Oreads, whose expedition towards the palace is mentioned some lines above (v. 9), are among the goddesses intended. It remains also unclear whether the goddesses lay aside their divine appearance and participate under human disguise at the wedding, or whether they lay aside a previous disguise and participate while revealing their true identities.

In the original context of the quotation, Isis takes off her divine appearance and acts under disguise with the purpose of stirring up the Trojan women to rebellion.[651] The original context of the quotation thus suggests that the goddesses in the cento lay aside their divine appearance and participate under disguise at the wedding; earlier scholars have taken this interpretation for granted.[652] But, such an interpretation has no parallels in other *epithalamia of occasion.* Gods act under disguise only in *anti-epithalamia*; cf. Chapter 9. Since there is no evidence of gods acting under disguise in other *epithalamia of occasion,* I suggest that the negative associations brought about through the context

[649] Pavlovskis 1965 p. 173 claims that Venus' detailed description of the bride's golden ornament indicates rivalry between them.

[650] Roberts 1989 p. 324: "Indeed the whole poem suggests a close identification between the two figures, to the point that it is no exaggeration to talk of Venus as standing for the bride."

[651] *Aen.* 5. 619. *deae* in the *Aeneid* must be understood as *gen. sg*. *deae* in the cento must be understood as *nom. pl.* So also McGill 2005, footnote 54.

[652] Rosenblum 1961 translates "the goddesses lay aside their divine appearance and garment." McGill 2005 footnote 54 also suggests that the goddesses put aside their divine appearances.

in the text of origin should be repressed at this moment.[653] In this case, where no clear evidence is found from the immediate context of the cento, the poem's rhetorical function alone must decide how the cento's details should be understood, or only vaguely understood.

The Oreads' participation at the wedding has troubled some scholars; it has been explained as an unhappy consequence of the "nature of the poem" (i.e. of the poem being a cento).[654] This may be so. There is however also another possible interpretation of their presence at this early stage of the poem (v.9). The quotation about the Oreads comes from a passage in the *Aeneid* describing the goddess Diana and her throng, a throng to which the Oreads belong. In this passage, Dido, who has not yet experienced love, is likened to Diana.[655] As noticed above, the bride in *Epithalamium Fridi* will be firmly linked with Venus. The association with Venus does not, however, appear at full scale until later in the poem, in the dialogue between Venus and Cupid. It could be that the Oreads' early presence at the wedding suggests a parallel between the bride, who has not yet experienced love at this moment of the poem, and Dido before falling in love with Aeneas. The evidence within the poem for such an interpretation is admittedly thin; but some support may be found in other *epithalamia of occasion,* where the development of bride or groom, who are first ignorant of love and then overwhelmed with it, is a recurrent theme; cf. Chapter 8e. If so, the semantic function of the Oreads' early presence at the wedding may primarily be to underline the bride's virginity.

Throughout the poem, the bride is firmly linked with Dido. This is primarily achieved indirectly, through the recurrent connections between the present wedding and Dido's love story with Aeneas. It is achieved directly only once, through the use of one long quotation in the previously discussed description of the bride's golden ornament, lines 38sp–39. In their original context, these lines describe Dido at her departure for the hunt with Aeneas.[656] Possibly, the negative associations with the outraging Dido are too strong to admit more frequent direct associations between her and the bride, even in so clearly epideictic a poem as *Epithalamium Fridi*. Noteworthy is nonetheless that the portrait of the bride has strong divine notes (Venus in particular) and strong historic notes (Dido) throughout *Epithalamium Fridi,* and that both of these notes are altogether positive in the cento.

## *The portrait of the groom earlier in the poem*

There is no elaborated *encomium* of the groom in *Epithalamium Fridi.* Venus mentions him only once in her speech to Cupid; but when she does, she emphasises his worthiness and the worthiness of the wedding:

[653] The negative associations with the text of origin must be repressed also as regards lines 16–17fp. In their original context, these lines describe Gaia and Juno Pronuba giving a sign when Dido and Aeneas enter the cave. The passage in the *Aeneid* is best interpreted as an *anti-epithalamium; cf.* Chapter 8c. As repeatedly noticed, however, in *Epithalamium Fridi* the love story between Dido and Aeneas has altogether lost its negative connotations.

[654] Morelli 1910 pp. 415–416: "Il centone è assolutamente insignificante; per la sua natura stessa, ben poco valore si può attribuire e a quell che c'è (a es. le Oreadi, dee non nuziali, che sono nominate con la *bona Iuno*) e a quell che manca…"

[655] *Aen*. 1. 500.

[656] *Aen*. 4. 138–139.

vv. 49–51:

*... Liceat Frido servare marito,*
*cui natam egregio genero dignisque hymenaeis*
*dat pater et pacem hanc aeterno foedero iungit.*

"... Let her serve her husband Fridus, a peerless son-in-law to whom the father gives his daughter in worthy nuptials and confirms this peace with an eternal compact."

The worthiness of the groom and of the wedding are commonplaces of the genre. It is worth noticing that Luxorius has changed the Virgilian *Phrygio* for *Frido*. This is the most significant alteration of the Virgilian text found in the cento. The 'Phrygian husband' in the *Aeneid* is Aeneas, with whom Juno wants to marry Dido. Through associations with the original contexts of quotations, Aeneas is linked with the groom also elsewhere in *Epithalamium Fridi*,[657] and the phonetic resemblance between *Phrygius* and *Fridus,* a resemblance with which Luxorius plays at this moment of the poem, highlights their close identification.

## *The relationship between* Cento Nuptialis *and* Epithalamium Fridi

As noticed in the preceding chapter, the groom was associated with Aeneas and his allies in *Cento Nuptialis* too. In *Cento Nuptialis,* these associations not only filled a general panegyric scope, but were also part of a consistent portrayal of the groom as heroic, strong and independently superior to his bride. The picture of the bride on the other hand was characterised by hindrance and hostility. The negative associations as regards the bride were for the most part linked with her threatening sexuality, and the negative picture of her culminated in the description of the coitus; there she was also strongly associated with the repulsiveness of her vagina. The coitus itself was related with hostility, competition and death.

The pictures in *Epithalamium Fridi* are radically different. Although bride and groom are firmly associated with Dido and Aeneas here too, the hostility between these protagonists in the *Aeneid* certainly does not extend to this cento. As repeatedly noticed above, the reason for this is that Dido's and Aeneas' love story has been altogether subordinated to the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion*. The sexual aggressiveness of the spouses is also far less emphasised in *Epithalamium Fridi* than in *Cento Nuptialis.* The spouses are closely related to each other, and particularly so in the description of the coitus at the end of the poem. Nonetheless, through associations with the original contexts of numerous quotations, the coitus can be associated with Hades and death in *Epithalamium Fridi* too.[658] It can also be associated with competition and battle. Such associations are however often brought about through the use of quotations which are used in *Cento Nuptialis* too, or through quotations which come from frequently used passages related to the description of the coitus in *Cento Nuptialis*.[659] As regards the whole poem, approximately one fifth of the total text amount (18 out of 88 quotations) was used in *Cento Nuptialis*. As regards the description of the coitus in

[657] V. 48–51; 65fp.

[658] 34fp=*Aen.* 6. 129; 59=*Aen.* 6. 105; 64sp=*Aen.* 6. 406=*CN* 105; 66=*Aen.* 9. 434; 67=*Aen.* 6. 637.

[659] 34sp=*Aen.* 10. 649; 60fp=*Aen.* 7. 434; 61=*Aen.* 8. 251 (this quotation comes from the passage in the *Aeneid* where Hercules' killing of Cacus is described. Associations with this event forecast the description of the coitus in *CN*; cf. preceding chapter); 64fp=*Aen.* 12. 70=*CN* 55; 65fp=*Aen.* 10. 788=*CN* 109; 65sp=*Aen.* 9. 72.

*Epithalamium Fridi*, half of the quotations used there were used in *Cento Nuptialis* too. This almost inevitably implies some small thematic resemblance between the passages.

As regards the narrative as a whole, the similarities between *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* are most evident in the detailed descriptions of the music played at the weddings and in the relatively detailed descriptions of the coituses. However, although Luxorius uses many phrases which were used by Ausonius before in the latter passage, the general mode of the passage is radically different. There is no evident trace of hostility between the spouses when they reach the shared climax at the end of the poem. The closeness between bride and groom is what most distinguishes the description of the coitus in *Epithalamium Fridi* from the description of the coitus in *Cento Nuptialis,* and I believe that the sense of closeness between groom and bride at the end of the poem should be regarded not only as a result of the coitus, but also as the climax of the poem as a whole. The happy outcome of the wedding in general and of the coitus in particular is also emphasised in the last two lines of the poem; these lines portray the bride as she rejoices over the divine birth of children and grandchildren.[660]

## Conclusions of the chapter

*Epithalamium Fridi* belongs, as does *Cento Nuptialis,* to the kind of *wedding-related texts* called *epithalamia of occasion* in this work. Therefore, the rhetorical function of the poem is of course epideictic. The author of the poem is Luxorius and the poem commemorates the wedding between a certain Fridus and his bride. It can be assumed that the spouses were socially superior to the author and that they lived in Carthage during the late 5th or early 6th century.[661] Presumably, the poem was also written and performed in Carthage. Beyond this point, the circumstances around the composition of *Epithalamium Fridi* remain unknown.

The structure of the poem clearly shows that it belongs to the tradition of *late antique epithalamia of occasion,* as established in the poems by Statius and Claudian. In contrast to *Cento Nuptialis,* it contains a central dialogue between Venus and Cupid. This dialogue sets the plot in motion and it covers exactly half of the lines in the poem, vv. 27–60. Prior scholarly examinations of the relationship between *Epithalamium Fridi* and earlier wedding poetry have identified Statius as a major source of inspiration for Luxorius.[662] The influence from Statius' wedding poem on *Epithalamium Fridi* is indisputable. However, in the preceding analysis a close resemblance between the cento and Claudian's wedding poems was also found at some points, and a most significant influence was found from the epithalamium-like passages *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 throughout the cento.

Between *Epithalamium Fridi* and *Cento Nuptialis,* there are also a few similarities which go beyond the obvious fact that both poems are centos; such similarities are seen in the descriptions of the music played at the weddings and in the circumstance that the coitus is described in both poems. Nonetheless, there are also major differences between

[660] Vv. 67–68: *His demum exactis geminam dabit Ilia prolem*
*Laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes.*

[661] Cf. Chapter 10b and Rosenblum 1961.

[662] Morelli 1910 pp. 410–416 claims that the first parts of the poem resemble Stat. *Silv.* 1. 2, that Venus' speech to Cupid resembles Claud. *carm. min.* 25 and that the description of the deflowering of the bride at the end of the poem is inspired by Ausonius. Pavloviskis 1965 and McGill 2005 further emphasise Statius' influence.

*Epithalamium Fridi* and *Cento Nuptialis*. Luxorius relates for the most part differently than Ausonius to his sources. This can perhaps be deduced already from his more frequent use of long quotations and from the fact that he slightly alters the Virgilian text at some points.[663] Luxorius also uses strikingly many quotations from the epithalamium-like passages *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168. Because *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 can be read as 'epithalamia,' it is particularly difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the influences from the text of origin and from the epithalamic tradition; the poem's exact relationship to the genre is thus difficult to determine in its details. *Epithalamium Fridi* is however certainly more closely related to contemporary wedding texts than *Cento Nuptialis*.

Moreover, unlike the mood in *Cento Nuptialis,* the atmosphere throughout *Epithalamium Fridi* is characterised by a significant sense of closeness. There is a sense of closeness between the historical events and the present events in Carthage; there is a sense of closeness between human and divine spheres; there is a sense of closeness between groom and bride at the end of the poem. All these proximities contribute in different ways to the panegyric scope of the poem. Primarily, they do so by associating the present wedding with the illustrious love story between Dido and Aeneas. This love story took place, as does the wedding, in Carthage. The city of Carthage is also portrayed as the blissful place where human and divine, as well as historical and present events, congregate. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* the love story between Dido and Aeneas has totally lost its elsewhere negative connotations. The main reason for this is that it has been altogether subordinated to the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion.* The positive reinterpretation of Dido's and Aeneas' love story may have been facilitated by the circumstance that the poem in all probability was written and performed in Carthage. Possibly the story about Dido and Aeneas was by tradition read in a more positive way there than in other parts of the Roman empire, particularly with regard to Dido's role in it.

There is, however, not only thematic closeness in *Epithalamium Fridi*. Also the relationships between the cento, its text of origin and its genre are characterised by closeness: as already mentioned, *Epithalamium Fridi* draws extensively upon two epithalamium-like passages in the text of origin, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168. These passages provide the cento not only with several quotations, but also with much of its general structure. The two 'nodes', text of origin and genre, interfere throughout the cento, but the genre undoubtedly prevails over the text of origin. As will be elaborated in Chapter 15, the steady inclination towards the genre in *Epithalamium Fridi* implies that this cento presupposes a less advanced Model Reader than *Cento Nuptialis.*

Unlike the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis,* there is no humorous contrast between the contexts in *Epithalamium Fridi* and its text of origin. Moreover, I suggest that the amalgamation in the cento between its text of origin and its genre facilitates the realisation of temporal, celestial and spousal affinities as discussed above. The close relationship between text of origin and genre also make some details, such as the location of the dialogue between Venus and Cupid and the question of which goddesses participate at the wedding, vague in the cento; these details are unimportant for the overall interpretation of the poem. In the general interpretation of *Epithalamium Fridi*, the genre (*epithalamium of occasion*) prevails over the text of origin. The genre also neutralises the antagonistic tendencies which are found in the text of origin; this implies

[663] Cf. Chapters 2b and 10b.

e.g. that the antagonism between Dido and Aeneas does not extend to the spouses in the cento.

# PART FOUR: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

## 14. Functions of associations and reconsideration of the text of origin

This chapter deals with two different functions of the meaningful associations with the text of origin which were provoked in the wedding centos; I call these two functions of the meaningful associations 'external' and 'internal.' The chapter also deals with the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. The chapter is based on the preceding analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi,* Chapters 12 and 13, but may also have general implications.

### a. Different functions of associations

#### *Hypotheses*

As repeatedly noticed in the preceding chapters, the Model Reader's associations with the text of origin in the wedding centos are primarily brought about through the quotations. All meaningful associations with the text of origin link the events told in the wedding centos with events told in the text of origin in a way that deepens the understanding of the cento. They do so by linking the events told in the cento with events in the text of origin that may in some way be regarded as analogous with the events told in the cento (e.g. gifts in the cento, gifts in the text of origin; party in the cento, party in the text of origin; sexual encounter in the cento, battle in the text of origin; wedding in the cento, wedding-like events in the text of origin, etc.).[664] The analogous events may or may not be portrayed in generically similar passages in the text of origin.

In the wedding centos, however, the reader may not only make meaningful associations; he or she may also make what I call 'empty' associations.[665] 'Empty' associations are, I suggest, an inevitable result of centos being patchwork-poems. Not all patches fit perfectly in a patchwork; some patches must nonetheless be used. Although not perfect, they are the best patches available. It would be unfair not to admit this reasoning with regard to quotations used in centos; some quotations bring about meaningful associations, some do not. 'Empty' associations can probably occur in all centos and they point in diverse directions. They are impossible to integrate in the interpretation of the cento; they do not make sense at any stage and must therefore be

[664] Cf. previous chapters. Cf. also Lamacchia 1958: 1.

[665] Cf. Chapter 6d, discussions about 'noise' as an obstacle for the making of meaning in centos. Cf. also Chapter 15.

repressed throughout the reading. For obvious reasons, such associations have been withheld from the analyses.

When analysing a cento, it is often difficult to immediately distinguish meaningful associations from empty associations. Although it cannot be assumed that the author intended them all or that any empirical reader has noticed them all, I suggest that all connections which deepen the understanding of the cento and which reasonably cohere with the general interpretation of the cento should be considered as meaningful; cf. Chapters 5–7.

I further suggest that the meaningful associations with the text of origin may have external as well as internal functions. The external function of a meaningful association is to link the events in the cento with a somewhat analogous event in the text of origin. By contrast, the internal function of a meaningful association is to strengthen the thematic coherence within the cento itself. All meaningful associations with the text of origin have an external function inasmuch as they link the events in the cento with somewhat analogous events in the text of origin, but only some of the meaningful associations have a clear internal function.

The following figure illustrates what I consider to be the most important similarities and differences between the different functions of meaningful associations and empty associations found in the wedding centos:

*Fig. 1*

| **'External' function of association** | **'Internal' function of association** | **'Empty' association** |
|---|---|---|
| (1ab) Some kind of meaningful association between plots in text of origin and cento. | | (1c) No kind of meaningful association between plots in text of origin and cento. |
| (2ab) Gives suitable words and meaningful associations with the cento. | | (2c) Gives only suitable words to the cento. |
| (3ab) Deepens the understanding of the cento. | | (3c) Does not deepen the understanding of the cento. |
| (4a) Immediately (although sometimes only partly) integrated when it first occurs in the cento. | (4b) Not integrated or only partly integrated when it first occurs in the cento. | (4c) Not integrated in the cento. |
| (5a) Withheld aspects (if any) continue to be repressed throughout the cento. | (5b) Withheld aspects integrated at other moments of the cento. | (5c) Continues to be repressed. |
| | (6b) When integrated, the previously withheld aspects deepen the understanding of the cento. | |

In the following, I will discuss some examples of different functions of associations found in the wedding centos. The associations have been discussed, although with a different focus, also in the previous analyses of the wedding centos, Chapters 12 and 13. In the following, I will also argue that the different functions of associations imply different approaches for the cento's Model Reader.[666]

## *Examples from* Cento Nuptialis

### Associations with external functions

Associations with an external function which are provoked by quotations from passages in the text of origin that are in themselves not *wedding-related* are more frequent in *Cento Nuptialis* than in *Epithalamium Fridi*. Nonetheless, although for the most part they do not come from generically related passages in the text of origin, all associations with external functions in *Cento Nuptialis* come from passages describing situations which can in some respect be considered analogous to the situation described in the cento. As mentioned above, it seems that all meaningful associations with the text of origin in centos link the plot in the cento with events in the text of origin which can in some respect be regarded as analogous to the events in the cento.[667] It is therefore relatively easy for the cento's Model Reader to immediately integrate them (as far as the analogy goes) in the interpretation of the cento; cf. the preceding figure (4a).

Associations with external functions in *Cento Nuptialis* are e.g. provoked by the frequent use of quotations describing festivities in the Virgilian works in the *Cena Nuptialis* section, by the frequent use of quotations describing gifts in the Virgilian works in the *Oblatio munerum* section, and by the frequent use of quotations coming from dialogues in the Virgilian works in the dialogue between groom and bride in the *Ingressus in cubiculum* section. These associations are for the most part brought about through the use of quotations which do not come from generically related passages in the text of origin.

Associations with primarily external functions are frequent also in the *Epithalamium utrique* and in the *Imminutio* section. In the *Epithalamium utrique,* many quotations come from the epithalamium-like 8th *Eclogue.* In the *Imminutio*, the coitus is continuously linked with battle in the *Aeneid.* This connection is consistent enough to portray the coitus and battle as analogous events. I suggest that the cento's Model Reader can initially suspect that *Epithalamium utrique* and *Imminutio* are generically related to the passages in the text of origin where many important quotations come from; the 8th *Eclogue* is similar to an epithalamium, and battle metaphors are frequent in Latin erotic poetry. I will come back to the *Epithalamium utrique* and the *Imminutio* in the discussion about the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. This discussion is found in the second part of this chapter.

[666] Cf. Chapter 6d.
[667] Cf. also Lamacchia 1958: 1.

**Associations with internal functions**

As was shown in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis,* consistent associations with the text of origin point forward to the events described in the *Imminutio* part of the poem; cf. Chapter 12. An association with such an internal function in *Cento Nuptialis* is the association between the wedding party and the feast commemorating Hercules' killing of Cacus, an association which was provoked in the *Cena Nuptialis* section.

This association is brought about through the use of many quotations from a passage in the *Aeneid* describing a party which is held to commemorate Hercules' killing of Cacus. The association points forward to the description of the coitus, a description which is found in the *Imminutio* part. The most important function of this association to the text of origin is internal; as was shown in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis,* its most important function is to connect the cento's different parts with each other.

It may nonetheless be immediately noticed that the quotations used to describe the wedding party in the cento come from a description of a feast in the *Aeneid.* There is thus also an immediate analogy between the plots in the passage of the cento where the quotations are re-used and in the passage of the text of origin where they come from. This analogy can be immediately recognised during a first reading; therefore, the association with the text of origin can be partly integrated in the cento already when it first occurs; cf. the preceding figure (4b). The part of the association with the text of origin which can be immediately integrated has an external function only.

Nonetheless, the fullest relevance of the passage in the text of origin appears only later in the cento; cf. the preceding figure (5b). It appears in the *Imminutio* part; this is where the circumstances motivating the feast in the *Aeneid* (the killing of Cacus) can be linked with the circumstances motivating the wedding party in the cento (the consummation of the wedding). At this point, the aspects of the associations regarding the reason for the feast in the *Aeneid* which were previously withheld (the killing of Cacus) can be more fully integrated in the cento. Up to this stage, the possible associations between the wedding and the killing of Cacus have been meaningless in the cento; therefore, they have had to be set aside. When integrated in the cento, the aspects which were previously set aside contribute to thematic unity within the cento (internal function). They also contribute to the general interpretation of *Cento Nuptialis* as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion;* cf. the preceding figure (6b).

Other associations with internal functions in *Cento Nuptialis* are found in the *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* section. In this section, quotations link the bride with a horse upon which Aeneas' descendants will ride, and with a cow which should be kept away from the bull because she sets him on fire when he stares at her. The obscenity suggested by these quotations is certainly inappropriate in the description of the bride as she appears at the wedding. It is also far from congruent with the epithalamic genre as we know it. Therefore, the Model Reader of the cento is most likely to withhold the suggested obscenity of the passage at the moment when the association first occurs in the cento; cf. the preceding figure (4b). However, and here my interpretation differs from earlier scholars', the general understanding of the cento gains from having the previously withheld obscenity of this passage integrated when the reader reaches the *Imminutio* part; cf. the preceding figure (5b). As was shown in the previous analysis of the cento, the integration of these and similar associations in *Cento Nuptialis* strengthen the interpretation of the cento as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion.* They also strengthen the thematic unity within the poem; cf. the preceding figure (6b).

McGill 2005 argues differently.[668] I agree with McGill when he says that Ausonius may be having a bit of fun in the *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* section, anticipating the pornographic *Imminutio* part through intertextuality. I also agree with the suggestion that for a reader who has read the *Imminutio* part, the lines could take an off-colour significance. But, McGill dismisses such an off-colour interpretation because it is not congruent with Ausonius' explicit strategy in the *Descriptio egredientis sponsae* section*;* "interpretation should continue to center on the fact that Ausonius is fundamentally trying to create a plausible epithalamium and praise the bride in a generically appropriate way – gestures that themselves allow for interpretative freedom, but within a particular parameter."

I believe that McGill's position reduces *Cento Nuptialis'* ambivalence, an ambivalence which the author probably strove for in the poem. After all, we know that the poem had two different purposes: it was composed both to commemorate the wedding and for the competition with the emperor. McGill's position also reduces the interpretative freedom that the cento suggests for its advanced Model Reader. I agree with the suggestion that the Model Reader should at a first stage be cautious as regards associations that contradict the presupposed panegyric scope of the wedding-cento; cf. the preceding figure (4b). Nonetheless, as was seen in Chapter 12, *Cento Nuptialis* does provoke associations that contradict its presupposed panegyric function. The continuous use of quotations itself inevitably causes a multiplicity of possible associations, of which some may contradict the general scope of the poem. Doubtful associations can sometimes be regarded as 'empty' associations which should be repressed; cf. the preceding figure (1–5c).[669] However, sometimes the doubtful associations are consistent enough to overthrow the general interpretation of the whole cento. As was seen in Chapter 12, this is so in the double-functioned *Cento Nuptialis.*

I believe that the circumstance that there are so many potentially obscene associations in *Cento Nuptialis* suggests in itself that the cento's advanced Model Reader would be implied to keep an open eye for them; it also suggests that he or she should let the obscene associations have an influence over the general interpretation of the cento. The evidence within the text for the unexpected interpretation of the cento as an *anti-epithalamium* is, I believe, convincing enough even if the double circumstances lying behind the poem's composition had been unknown to us. The approaches suggested for the advanced Model Reader, including a reconsideration of the first seven sections through the lens of the *Imminutio,* lie, so to speak, implicit in the text.[670]

The *Ingressus in cubiculum* section in *Cento Nuptialis* is particularly interesting with regard to what can perhaps be understood as a special use of 'internal' functions of associations in cento dialogues. In the *Ingressus in cubiculum* section*,* the spouses reveal suspicion with regard to each other's true intentions. On the surface of the text in the cento, there is not much that motivates their suspicion and hostility. However, when the original contexts of quotations describing the spouses' actions and words are considered, both spouses' suspicion of treachery becomes comprehensible; cf. the analysis of this section in Chapter 12.

This may be used as a dramatically very efficient tool in the cento dialogue. The dramatic efficiency is, however, only at hand if the internal associations between the protagonists' lines and their subsequent actions are allowed to come up to the surface of the Model Reader's mind and influence his or her interpretation of the plot. Such

[668] McGill 2005 chapter 5, footnote 36.
[669] Cf. above. Cf also Chapter 6d, discussions on noise.
[670] Cf. Chapter 6d. Cf. also Conte 1986 p. 30 and Eco 1996.

influence strengthens the Model Reader's understanding not only of the immediate plot and of the protagonists' interpretation of the situation, but also of the plot in the cento as a whole. The reason for this is that the protagonists' interpretations of each other's intentions can determine the subsequent plot in the cento. As was seen in the preceding analysis, this is the case in *Cento Nuptialis,* where the groom's presumed interpretations of the bride's hidden intentions could be identified as plausible motivating factors lying behind his subsequent violence in the *Imminutio* part.

## *Examples from* Epithalamium Fridi

### Associations with external functions

*Epithalamium Fridi*, unlike *Cento Nuptialis*, draws much upon generically related passages in the text of origin, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and *Aen.* 4. 102–168. The association between Venus' speeches to Cupid in the cento and in *Aen.* 1. 663–689 is one of the most interesting associations in *Epithalamium Fridi*. This association is brought about through many quotations, among which some of the longest are found at important positions in the cento. It links the momentary plot in the cento with a similar plot in a generically related passage in the text of origin. The function of the association is primarily external; cf. the preceding figure (1–7a).[671]

In *Epithalamium Fridi,* there are very few meaningful associations which link the events in the cento with analogous events in passages in the text of origin which do not resemble epithalamia. Actually, the connection between the cento and *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 seems to be the only connection with the text of origin that really matters for the interpretation of *Epithalamium Fridi.*

### Associations with internal functions

In *Epithalamium Fridi,* associations with the text of origin having internal functions are less frequent, and also less important for the general interpretation of the poem, than in *Cento Nuptialis.* Nonetheless, some such associations are found in this cento too. In contrast to *Cento Nuptialis,* the few associations having a primarily internal function do not, however, contradict the general epedeictic scope of *Epithalamium Fridi.*

One such example is the possible connection between Venus' gifts of 'endured peace and plighted wedlock' as described at the beginning of the poem, and the trumpet which is described later in the poem as it 'rang out afar its fearful call, it tames passion and soothes rage.' The original context of the first quotation links the wedding described in the cento with the supposed positive outcome of Dido's and Aeneas' love story; cf. the preceding figure (4b). When the second quotation is linked with the first, the idea that peace is a likely result of the wedding is emphasised and more fully integrated in the cento; cf. the preceding figure (5b). The connection between peace and marriage agrees with Juno's suggestion about Dido's and Aeneas' 'wedding' and it is

[671] It may perhaps also be argued that the many quotations from the same passage in the text of origin interfere so much with each other in the cento that the effect is also in some respect internal. The whole network of quotations interacting with each other ultimately links, however, the dialogues in *Epithalamium Fridi* and the *Aeneid* with each other. I therefore regard this whole network of associations as, so to say, one association with a primarily external function. The generic closeness between *Epithalamium Fridi* as a whole and *Aen.* 1. 657–726 is particularly emphasised through the association between the dialogues, which are typical of the epithalamium.

also congruent with epithalamic genre-expectations. Thus, unlike *Cento Nuptialis,* the associations with internal functions in *Epithalamium Fridi* further strengthen the panegyric scope and the generic identity of the cento as an *epithalamium of occasion*; cf. the preceding figure (6b).

I further suggest that the associations with internal functions in *Epithalamium Fridi* indirectly also cast the story about Dido and Aeneas in a more positive mode than is generally the case; cf. the following discussion about the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin.

## *Summary*

This part of the chapter has shown that the meaningful associations with the text of origin found in the wedding centos have two different functions: one which I call 'external,' and one which I call 'internal.' The 'external' function of an association with the text of origin concerns the relationship between the plot in the cento and the plot in the text of origin. By contrast, the 'internal' function of an association with the text of origin primarily concerns the plot within the cento itself. In some meaningful associations, I find only an external function; in some I find both external and internal functions.

To some degree all meaningful associations with the text of origin have an 'external' function, inasmuch as they link the events told in the cento precisely with events told in the external text of origin. It was however shown that the association with a primarily 'internal' function reaches its fullest significant connection with the text of origin in a process having two or more steps. At the moment when this kind of association first occurs in the cento, it cannot be fully integrated in the cento, because it does not make immediate sense there. Nonetheless, the association comes up to the surface of the Model Reader's mind at a later stage of the reading (or during a second or later reading); there the association begins to make better sense and it can therefore be more fully integrated in the interpretation of the cento. Moreover, when the internal function of an association has reached its full potential, it sometimes helps to cast the general interpretation of the cento in a new mode.[672] This is so in *Cento Nuptialis.* The internal function of an association always deepens the general understanding of the cento.

Unlike the internal function of an association, the external function of an association is immediately integrated as far as it can be in the cento. The fullest possible effect of an external function of an association is therefore much more immediate than the fullest possible effect of an association having a primarily internal function.

In *Cento Nuptialis* as well as in *Epithalamium Fridi,* associations having external as well as with internal functions occur. In *Epithalamium Fridi*, associations with *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 having primarily external functions are most important for the general interpretation of the poem. Internal functions of associations, as well as external functions of associations which point towards passages in the text of origin which are not generically related with the epithalamium, play very small roles in this cento. By contrast, in *Cento Nuptialis,* associations having the internal function of uniting the first

[672] The ability of the internal function of an association to eventually be integrated in the interpretation of the cento is what distinguishes it from 'empty' aspects of associations. Unlike internal functions of associations, 'empty' associations must be repressed throughout the poem; there is nothing in any part of the cento which allows them to be integrated in the interpretation of the cento. The internal function of an association on the other hand deepens the general interpretation of the cento and the sense of unity within the cento; it therefore can and should be integrated.

sections of the poem with the events described in the *Imminutio* part are very important for the overall interpretation. These associations contribute to thematic unity within the poem and to the general interpretation of *Cento Nuptialis* as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion.* The high frequency of associations having a possible internal function indicates in itself that the cento's advanced Model Reader should keep an open eye for them, and that they should be allowed to influence the general interpretation of the poem; this kind of reading, including re-reading(s), lies implicit in the text.

What can perhaps be regarded as a special kind of internal associations was found in the dialogue between groom and bride in the *Ingressus in cubiculum* section of *Cento Nuptialis*. These associations could help the Model Reader to understand the protagonists of the poem and their actions. They could thereby also indirectly help to explain the plot that follows in the cento.

## b. Reconsideration of the text of origin

An important observation in the previous part of this chapter was that the wedding centos' meaningful associations with the text of origin are all brought about by quotations which link the events in the cento with somewhat analogous events in the text of origin. These events were sometimes described in passages which were generically related to the cento, sometimes not. In this part of the chapter, I will continue the discussion about meaningful associations with passages in the text of origin which may be considered as generically related to the centos.

### *Hypotheses*

Earlier scholars have assumed that centos sometimes elicit a reconsideration of their text of origin.[673] Some earlier scholars have also distinguished between centos which question or even overthrow the authority of their text of origin and centos which strengthen the authority of their text of origin, e.g. Herzog's classifications of centos as characterised by *Auflösung* (*decomposition*) or by *Deutung* (*interpretation*) as introduced in Chapter 5 in this work. Scholars who distinguish between overthrowing and strengthening functions in centos tend to classify the use of the Virgilian text for erotic purposes as aggressive, and the use of the Virgilian text for tragic or epic purposes as strengthening; the cento tragedy *Medea* and Proba's epic Christian cento have been regarded as reinterpretative and primarily strengthening towards the Virgilian texts, whereas *Cento Nuptialis* and to some degree also *Epithalamium Fridi* have been regarded as parodic-aggressive towards the Virgilian texts.[674]

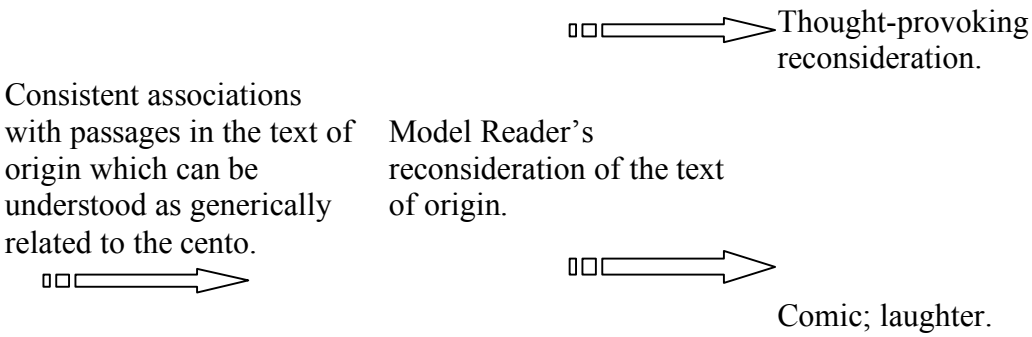
I believe that the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin must be considered a plausible side effect of the consistent use of quotations. A revisit and partial reinterpretation of the text of origin is, so to speak, the reverse side of the coin when compared to the Model Reader's making of meaning in the cento. This belief implies that I agree with earlier scholars' general suggestion that centos sometimes elicit a reconsideration of their text of origin. However, serious reconsideration of the text of origin implies an effort which I believe that the reader is likely to try to avoid, unless the cento clearly demands it; the suggested analogies between the wedding cento

[673] Stehlikova 1986 *et al.*
[674] E.g. Herzog 1975.

and the text of origin must therefore be rather wide-ranging if the cento is to be able to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin.

I therefore suggest that only consistent associations with passages in the text of origin which can be understood as generically related to the cento manage to persuade the Model Reader to go back to the text of origin with the purpose of reinterpreting it through the lens of the cento. As regards the effects of the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin, I suggest that it may have two different effects, (1) thought-provoking and (2) comic. These effects agree, as far as I understand, with the effects that Herzog describes with the words *Deutung* and *Auflösung.*

The following figure illustrates my hypotheses as presented above:




In this part of the chapter, I will also argue that some passages in the wedding centos are more likely than others to provoke the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. The Model Reader's reconsideration may also have a thought-provoking effect at some moments, and a comic effect at other moments of the same wedding cento.[675]

In the following, I will discuss which passages in the wedding centos are most likely to provoke the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. I will also discuss the probable effects of these reconsiderations. The relevant passages in the centos have been discussed also in the previous analyses; but the possible reconsiderations of the text of origin in terms of them have not been discussed before in this work.

## *Examples from Cento Nuptialis*

### Relevant passages

As was seen in Chapter 12, the closeness between the cento, its genre, and generically related passages in the text of origin differ between various moments in *Cento Nuptialis.* The quotations which provoke meaningful associations in *Cento Nuptialis* for the most part do not come from generically related passages in the text of origin; cf. the preceding part of this chapter.[676] There are, however, two sections which are more

[675] Herzog 1975 also shows that the same cento may reveal different approaches, i.e. *Auflösung* or *Deutung*, towards its text of origin at different moments. Cf. also Verweyen & Witting 1993.

[676] This is for example so in the *Oblatio munerum* section, where many quotations describe gifts in the *Aeneid;* In the *Aeneid* however, the gifts were for the most part not given for weddings or wedding-like events. There is thus a superficial analogy between the plots in the cento and in the text of origin (the giving of gifts); the analogy is however not generic or pervasive. This is for the most part so also in *Ingressus in cubiculum, Descriptio egredientis sponsae* and *Descriptio egredientis sponsi.* (*Descriptio egredientis sponsi* certainly agrees well with the genre-expectations as regards the encomium of the groom; cf. Chapter 12. Nonetheless, the quotations for the most part do not come from generically related passages in the text of origin.)

closely linked with relevant passages in the text of origin than the other sections of *Cento Nuptialis*. These two sections are *Epithalamium utrique* and *Imminutio.*[677] In *Epithalamium utrique,* many quotations come from 8th *Eclogue*;[678] in the *Imminutio,* many quotations come from battle scenes in the *Aeneid.*

There is an obvious generic resemblance between the 8th *Eclogue* and *Epithalamium utrique;* they are both related to the traditional epithalamium. By contrast, the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* and the *Imminutio* in the cento do not really belong to the same genre. Nonetheless, the cento's Model Reader is likely to become uncertain of how far the constantly suggested analogies between the *Imminutio* and the battle scenes go. This uncertainty is nourished also by the circumstance that battle metaphors are frequent in other Latin erotic poetry than the *Imminutio*. The cento's Model Reader may therefore suspect that the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* can also be interpreted in an erotic mode. Moreover, I suggest that this suspicion makes the Model Reader revisit the text of origin in order to examine whether such reinterpretation is possible or not.

**Effects of reconsiderations: *Epithalamium utrique* and the 8th *Eclogue***

When the cento's Model Reader reaches the *Epithalamium utrique* section, he or she is likely to observe that many quotations come from the *Eclogues.* As noticed in Chapter 12, the many quotations from the *Eclogues* could perhaps be motivated by the close relationship between bucolic poetry and early wedding poetry. The peers' song in *Epithalamium utrique* resembles such early wedding poetry, and the cento's Model Reader probably notices this resemblance. Particularly noteworthy, however, is the connection between *Epithalamium utrique* and the 8th *Eclogue.* In the 8th *Eclogue,* Damon complains that Nysa has spurned him in order to marry Mopsus. Damon's complaint is not an epithalamium, but it contains many traditionally epithalamic elements, such as the use of a refrain and an epithalamium-like praise of the spouses. The contrast between Damon's situation and Nysa's and Mopsus' joy is heartbreaking in the poem, and the observation that his complaint closely resembles an epithalamium makes Damon's grief particularly miserable.

In *Epithalamium utrique,* the peers sing a wedding song for the spouses Gratian and Constantia. The peers' song in *Epithalamium utrique*, more univocally than Damon's complaint, portrays a traditional epithalamium; it has a quasi-dramatic character and it contains epithalamic commonplaces, such as the wish for children and spousal love; cf.

[677] In *Cena Nuptialis,* one third of the quotations which come from passages describing festivities in the *Aeneid* come from the descriptions of Dido's party for Aeneas; this description is generically linked with the epithalamium. Nonetheless, I suggest that *Cena Nuptialis* has little reinterpretative force over the descriptions of Dido's party for Aeneas in the *Aeneid.* My reasons for this assumption are as follows: (1) In this section of the cento, the most striking feature is the abundant descriptions of the food which is served at the wedding. These descriptions comically link this second section in the poem with the second section of the wedding speech as defined by Menander; cf. analysis in Chapter 12. It is likely that the cento's Model Reader focuses on this unexpected wittiness of the poem rather than on the connection between the present dinner and Dido's party for Aeneas. (2) The description of Dido's party for Aeneas is one of the best and most well-known descriptions of parties in the *Aeneid*, it can therefore be expected that many quotations in *Cena Nuptialis* come from this description. (3) Furthermore, many quotations in *Cena Nuptialis* come from descriptions of other, less well-known, parties, e.g. the description of how Evander and Aeneas celebrated together for the first time. This unexpected circumstance is likely to attract the Model Reader's attention and thereby further decrease the importance of the description of Dido's party for Aeneas.

[678] Four quotations come from the 8th *Eclogue.* If we consider the length of *Epithalamium utrique* and of the 8th *Eclogue* in relationship to Virgil's total production, four quotations are a considerable text amount.

Chapter 12. Moreover, the context of the peers' song in a poem celebrating a wedding strongly underlines the affinity with traditional epithalamia. Particularly the context in the wedding cento leads to the conclusion that the peers' song connects even more closely with traditional epithalamia than Damon's complaint does. When the cento's Model Reader reconsiders the 8th *Eclogue* through the lens of *Epithalamium utrique*, the close connection between the peers' song and traditional epithalamia is likely to further highlight the epithalamic traits of Damon's complaint.

The highlighting of the epithalamic traits of Damon's complaint through the lens of *Epithalamium utrique* is likely to have a thought-provoking effect, inasmuch as it emphasises Damon's despair.[679] When the epithalamic traits of his complaint are underlined, the contrast between Damon's unhappy love and Nysa's and Mopsus' happy love becomes even more striking than before. The contrast between Nysa's and Mopsus' happy love and Damon's unhappy love was certainly crucial for the interpretation of the 8th *Eclogue* already before the reconsideration through the lens of the cento; cf. above. Nonetheless, the sad contrast between the spouses' happy love and Damon's unhappy love is further strengthened through the reconsideration. When the 8th *Eclogue* is reconsidered through the lens of another text, the contrast between happy and unhappy love is also more generalised than before. It comes to regard happy vs. unhappy love in general rather than Nysa's, Mopsus' and Damon's particular case. This generalisation is in itself thought-provoking.

**Effects of reconsiderations: *Imminutio* and the battle scenes in the *Aeneid***

The *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* is closely connected with erotic poetry (although not with *epithalamia of occasion*); cf. Chapter 12. In Latin erotic poetry, as well as in the *Imminutio,* battle metaphors are frequent. The battle scenes in the *Aeneid* and the *Imminutio* in the cento do not, of course, belong to the same genre; cf. below. Nonetheless, I believe that the suggested analogies between the *Imminutio* and the battle scenes are consistent enough to make the cento's Model Reader go back to the text of origin for reconsideration. I further suggest that when the cento's Model Reader returns to the battle scenes in the *Aeneid*, the main purpose is to investigate how far the suggested analogies with the *Imminutio* go. The surprising idea that Virgil's battle scenes are in fact concealed erotic poetry probably strikes the Model Reader when reading the *Imminutio:* Perhaps battle metaphors describe sexual encounter not only in the *Imminutio*, but also in the *Aeneid;* perhaps the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* and the *Imminutio* belong to the same literary genre; perhaps the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* are really just more sophisticated erotic poetry than the *Imminutio*.

At first sight, the frequent battle metaphors in the *Imminutio* and other erotic poetry may certainly raise the Model Reader's suspicion that the *Imminutio* and the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* could really both be read as erotic poetry. However, when the Model Reader goes back to the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* so as to investigate the issue, it soon becomes evident that the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* do not depict erotic activities. Unlike the *Imminutio,* the battle motive is not used metaphorically there; instead, it is used in its first sense, i.e. to describe armed warfare. Only when the quotations are re-used in the *Imminutio* does their meaning move from *proprium* to *improprium;* when the quotations are re-used in the cento, their meaning is efficiently turned upside-down. Back in the context of the *Aeneid,* the idea that the battle scenes

[679] Cf. also the discussion about Damon as Ausonius' *alter ego* in Chapter 12.

really depict erotic activities is utterly absurd.[680] Because of the idea's absurdity in the context of the *Aeneid*, the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin through the lens of the *Imminutio* is interrupted halfway. It does not involve any further serious reinterpretation of the battle scenes through the lens of the *Imminutio.* Instead, the recognition of the absurdity of the initial hypothesis and the subsequent interruption of the reconsideration of the text of origin will have a comic effect; rather than further serious reconsideration, it will provoke the Model Reader's laughter.[681]

The comic effect of the recognition of the absurdity and the subsequent interruption of the reconsideration can be explained through the incongruity theory of humour and laughter.[682] The incongruity theory claims that "humour and humorous laughter are caused by the perception of incongruity, i.e. a pairing of ideas, images, or situations which are not ordinarily joined – and that in most cases the incongruity is first perceived and then resolved in a two-stage process."[683] This theory was discussed already in the analysis of the *Imminutio* in Chapter 12. There, it was argued that humour based on incongruity of two different kinds can be found in the *Imminutio,* both when the cento is read in relationship to its text of origin and when it is read in relationship to its genre. There is a consistent incongruity between the original and the new contexts of the quotations used in the cento. There is also a harsh incongruity between the expected 'happy end' of the *epithalamium of occasion* and the unexpected 'unhappy end' of the *anti-epithalamium* of occasion.

When applied to the Model Reader's reconsideration of the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* through the lens of the *Imminutio,* the incongruity theory explains the Model Reader's amusement as a result of the perceived incongruity between the events described in the two texts: love-making and armed warfare. This interpretation is, so to speak, the reverse side of the coin when compared to the explanation of why the *Imminutio* provokes laughter when it is read in relationship to its text of origin. As repeatedly mentioned before, there is harsh and consistent incongruity between the original and the new contexts of the quotations used in the *Imminutio*. The incongruity

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[680] This does not, of course, exclude occasional erotic overtones in the *Aeneid*'s battle scenes; cf. e.g. the discussions about Euryalus' death in Chapter 12, 'The close connection between groom and bride in the description of the coitus.'

[681] The process of reconsideration is described here in some detail; this may give the impression that it takes a long time to reconsider the text of origin through the lens of the *Imminutio.* In reality, I believe that the reader's process of reconsideration is likely to be quick.

[682] It probably also agrees with the so-called relief theory of humour and laughter. As noted earlier, the relief theory focuses on their psychological aspects. It suggests that the perception of something comical leads to a saving of psychic energy, and laughter releases that energy. Freud further suggests that the energy saved and released could be energy of thought, feeling or summoned inhibition that turns out to be superfluous (Plaza 2000, p. 7). The interruption of the reconsideration saves the Model Reader's thought energy; serious reconsideration of the nature of the battle scenes would have involved serious thinking, and it is easy to imagine that the Model Reader laughs with relief when such effort turns out to be superfluous. Based on the relief theory, it can also be claimed that the interrupted reconsideration of the battle scenes saves the energy of the Model Reader's summoned inhibition since this inhibition turns out to be superfluous. These suggestions agree for the most part with Herzog's suggestions about how centos with the different functions *Auflösung* (dissolution) and *Deutung* (interpretation) relate to their texts of origin. For centos characterised by *Auflösung* of the text of origin, Herzog suggests that the more inappropriate the Virgilian text is for the subject of the cento, the more metaphoric is the use of language in the cento; the necessary ambivalence in the portrait of a taboo in the cento is a result of the distance to the text of origin (Herzog 1975 p. 11: "... je unpassender der virgilische Text für das Gemeinte ist, desto metaphorischer die Sprache – aus dem Abstand zum Modell erst resultiert die zur Darstellung des Tabuisierten notwendige Zweideutigkeit.")

[683] Plaza 2000 p. 7.

theory can, however, also describe the Model Reader's amusement as a result of the incongruity between the different widely defined genres 'erotic poetry' and 'epic descriptions of war'. Not only the events described in the texts, but also the strategies used and the directions in which the texts point their readers, differ.[684] Thus, just as in the *Imminutio,* humour based on incongruity of two different kinds can be found when the text of origin is reconsidered through the lens of the cento. There is harsh incongruity both between the events described in the texts and between the widely defined genres to which the texts turn out to belong.

## *Examples from* Epithalamium Fridi

### ***Epithalamium Fridi*** **and** ***Aen.*** **1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171**

*Epithalamium Fridi* relates closely both to the *epithalamium of occasion* and to generically related passages in the text of origin, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171. This is so throughout the poem. The cento's Model Reader almost certainly notices the suggested analogy between the wedding in the cento and Dido's and Aeneas' love story. The perception of this analogy is important for the realisation in *Epithalamium Fridi* of the epideictic scope of *the epithalamium of occasion*; cf. Chapter 13.

The Model Reader's perception of analogy between the wedding in the cento and Dido's and Aeneas' love story is, however, also likely to provoke a reconsideration of the plot in *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 through the lens of the cento; cf. the initial hypotheses of this part of the chapter. The ability of *Epithalamium Fridi* to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin is equally high throughout the poem.

#### Effect of reconsideration

When the cento's Model Reader revisits *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 in order to reconsider them through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi*, the epithalamic traits of the passages in the *Aeneid* describing Dido's and Aeneas' love story will probably strike him or her even more than before. The reason for this is that *Epithalamium Fridi* certainly is an epithalamium, whereas the generic identities of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 are more ambiguous; cf. the discussion about *Epithalamium utrique* and the 8th *Eclogue* above.

When read in an epithalamic mode, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 are traditionally read as *anti-epithalamia;* cf. Chapter 8c. By contrast, the cento evidently celebrates a prosperous wedding. Will the happy notes of the cento extend to the text of origin, or will the anti-epithalamic traits of the text of origin appear even more striking when the text of origin is contrasted to the cento's happy *epithalamium of occasion*? I believe that the happy notes of the cento are likely to extend to the text of origin. My reason for this belief is that the cento *per se* shows that Dido's and Aeneas' love story *can* be interpreted in a way that contributes to the realisation of the epideictic scope of the *epithalamium of occasion*, i.e. the negative aspects of their love story *can* be altogether overlooked.

In the conclusion of Chapter 13, I briefly suggested that the cento's happy interpretation of Dido's and Aeneas' love story may have been facilitated by the circumstance that the cento was in all probability written and performed in Carthage. It

[684] Cf. Chapter 5, discussions on genre.

seems likely that the story about Dido and Aeneas was read in a more positive way there than in other parts of the empire, particularly with regard to Dido's role in it. At any rate, Dido's interpretations of the events and of the nature of her ties with Aeneas seem to be confirmed in the cento. The cento thus opens up for an alternative understanding of the plot in the text of origin. This alternative understanding certainly lies implicit already in the *Aeneid.* In the fourth book of the *Aeneid,* Dido's perspective is very well described; it is difficult for the *Aeneid*'s Model Reader not to sympathise with her case. Nonetheless, through the outcome of events in the *Aeneid*, she is utterly proven to be wrong: Aeneas is the hero there; she stands in his way, he must abandon her; Dido must die. Although the *Aeneid's* Model Reader is likely to pity her, he or she also clearly understands that Dido was wrong and that she certainly overestimated the nature of her connection with Aeneas.

*Epithalamium Fridi* on the other hand implicitly suggests the contrary: if Dido was wrong, how could her story with Aeneas be used to epideictically describe a prosperous wedding in the wedding cento? The liaison between Dido and Aeneas must, at least to some extent, have been happy. This happy reinterpretation of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 through the lens of the cento is certainly thought-provoking, whether accepted or not. The possibility that Dido was right is thought-provoking because it shows that an interpretation of events always depends on the interpreter's perspective. The cento shows this much more clearly than the Virgilian text (which is in itself ambivalent, although only to a certain degree; cf. above).[685]

In the introduction to this part of the chapter, it was briefly mentioned that earlier scholars have regarded not only *Cento Nuptialis,* but also *Epithalamium Fridi*, as parodic-aggressive towards the Virgilian texts. For example, Herzog calls *Epithalamium Fridi* 'Luxorius' *Cento Nuptialis'* and 'an imitation of Ausonius.'[686] The idea that Luxorius primarily imitates Ausonius remains at best superficial; cf. the concluding discussions in Chapter 13. Unlike *Cento Nuptialis, Epithalamium Fridi* draws greatly upon the generic connection between *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 90–171 and the *epithalamium of occasion.* As has been shown in the preceding discussion, *Epithalamium Fridi* elicits thereby a thought-provoking reconsideration of its text of origin; or, to use Herzog's terminology, *Epithalamium Fridi* is a cento which is characterised by *Deutung* of its text of origin. [687] The thematic difference between the cento and its text of origin that Herzog suggests is typical for centos characterised by *Auflösung* of their texts of origin is clearly not at hand in this poem.

[685] The general suggestion that the interpretations of texts may vary is a suggestion which centos seem to be particularly apt to demonstrate, as will be further discussed in the fourth part of this study; cf. Chapters 16d and 16e.

[686] Herzog 1975 p. 13: "eine Imitation des Ausonius, der *Cento Nuptialis* des Luxurius."

[687] Herzog 1975 also suggests that in centos characterized by interpretation of the text of origin (*Deutung*), the text of origin is not split into particles which can be used freely in the cento. This kind of cento uses instead larger elements from its text of origin; these elements keep much of their original meaning in the cento. This too agrees well with how the text of origin is used in *Epithalamium Fridi; cf.* Chapter 13. (Herzog 1975 p. 12: "Es entsteht an diesem Punkt die zweite hermeneutische Möglichkeit des Cento: die vorgeprägte Sprache wird nicht mehr zur Zerschlagung in Partikeln zur unmittelbar verfügbaren Sprache reduziert, sondern in größeren, ihre Bedeutung bewahrenden Elementen gereiht, die insgesamt keinen primären Sinn ergeben (der obsöne Cento etwa wäre für den Nichteingeweihten unverständlich), vielmehr dem Leser die Dechiffrierung eines vorausgesetzten Sinnes überlassen. Die vorgeprägten Elemente sind Zur Metaphernkette geworden.")

## *Summary*

This part of the chapter has discussed the hypothesis that the wedding centos elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. It has also discussed the possible effects of such reconsideration. It was initially suggested that there is a connection between the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin and the perceived generic closeness between the cento and its text of origin. The idea that the cento and its text of origin are generically related is what first encourages the Model Reader to revisit the text of origin in order to reconsider it through the lens of the cento. Initially, it was also suggested that the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin could have two different effects, (1) thought-provoking and (2) comic. It was further suggested that some passages in the wedding centos are more likely than others to provoke the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin. Finally, it was suggested that the Model Reader's reconsideration can have a thought-provoking effect at some moments, and a comic effect at other moments of the wedding cento.

It has been shown that the ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin varies between different moments in *Cento Nuptialis.* This ability is high in the sections *Epithalamium utrique* and *Imminutio*; elsewhere it is low. *Epithalamium utrique* provokes a reconsideration of the 8th *Eclogue; Imminutio* provokes a reconsideration of the battle scenes in the *Aeneid*. By contrast, *Epithalamium Fridi'*s ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin is equally high throughout the poem. *Epithalamium Fridi* provokes a reconsideration of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168.

It has also been shown that the Model Reader's reconsideration of the 8th *Eclogue* through the lens of *Epithalamium utrique* has a thought-provoking effect. It accentuates the epithalamic traits of Damon's complaint; the contrast between his unhappy love and Nysa's and Mopsus' happy love is thereby also accentuated. Moreover, when the 8th *Eclogue* is read through the lens of another text, the theme of happy vs. unhappy love comes to be generalised. This generalisation, too, has a thought-provoking effect. The reconsideration of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi* also has a thought-provoking effect. It accentuates the epithalamic traits of Dido's and Aeneas' love story. Furthermore, the cento *per se* shows that the unhappy notes of this love story *can* be altogether overlooked; it also suggests that Dido's interpretation of the events in the *Aeneid* and of the nature of her liaison with Aeneas may have been right. These suggestions certainly lie implicit also in the Virgilian text; however, unlike the cento, there the outcome of events proves that Dido was utterly wrong. The reconsideration of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi* renders the story about Dido and Aeneas in a more positive epithalamic mode than is normally the case. From a general viewpoint, the reconsideration of *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi* is thought-provoking because it shows that the interpretations of texts and of events may vary depending on the interpreter's perspective. This is a suggestion that centos seem particularly apt to demonstrate, as will be further discussed in Chapter 16d.

Unlike the other reconsiderations, the Model Reader's reconsideration of the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* through the lens of the *Imminutio* is more likely to have a comic effect and to provoke laughter than serious reconsideration. The reason for this is that the Model Reader's examination of the text of origin through the lens of the cento is interrupted halfway, when the Model Reader realises that the idea that the battle scenes

in the *Aeneid* are really concealed erotic poetry is absurd in the context of the *Aeneid.* The comic effect of the interrupted reconsideration was explained through the incongruity theory of humour and laughter.

## Conclusions of the chapter

In the first part of this chapter, the different functions of associations with the text of origin were identified and discussed. It was argued that all associations with the text of origin which deepen the understanding of the wedding centos, and which reasonably cohere with the general interpretation of the cento, should be considered as meaningful associations – regardless of the author's intentions, of which we know little or nothing. Associations which do not deepen the general understanding of the cento were called 'empty associations.'

It was also argued that the meaningful associations with the text of origin may have external as well as internal functions, and that these functions suggest different approaches for the cento's Model Reader. The external function of a meaningful association is to link the events in the cento with a somewhat analogous event in the text of origin. The analogous event in the text of origin may or may not come from a passage which is generically related to the cento. All meaningful associations with the text of origin have some kind of external function. Unlike the external function, the internal function of a meaningful association is to strengthen the thematic coherence within the cento itself. Not all meaningful associations with the text of origin have internal functions in the cento. Examples of the different functions of associations from both centos were identified and discussed.

In the second part of the chapter, the wedding centos' ability to elicit the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin was discussed. It was argued that both wedding centos challenge their Model Reader to partially reconsider the text of origin through the lens of the cento, and that this reconsideration is a result of consistent associations with passages in the text of origin which can be considered generically similar to the cento. It was also argued that the reconsiderations which are provoked by the wedding centos, or by various parts of them, have two different results: (1) thought-provoking and (2) comic. Examples from both wedding centos were identified and discussed.

The discussions held in this chapter suggest an unexpected connection between the generic resemblance between the texts and the effect of the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin through the lens of the cento; this connection was not foreseen in the initial hypotheses of the chapter. When the wedding centos, or a certain part of them, turn out to be generically related with the text of origin, the reconsideration of the text of origin through the lens of the wedding cento has a thought-provoking effect (e.g. the 8th *Eclogue* through the lens of *Epithalamium utrique*, and *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi*). By contrast, when a part of the wedding cento turns out *not* to be generically related to the text of origin, although this was initially assumed by the Model Reader, the reconsideration of the text of origin is interrupted halfway with a comic effect, e.g. the battle scenes in the *Aeneid* through the lens of the *Imminutio.*

The following figure summarises the connections between meaningful associations with the text of origin found in the wedding centos and the centos' (or cento sections')

abilities to provoke the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin with different effects, as has been proposed in this chapter:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Meaningful associations with analogous events in the text of origin which are portrayed in passages that do not seem to be generically related to the cento. | Meaningful associations with analogous events in the text of origin which are portrayed in passages that initially seem to be generically related to the cento, but then turn out not to be generically related to it. | Meaningful associations with analogous events in the text of origin which are portrayed in generically related passages in the text of origin. |
| ⇩ | ⇩ | ⇩ |
| No reconsideration of text of origin. | Reconsideration of text of origin with comic effect. | Reconsideration of text of origin with thought-provoking effect. |
| E.g. Gifts in *Oblatio Munerum,* gifts in the *Aeneid.* | E.g. Battle scenes in the *Aeneid* through the lens of *Imminutio.* | E.g. 8th *Eclogue* through the lens of *Epithalamium utrique; Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 through the lens of *Epithalamium Fridi.* |

These suggestions call for further scholarly examination as regards their potential relevance also for other centos.

# 15. How does a cento guide its readers beyond a wide field of possibilities?

In this chapter, I will discuss how a cento may guide its Model Reader beyond a wide field of possibilities. The discussions are based on examples from the analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi,* Chapters 12–14, but may also have general implications.

## a. Inclination towards the genre

When a cento borrows many passages from a text of origin which embodies the same generic pattern as the cento itself does, there is what I call an 'inclination towards the genre' in the cento. When many quotations are borrowed from a generically related passage to the cento, the generic pattern is stressed twice: the Model Reader may take

the relationship with either the text of origin or the genre as starting-point for his or her interpretation of the cento; cf. Chapters 5 and 6. As was seen in the previous chapters, there is sometimes an inclination towards the genre at the expense of the text of origin the wedding centos. When there is such an inclination in the cento, the field of possibilities and, with it, the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation are reduced.[688]

## *Different kinds of inclination towards the genre*

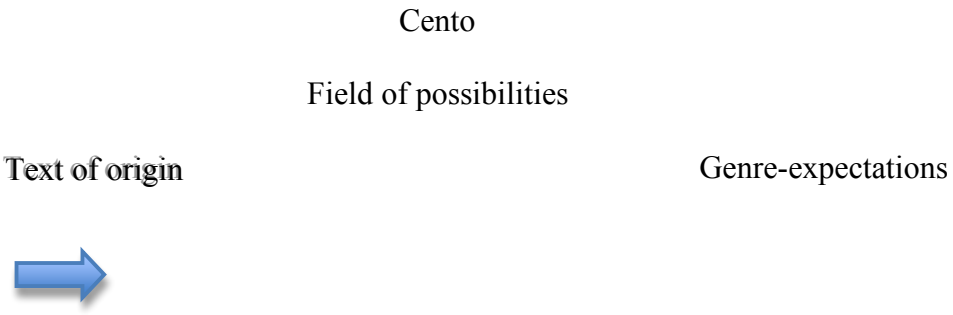
I have noticed three different kinds of inclination towards the genre in the wedding centos. I call them steady, fluctuating and 'false' inclinations, and they will be presented below.

### Steady inclination towards the genre

*Epithalamium Fridi* is characterised by a steady inclination towards the genre. This is so throughout the cento, and it implies that the field of possibilities is much reduced in the whole cento. *Epithalamium Fridi* draws greatly upon two generically similar passages in its text of origin, *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and *Aen.* 4. 102–168. As was shown in Chapters 13 and 14, this is so throughout the cento and the generic similarities between the cento and its text of origin sharply reduced the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation in the whole cento.[689]

The following figure illustrates a steady inclination towards the genre:

*Fig. 1. Steady inclination towards the genre*




### Fluctuating inclination towards the genre

In *Cento Nuptialis,* the dependence of passages in the text of origin moulded on the same generic pattern as the cento itself varies between different moments. Only the *Epithalamium utrique* is really moulded on a generically similar passage in the text of

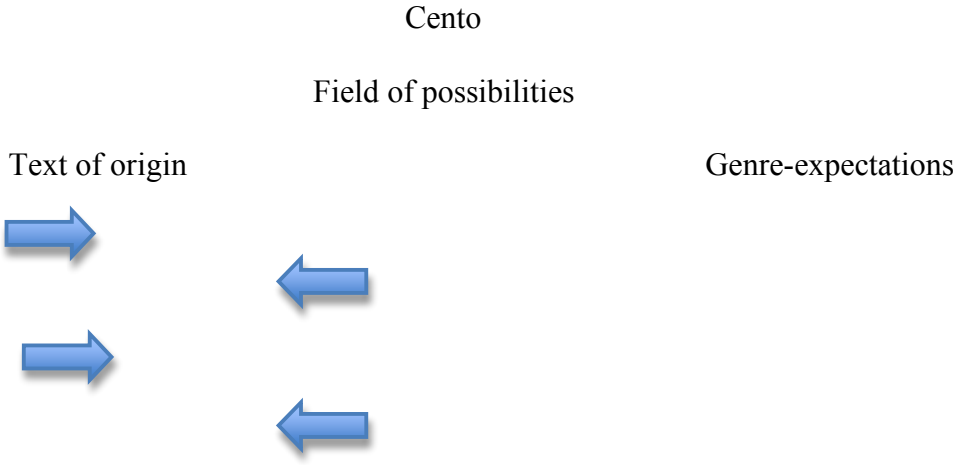
[688] A wide field of possibilities between them normally separates the text of origin from the genre; cf. Chapter 5. When the same generic pattern is at hand in both the text of origin and in the genre, the field between them shrinks. When the field of possibilities shrinks, the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation is simultaneously reduced; cf. Chapter 6d. (It is however important to keep in mind that neither the field of possibilities between text of origin and genre, nor the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation, ever disappears altogether.)

[689] Furthermore, in the case of *Epithalamium Fridi,* the generic similarities strengthened the epithalamic identity of the cento and also cast the text of origin in a partially new (and more positive) mode by emphasising the epithalamium-like tendencies of the passage; cf. Chapter 14. This too could not have happened if there had been a strong tension between the text of origin and the genre.

origin; cf. Chapters 12 and 14.[690] In *Epithalamium utrique,* the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation is more reduced than at other moments of *Cento Nuptialis.*[691] The text of origin momentarily strengthens the epithalamic identity of the cento, and the field of possibilities is temporarily reduced.

The following figure illustrates a fluctuating inclination towards the genre:

*Fig. 2. Fluctuating inclination towards the genre*




**'False' inclination towards the genre**

In *Cento Nuptialis,* there is also a case when the Model Reader first assumes that the cento and the text of origin are closely generically related, but during a closer examination realises that this is not so. The *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* may initially seem to belong to the same genre as the passages in the text of origin where many of the quotations come from; cf. Chapters 12 and 14. This may be called a 'false' inclination towards the genre in the cento. When there is a 'false' inclination towards the genre, the text of origin is not really generically similar to the cento, and the cento's field of possibilities shrinks therefore only imaginarily, during a first stage of inter-

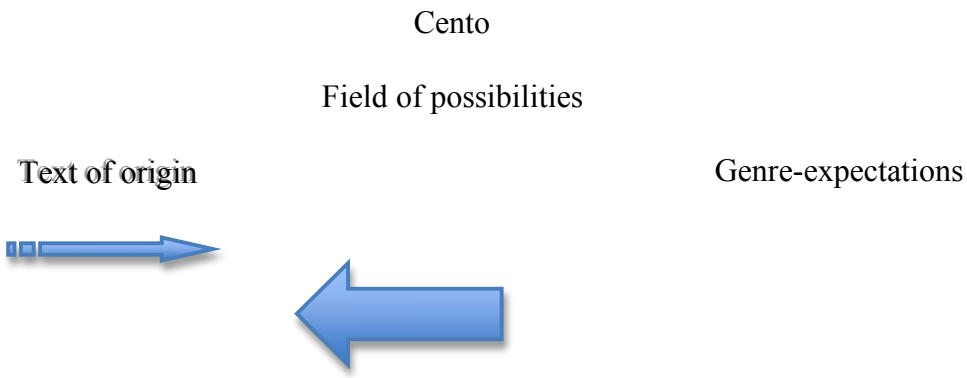
[690] Lamacchia 1958:1 pp. 207–208 discusses how similar dialogues in the text of origin provide the character Medea with many quotations in her dialogue with Jason in the cento *Medea*. Although such dialogues do not form a genre, the Model Reader's field of possibilities is thereby reduced in a similar way as in centos which are momentarily moulded on the same generic pattern as their texts of origin. One of Medea's topics in her dialogue with Jason is to implore Jason to pity her who suffers undeservedly (Hos. Get. *Medea* v. 210–213): *Mene fugis? Per ego has lacrimas* (*Aen*. 4. 314)*, per siquis amatae/ tangit honos animum* (*Aen.* 12.56–57), *per inceptos hymenaeos* (*Aen.* 4. 316),/ *per conubia nostra* (*Aen.* 4. 316) *et mensas quas advena adisti/ te precor* (*Aen.* 10. 460–461): *Miserere animi non digna ferentis* (*Aen.* 2. 144). "Is it from me you are fleeing? By these tears, by aught of reverence for your beloved/ that yet may touch your heart, by the nuptial rites begun,/ by the marriage that is ours and the board whereto you came as a stranger/ I beseech you, pity a soul that bears [sorrow] undeserved." All quotations in this passage come from well-known desperate prayers in the *Aeneid:* Dido to Aeneas (*Aen.* 4. 314; 4. 316); Amata to Turnus (*Aen.* 12. 56–57); Pallas to Hercules (*Aen.* 10. 460–461); the Greek fraud to the Trojans (*Aen*. 2. 144). The Model Reader cannot fail to understand that Medea claims to suffer undeservedly and that she intensely implores Jason to pity her.

[691] Like *Epithalamium Fridi, Epithalamium utrique* too elicits the Model Reader's reinterpretation of the text of origin through the lens of the epithalamium. I suggest that this reconsideration, which has thought-provoking effects, could not have taken place unless text of origin and genre were closely generically related; cf. Chapter 14.

pretation. The initial uncertainty and the subsequent solution have comic effects; cf. Chapters 12 and 14.

The following figure illustrates this suggestion:

*Fig. 3. False inclination towards the genre*




## *How firmly do the different kinds of inclination guide the Model Reader?*

### Steady inclination towards the genre

I suggest that a steady inclination towards the genre guides the Model Reader's interpretation of a cento very firmly.[692] *Epithalamium Fridi* borrows many quotations from traditional *anti-epithalamia* without any risk of losing its epideictic purpose. What enables this is, I believe, *Epithalamium Fridi*'s steady inclination towards the *epithalamium of occasion;* cf. Chapters 13 and 14. The Model Reader's understanding is so firmly guided through the steady inclination towards the genre that potentially negative associations from the text of origin can relatively easily be altogether overlooked in the cento.[693] A steady inclination towards the genre seems to be the firmest possible kind of guidance in a cento.

### Fluctuating inclination towards the genre

When a cento only occasionally borrows many quotations from generically related passages in the text of origin (fluctuating inclination towards the genre), the degree of guidance for the Model Reader's interpretation is lower than in centos with a steady inclination towards the genre. A fluctuating inclination towards the genre certainly implies that the Model Reader momentarily has guidance and a chance to relax. However, a fluctuating inclination towards the genre may be combined with a very wide

[692] Nonetheless, even when there is a steady inclination towards the genre, the first node present in a cento is the cento *per se*; the situation in the cento is always the most important thing to consider for the cento's Model Reader. No sound interpretation of a text rules out the situation at hand in the text in question. Cf. Chapter 5.

[693] Furthermore, in the analysis of *Epithalamium Fridi* it was noticed that some details, such as which gods attended the wedding and which clothes they lay off, could not be clearly understood. Since the overall interpretation of the cento was nonetheless clear, however, these uncertainties did not disturb the Model Reader too much.

field of possibilities, and a large freedom of interpretation, at other moments of the cento, e.g. in *Cento Nuptialis*. This greatly affects the Model Reader's general interpretation of a cento with a fluctuating inclination towards the genre; a fluctuating inclination towards the genre provides only limited guidance.[694]

**'False' inclination towards the genre**

When there is a 'false' inclination towards the genre in a cento, the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation is only imaginarily reduced; cf.Figure 3. The *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* evidently does not belong to the same genre as the battle scenes in the *Aeneid.* This becomes clear at the Model Reader's second stage of interpretation, and the sudden insight that this is so has a comic effect; cf. Chapters 12 and 14. However, even when the initial uncertainty of the genre has been resolved, the issue of the exact interpretation of the *Imminutio* remains unclear. It is evidently *not* a description of armed battle. But, what *exactly* is it? Erotic poetry? Yes, probably. Love poetry? Possibly. Widely defined antagonistic poetry? Yes, almost certainly. To some degree, the *Imminutio* can perhaps be defined as all these kinds of poetry. The text leaves the exact interpretation open for the Model Reader.

The preceding discussion suggests that a 'false' inclination towards the genre provides the Model Reader with weaker support than both a steady and a fluctuating inclination towards the genre. Rather than to provide firm guidance, a 'false' inclination leaves the Model Reader very uncertain. Moreover, since a 'false' inclination questions the Model Reader's initial understanding without providing any clear answers, it perhaps leaves him or her even more uncertain than no inclination towards the genre at all. A 'false' inclination towards the genre does not guide the Model Reader's understanding beyond the comic.

## *What does a cento with an inclination towards the genre presuppose of its Model Reader?*

It has been argued that the interpretative freedom of a cento with a wide field of possibilities demands a Model Reader with (1) much familiarity with classical literature, (2) much playfulness, and (3) a high associative capacity as regards the present situation compared to the literary situations at play; cf. Chapter 6d. The discussions above suggest that the field of possibilities and the Model Reader's freedom of interpretation are reduced when there is an inclination towards the genre in a cento. How do the different kinds of inclination towards the genre in a cento change the demands on the cento's Model Reader?

**Steady inclination towards the genre**

A steady inclination towards the genre in a cento implies that the demands on the Model Reader decrease. The readers of centos with a steady inclination towards the genre are

[694] If a fluctuating inclination towards the genre does not, like the steady inclination, provide the Model Reader with firm guidance, why does the author choose to let the genre interfere with the text of origin at all? I believe that one reason for this may be that if the cento provides its reader with some moments of less openness, it is more likely that the less advanced reader continues the attempts to find a meaning in the cento. Less open moments seem necessary for most empirical readers since such moments may serve not only as points of reference and guidance, but also as points of relaxation in very open centos; cf. below.

so firmly guided that contemporary average knowledge of genres and of text of origin (cf. Chapters 3a and 6a) was probably sufficient to understand them. I further suggest that centos with a steady inclination towards the genre demand less playfulness and less associative capacity from their Model Readers than other centos. With regard to the wedding centos, this implies that *Epithalamium Fridi* demands a less advanced Model Reader than *Cento Nuptialis*.

**Fluctuating inclination towards the genre**

A cento with a fluctuating inclination towards the genre presupposes a Model Reader who benefits from some points of less openness, either as points of reference for the interpretation or as moments of relaxation. This could imply that centos with a fluctuating inclination towards the genre presuppose less advanced Model Readers than centos without an inclination towards the genre. However, if the cento is very open or ambiguous at other moments, some passages of firm guidance are useful also for an advanced Model Reader. I suggest that a cento with a fluctuating inclination towards the genre does not necessarily presuppose a less advanced Model Reader than other centos; instead, the demands on the Model Reader are determined by the openness of the cento as a whole.

**'False' inclination towards the genre**

Similarly, a cento with a 'false' inclination towards the genre does not presuppose a less advanced Model Reader than other centos. As suggested above, a 'false' inclination towards the genre does not firmly guide the readers' exact interpretation of the cento. Perhaps the uncertainty with which a false inclination towards the genre leaves the reader even increases the urge for a playful mind. Without an open and playful mind, the reader may find the uncertainty, as well as the constant questioning of his or her initial assumptions on the cento, disturbing or threatening; cf. Chapter 6b.

## *Conclusions*

This part of the chapter has identified three kinds of inclination towards the genre in the wedding centos: steady, fluctuating and 'false.' A steady inclination towards the genre provides the Model Reader with firm guidance; a cento with a steady inclination towards the genre also presupposes a less advanced Model Reader than other centos. By contrast, a fluctuating inclination towards the genre provides only temporary support for the interpretation. If the cento is very open at other moments, temporary support is useful also for the advanced reader. Which demands a cento with a fluctuating inclination towards the genre puts on its Model Reader must be concluded from the cento as a whole. A 'false' inclination towards the genre leaves the readers uncertain of the cento's exact interpretation; this may increase the demand of a playful Model Reader.

With regard to the wedding centos, it may be noticed that *Epithalamium Fridi* firmly guides its readers' interpretation through a steady inclination towards the genre. From this it may be concluded that *Epithalamium Fridi* presupposes a less advanced Model Reader than *Cento Nuptialis,* which is only occasionally moulded on generically related passages in its text of origin.

I believe that the author may intentionally let the genre prevail over the text of origin in a cento; the reason for this may be that the author wants to guide the reader's

understanding of the cento beyond a cento's normally wide field of possibilities; cf. Chapter 6d and discussions held about authorial intentionality in Chapter 5.

## b. Internal associations

In the preceding part of this chapter, it was noticed that *Cento Nuptialis* only occasionally guides its readers through an inclination towards the genre. Does *Cento Nuptialis* guide its readers in some other way beyond a wide field of possibilities? Yes, I believe that it guides its readers with internal associations instead; cf. Chapters 12 and 14a.

### *What does a cento with many internal associations presuppose of its Model Reader?*

The use of internal associations as guides for the interpretation presupposes a more advanced Model Reader than the use of a steady inclination towards the genre. The use of internal associations also seems to demand a Model Reader who reads and probably also re-reads the cento several times. This is because the reader of a cento where internal associations guide the ideal interpretation must be able not only to instantly relate the cento to its text of origin and to its genre; he or she must also be able to relate the cento's different parts to each other. This demands a re-reading reader with a good memory, a thorough knowledge of the text of origin and of the genre, a playful attitude and a high associative capacity; cf. Chapters 6d and 12.

Yet, the circumstance that a cento with many internal associations is best understood if read and re-read in private does not, of course, exclude the possibility that other kinds of reception also occurred in antiquity. The literary competition between Ausonius and the emperor, for example, may well have been held in public; cf. Chapter 6a. Nonetheless, *Cento Nuptialis* is certainly more deeply understood when read and re-read in private; cf. Chapter 12. The different kinds of reception of this cento may aim at different Model Readers. It is easy to imagine an unsophisticated public's raw laughter at a recitation of the *Imminutio* ( ≈ the less advanced Model Reader). It is likewise easy to imagine the advanced reader's sober re-reading in private ( ≈ the advanced Model Reader). Possibly also other cleverly composed centos simultaneously aim at different Model Readers: one more immediate and less sophisticated, and one which involves an advanced Model Reader's recognition of various allusions to text of origin and genre; cf. Chapter 6c.

### *Concluding discussion: Internal associations as guides in centos without a steady inclination towards the genre*

An author may for different reasons want to compose a cento without a steady inclination towards the genre. Such a cento guides its readers less firmly; it is a more open work than centos which are moulded on generically related passages; cf. above. The openness of a cento where the different nodes are widely separated may be attractive in a case like Ausonius', where the cento has two different functions (celebration of a wedding and competition with the emperor); cf. Chapters 10a and 12.

An open work may certainly also be attractive in many other cases and for various other reasons.

Although the author wants to avoid the firm guidance of an inclination towards the genre, he or she may want to guide the readers' interpretation in some other, less firm, way.[695] I suggest that one such way is to use internal associations. I further suggest that internal associations may be particularly apt guides precisely in centos without a steady inclination towards the genre. Centos without a steady inclination towards the genre draw little of their meaning from other texts than themselves. Therefore, the general urge for internal coherence seems to be higher in such centos than in other centos. In order to be understood and to convey the author's message to the recipients, they must provide their readers with much internal support for the interpretation.[696] Internal coherence may e.g. be provided through the use of internal associations. This is why such associations may be particularly apt to use as guides in centos which are not moulded on generically related passages in their text of origin; however, this suggestion calls for further scholarly examination of such centos.

# 16. Which are the probable functions of a cento?

From the discussions which have been held in the previous parts of this work, it can be suggested that centos may be particularly apt for certain functions. Some such functions will be discussed in this chapter. Although other centos will also be discussed, most examples in this chapter come from *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi.*

## a. Markers of sophistication and social status

### *Markers of sophistication and social status for the author*

In Chapter 2a, it was noticed that many cento-like quotations in other works than centos lie in the mouths of characters in the stories. In most cases, the recognition of the original contexts of these cento-like quotations adds little to the understanding of the new context. I also briefly suggested that this may reflect a true-life practice among

[695] Cf. Eco 1989 pp. 64–65 about openness in modern music: "Given a brief succession of melodic data reiterated at ever-increasing velocity, there soon will be a moment when the ear, having reached saturation, ceases to perceive distinct sounds and hears an undifferentiated sonic mixture. This measurable threshold represents an insurmountable limit, and is, in itself, further evidence of the fact that a disorder which is not specifically aimed at subjects accustomed to moving among systems of probability will not convey any information. This tendency toward disorder, characteristic of the poetic openness, must be understood as a tendency toward *controlled* disorder, toward a circumscribed *potential,* toward a freedom that is constantly curtailed by *the germ of formativity* present in any form that wants to remain open to the free choice of the addressee."

[696] The urge for internal coherence in centos without a steady inclination towards the genre also makes me assume that such centos are unlikely to be unclear in their details: The Model Reader of a cento like *Cento Nuptialis* would probably be much more confused by unclear details than the Model Reader of *Epithalamium Fridi*. The reason for this is that in order to be understood, *Cento Nuptialis* demands internal coherence, also with regard to details. Support for this suggestion was also found in the examination of the wedding centos. Unlike *Epithalamium Fridi, Cento Nuptialis* is very clear in its details; cf. Chapters 12–13.

learned persons of quoting Virgil (and perhaps also other authors) with the purpose of displaying one's witty capacity. Could a wish to show one's witty capacity also be a motivating factor lying behind the compilation of whole centos? Yes, I believe that it could.[697]

When Ausonius in the beginning of his prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis* says that his poem lacks "a spark of wit",[698] we may well understand it as an indirect affirmation of the contrary; Ausonius' honest opinion may very well be that he considers his cento very witty. His reason for not saying this clearly is that he wants to capture the goodwill of his audience, *captatio benevolentiae.*[699] The circumstance that Ausonius discusses the wittiness (or lack of wittiness) of his poem in the very beginning of his prefatory letter may indicate how important it is for him to display his sophistication and witty capacity in the poem.

Moreover, a special kind of sophistication could be displayed when talking about sex; Romans used various roundabouts for genitals, anus and sexual acts.[700] One such roundabout found in literature is the use of so-called *cacemphata,* i.e. expressions with a non-sexual meaning given a dubious meaning in later literature; grammarians list such expressions. The ability to use *cacemphata* obviously depends on the speaker's knowledge and education. It seems likely that *cacemphata* were used as euphemisms for sexual activities and likewise not only in literature, but also in everyday conversation; this seems to be the case as regards some of the expressions with a sexual meaning in *Cento Nuptialis.*[701] Many of the cento-like quotations in *Satyricon* too have a frivolous sense in their new context.[702]

## *Markers of sophistication and social status for the audience*

My considerations regarding centos as a marker of sophistication are also related to the reception. A witty use of quotations inevitably involves both an including and an excluding element for the audience. Those who are able to recognise the quotations are likely to be amused. By contrast, those who do not recognise the quotations are likely to feel embarrassed and perhaps even humiliated rather than amused (i.e. if they are aware at all of not being in on the joke).

The reasons why those who recognise the quotations are amused may vary. Some may find that the adaptation of the quotations is truly droll;[703] some may be amused because they feel content with themselves when they recognise the quotations;[704] some may even expose their amusement for the sole purpose of showing that they have

[697] So also McGill 2005 *passim.*

[698] Prefatory letter, line 2: *sine ingenii maturitate*

[699] Cf. Chapter 1b, 'Unity as the core of Ausonius' discussion on cento'.

[700] For a thorough study, see Adams 1982.

[701] Adams 1981 treats thoroughly all verses describing sexual intercourse in *Cento Nuptialis.* He shows that some of the expressions used by Ausonius are used with the same sense also by other authors.

[702] Adams 1981 p. 201.

[703] The reason for this is probably that they notice the incongruity between the original and the new contexts of the quotations. This kind of humour is best understood through the "incongruity theory" of humour and laughter; cf. Chapters 12 and 14. Cf. also Plaza 2000 Introduction 1. 2 pp. 3–7.

[704] This can be explained through the "superiority theory" of humour and laughter. According to this theory, humour involves an important derisive element and a feeling of superiority. Plaza 2000 pp. 4–6.

recognised the quotations.[705] The two latter reasons to expose amusement depend greatly on social considerations. It is socially and psychologically important for people in the audience to show that they are (or at least can pretend to be) among those who are in on the joke; it is generally considered better to be among those who understand than among those who do not understand. Those who understand share a socially prestigious 'repertoire' that the others lack.[706] The ability to understand (or pretend to understand) a cento can thus serve as a marker of sophistication and social status also for the audience.[707]

### *Markers of sophistication and social status for the Roman culture*

A third consideration regarding centos as markers of sophistication and social status concerns the Roman dependence on Greek culture; cf. Chapter 3c. Most Latin literature connects with Greek predecessors. Latin works were often written *in aemulatio* of well-known Greek works. Most researchers agree for instance with the suggestion that Virgil wrote the *Aeneid in aemulatio* with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey;* and, if the Greek had composed centos based on Homer, why then would not Romans compose centos based on Virgil? The existence of Latin centos may perhaps be partly understood as a marker of sophistication and social status for Roman culture (Virgil) in comparison with Greek (Homer); cf. Chapter 3c.

## b. Occasional poems

Occasional poems are poems written for a special occasion, such as a birthday or a wedding. Both *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* are, at least in part, occasional poems.[708] There is also evidence of another, now lost, cento written for a wedding; this cento was written by the emperor Valentinian and Ausonius refers to it in his letter containing *Cento Nuptialis*.[709] Centos were thus written for the occasions of marriages on at least three different instances and by at least three different authors. Given the fact that so much ancient literature is lost today, it seems likely that there were also other

[705] This too can be explained through the "superiority theory" of humour and laughter. This kind of laughter is most common among people with what we nowadays would call low self-esteem. This is well described by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), *Leviathan*, ch. 6: "*Sudden glory,* is the passion which maketh those *Grimaces* called LAUGHTER; and it is caused either by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour, by observing the imperfections of other men." Eds. Flathman E. & Johnston D. 1997 p. 35. Cf. Plaza 2000 p. 6. It is also possible that those who do not recognise the quotations expose an air of amusement. Their reasons for doing so must be to hide their ignorance and to pretend that they are among those who do understand. Even if they expose an air of amusement, I believe that they are more likely to feel embarrassed than amused.

[706] For a discussion about 'repertoire', see McCormick 1994. Cf. also Chapter 6b.

[707] This aspect is certainly more relevant if the centos were recited than if they were read in private. It is unknown which kind of reception of centos was most common in antiquity; cf. Chapter 6a.

[708] Cf. discussions about the double circumstances lying behind the composition of *Cento Nuptialis,* Chapter 12.

[709] Lines 9–11: …*Imperator Valentinianus, vir meo iudicio eruditus, nuptias quondam eiusmodi ludo descripserat, aptis equidem versibus et compositione festiva*.

centos written for weddings or other special occasions, centos of which no trace remain today.

Why did authors choose to write wedding poems, and possibly also other occasional poems, as centos? Is the cento particularly apt for occasional poems? I believe that the answer to this question is affirmative. My reasons for this belief are connected with the previous discussions about the cento as a marker of sophistication and social status, and with the panegyric scope of most occasional poetry. I suggest that the choice of writing a wedding poem, or some other kind of panegyric occasional poem, as a cento is, above all, yet another way for the poet to praise the recipient(s) of the poem. The cento well suits the panegyric purpose of the occasional poem in two ways: (1) By using the cento form, the poet shows that it can be safely assumed that the recipient(s) recognise(s) the quotations and in so doing is/are in on the joke. Thus, the recipient's skill is indirectly praised. With regard to *Cento Nuptialis,* it is primarily the emperor's skill that is indirectly praised; the emperor's order was Ausonius' immediate reason for the composition of the poem; cf. Chapters 10a and 12. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* the spouses' skill is indirectly praised. (2) Consequent allusions between the new poem and the original context of the quotations can have the effect that certain characters and situations in the new poem are recognized as analogous, or almost identical, to canonical characters and situations in the old poem. This observation is particularly relevant with regard to *Epithalamium Fridi,* where the spouses are constantly linked with Dido and Aeneas in an altogether complimentary way; cf. Chapter 13.

I further suggest that another, less important, reason to write an occasional poem as a cento is the wish to amuse the audience. If the audience recognises the quotations, it is likely to be amused. Hence, the requirement that an occasional poem should amuse the audience is also pleasantly met if the poet chooses to write his or her poem as a cento. This suggestion is valid with regard to both the wedding centos.

## c. Poetic games

Centos were also used as poetic games. Ausonius introduces his cento as a literary *nuga,* another game like *Technopaegnion* or *Griphus Ternarii Numeri,* where he also takes up the challenge of a demanding format. As already mentioned, even the prefatory letter to *Cento Nuptialis* shows clear similarities with the letters containing *Griphus Ternarii Numeri* and *Technopaegnion.*[710] In his letters, Ausonius emphasises a competitive element in the composition of these works. The cento was composed in competition with the emperor, and *Griphus* originated over dinner at a party. The recipients of both *Griphus* and *Technopaegnion* are encouraged to take up the competition with Ausonius; they should either improve his poem or try to write a similar poem of their own. Although there is no explicit evidence for it, we may assume that other centos than *Cento Nuptialis* were written under similar circumstances.

[710] Cf. Chapter 1a, footnote 10. Cf. also Chapter 5, 'The cento as a play-ground' and Chapter 10a. According to Ausonius, both *Griphus* and the cento are hastily composed works and he has recently happened to find them again among his papers. They are really bad, and the recipient must judge them mildly and decide whether to give them life or destroy them. *Technopaegnion* is, just like the cento, a trifling, worthless and useless little work. The reader must judge it mildly "to harmonize what is harsh, to give flavour to the insipid, to couple up the disconnected; in short, to lend sweetness to the bitter, grace to the awkward, smoothness to the rough", *absurda concinerent, insulsa respirent, hiucla congruerent, denique haberent et amara dulcedinem et inepta venerem et aspera levitatem.* (Aus. *Techn.* 4. Lines 4–6.) The similarities with what he says about the cento are obvious; cf. Chapter 1b.

One possible aim of these kinds of competitions may certainly be to show one's witty capacity and thereby use the cento as a marker of sophistication and social status; cf. above. However, there is also another possible function: to use the cento as a brain-testing game just for fun. The demanding format is of main concern for this function; the cento's complexity may charm the author and the audience. Although a brain-testing game can be played in friendly competition with others, the main purpose can still be to relax and have fun. It is pretty similar to how many people today relax with tricky crosswords or Sudoku.[711] That the cento, because of its complexity, is particularly apt for brain-testing poetic games is obvious.

## d. Subversive poems

In Chapter 14b, it was argued that *Epithalamium Fridi* provokes the Model Reader's serious reconsideration of the text of origin. The effect of this reconsideration was that Dido's and Aeneas' love story was interpreted in a happier and more epithalamium-like mode than is generally the case; *Epithalamium Fridi* thus questions, or perhaps even overthrows, the traditional interpretation of the episode of Dido and Aeneas in the *Aeneid.* Do other centos too have such subversive potential? Yes, I believe that this may be so.

### *Proba's cento*

There is evidence that Proba's cento has been interpreted as a subversive poem. Although this interpretation may be historically incorrect as regards the author's intentions, it is very interesting if we want to understand how a cento may be read as a subversive text.[712]

A late fourth-century scribe has written a prefatory letter to Proba's cento. This scribe approvingly reads the cento as if it took an ideological stance that differed essentially from the Virgilian works. He writes: *dignare Maronem/ mutatum in melius divino agnoscere sensu,* "Deign to recognize Virgil changed for the better with your divine perception/through divine meaning."[713] From this quotation, it may be concluded that the scribe interprets the Virgilian works as if they were essentially alien to Christian beliefs. As a consequence, Proba's cento is for him a Christian text that has overthrown the pagan Virgil and changed his text to something essentially different and better. The scribe apparently understands Proba's cento as a tool for overthrowing the morals of the *Aeneid* and replacing them with Christian morals.[714] This is, I suggest, a basically very significant subversive reading of Proba's cento.

[711] From this point of view, the main difference between a crossword and a cento is that a crossword is rarely (if ever) recited in public, while a cento might well have been; cf. Chapter 6a.

[712] The evidence about the historical situations in which most extant centos were written is very scarce; cf. Chapter 2b.

[713] Translation from McGill 2007 p. 174. Clark & Hatch 1981:1 translate: "Deign to renew an old acquaintance – Maro, changed for the better with sacred meaning."

[714] Cf. Chapter 6b. Cf. also McCormick 1994 about 'general repertoires.'

## *Zenga Zenga*

Also the so-called Zenga Zenga, which is the latest cento-like composition that I am familiar with, can be read as subversive.[715] The Zenga Zenga is a remix, made by the Israeli journalist and musician Noy Alooshe, of a speech held by the Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi on February 22, 2011. Alooshe used the natural beat of Qaddafi's words, remixed the speech and set the remix to the music of a song by an American rapper. On February 22, Alooshe uploaded the Zenga Zenga as a video on YouTube. Beside the music, the video includes clips from Qaddafi's speech, and in these clips, Qaddafi's gestures are strikingly similar to those commonly used at trance parties. In the original version of the video, there are also small images of nearly nude women dancing on both sides of Qaddafi; Alooshe has however removed these images in a later version, at the request of web users who want to be able to share the video with their more conservative parents.

The immediate response to the Zenga Zenga video seems to indicate that the Libyan opposition at large received it positively as a subversive text towards Qaddafi. Although the discovery that Alooshe is an Israeli Jew has later caused some negative response, it seems that the reactions to the Zenga Zenga are still for the most part positive; Alooshe claims that he has even received a message saying that if and when the Qaddafi regime fell, "we will dance to 'Zenga-Zenga' in the square." I suggest that this message, and the many hits on the 'non-nude version' of Zenga Zenga on YouTube, indicate that some people understand the Zenga Zenga as a subversive song towards Qaddafi. The cento-like composition can, as it seems, be read as a rebellious tune with the function of keeping the fighting spirit up among the Libyan opposition.

## *Why may a cento be apt for subversive poems?*

The inherent subversive potential of the cento is, I suggest, ultimately a consequence of the lack of distinct boundaries between the texts. When the reader associates what the author presents as similar characters or situations, his or her focus is withdrawn from the individual traits in the texts. The common traits and general themes of the texts are highlighted instead. This is so in *Epithalamium Fridi*; cf. Chapters 13 and 14a; and the same may be true of Proba's cento and Zenga Zenga.

Proba's cento can be understood as similar to a double-exposed photo. The boundaries between the Christian text and the Virgilian texts can be seen as blurred. If this is how the reader receives the text, the rubbing-out of boundaries between different stories and different cases will make him or her focus not primarily on any of the individual stories in the Bible or in the *Aeneid*, but on the common ruling theme of the stories. If the reader, like the anonymous scribe, to begin with does not share Proba's interpretation of the stories in the Bible and in the *Aeneid* as essentially analogous, he or she will be surprised when reading the cento. When struck with the unexpected, the reader is likely to reflect upon the general ideas expressed in the cento and in the text of origin.[716] Because of the use of visual and acoustic media, Zenga Zenga's similarities to a double-exposed photo are even more evident than the similarities between Proba's

[715] Much of the information about Zenga Zenga comes from "Qaddafi YouTube Spoof by Israeli Gets Arab Fans." This article was published by *The New York Times* on-line on February 27, 2011. A version of the article was printed on February 28, 2011, p. A10 of the New York edition of *The New York Times*. The original version on Zenga Zenga can be seen on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBY-0n4esNY.

[716] Cf. Chapter 14b.

cento and a double-exposed photo. Through the video and the musical rhythms, Qaddafi is effectively linked with rap artists and trance parties. From this, the audience may conclude that Qaddafi suggestively enchants his followers; and if this is how the audience receives it, the cento-like composition seems to overthrow Qaddafi's rhetorical authority in a way similar to how the opposition wants to overthrow his political authority in Libya.

The investigations of the wedding centos suggest that centos which are moulded on generically related passages in the text of origin have a larger subversive potential than other centos. *Epithalamium Fridi,* the wedding cento which as a whole is moulded on generically related passages in the text of origin, elicits the Model Reader's thought-provoking reconsideration of the text of origin. By contrast, *Cento Nuptialis,* the wedding cento which generally is not moulded on generically related passages in the text of origin, does not for the most part have such thought-provoking effects on its Model Reader.[717] Authors may, I suggest, intentionally use generic closeness between a cento and its text of origin with subversive ends. However, the author may also present the cento or cento-like composition as generically related to the text of origin, although this is not really so; cf. Zenga Zenga (rap music and political speech), the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis* (erotic poetry and epic descriptions of battle) and Proba's cento (Christian and Roman epic). This may perhaps also be done with subversive ends. It is worth noticing, though, that a cento which seems to be moulded on generically similar passages in the text of origin may well be read as if it was written with subversive ends, regardless of the author's intentions.

## e. Humorous poems

As was seen in Chapters 12 and 14b, the perceived incongruity between the original and the new context of the quotations does not necessarily become food for thought. It may also have a comic effect; this was the case with the *Imminutio* section of *Cento Nuptialis*. This may also be the case with Zenga Zenga, which the *New York Times* initially presents as "a YouTube clip mocking Col. Muammar el-Quadaffi."[718] Incongruity can thus not only be rebellious, but also comic; cf. the 'incongruity theory' of humour and laughter as discussed in Chapters 12 and 14.

I believe that it is difficult to determine exactly when incongruity stops being food for thought and becomes comic; furthermore, it may be that incongruity moves from the comic towards the subversive. The border between comic and subversive almost certainly varies between different empirical readers and between various situations. Nonetheless, I am convinced that it is basically the same blurring feature in the cento that may have two such different ends.

The examinations of the wedding centos showed that *Epithalamium Fridi*, which is moulded on generically similar passages in its text of origin, provokes the Model Reader's serious reconsideration of the text of origin, whereas the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis,* which only initially seems to be moulded on generically similar passages in the text of origin, has a comic effect on the Model Reader; cf. Chapters 14b and 15a. This may suggest that centos with a 'false' inclination towards the genre have a

[717] Only the *Epithalamium utrique* section, which is moulded on the generically related 8th *Eclogue,* makes the Model Reader reconsider the text of origin with a thought-provoking effect; cf. Chapter 14b.

[718] On Wikipedia, the song is presented as a "YouTube video that parodies the Libyan ruler Muammar Gadaffi."

comic effect on their Model Readers. Such centos may therefore be particularly apt for comic purposes, with or without subversive intentions.

## *Concluding discussions on comic and subversive potentials*

Even though the cento may at first glance seem to be a very traditional and conservative kind of literature because of its enormous dependence on earlier literature, it may also have a strong subversive potential. The reason for this is probably that a cento demonstrates more clearly than most other literature that a text is never static or unchangeable.[719] The quotations in a cento may move freely not only between different literary genres, but also between different cultural, political and religious spheres.[720] Therefore, the ideas expressed in a cento like Proba's or a cento-like composition like Zenga Zenga cannot be orthodox. This heretical potential of the cento was probably one motivating factor among others that lay behind the Church fathers' condemnations of Proba's cento; cf. Chapter 1a. Similar negative reactions from some Arabs towards Zenga Zenga have been seen; these reactions can, however, also be explained by the circumstance that the creator of this cento is an Israeli Jew.

Centos are based upon simultaneous distance and closeness; and both humour and reconsideration are, I suggest, best achieved when the reader perceives both distance and closeness between the different repertoires involved in the reading (i.e. the personal, and those embedded at various levels of the cento). Cento is a detached *and* dependent way of writing: it takes a detached stance towards both genre and text of origin; it is nonetheless dependent on both. I believe that the cento is therefore particularly apt to express comic *and* subversive standpoints.

[719] Cf. Desbordes 1979 §28: "Dangereuse capacité du syntagme, de la phrase, du texte, dont le sens ne sera jamais fixé, à qui on pourra toujours faire dire autre chose. Il est tout à fait significatif que les Pères de l'Eglise qui sont les premiers à parler du centon, sont aussi les premiers à le condamner, comme exemple trop séduisant d'une perversité qui menace l'Écriture même."

[720] Cf. McCormick 1994 and discussions about 'repertoires' in Chapter 6b in this work.

# Summary

The centos in focus of this work were the wedding centos *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi.* Ausonius (c. 310–395) wrote *Cento Nuptialis* in 374/375. Some time later, he revised it and sent it in a letter to his friend Paulus; this letter also contains the only detailed description extant from antiquity of what cento poetry is. *Epithalamium Fridi* was written some 100–150 years later by Luxorius, who in all probability lived in Carthage during the late 5th or early 6th century.

*Cento Nuptialis* was written in response to a similar poem by Emperor Valentinian I; at the emperor's request, Ausonius had to participate against him in a literary competition. The subject-matter of *Cento Nuptialis* is the wedding between the emperor's son (and Ausonius' former pupil) Gratian and his wife Constantia. *Cento Nuptialis* is written in the form of a wedding poem for a special occasion – a kind of poem which has been called *epithalamium of occasion* in this work. *Epithalamium Fridi* commemorates the wedding between a certain Fridus and his bride. This cento too is written as an *epithalamium of occasion.* Beside their generic similarities, the two centos also have in common that they are composed exclusively of quotations from the works of Virgil.

The aim of this study was to show how *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* relate in different ways to both their text of origin and their genre. Although they are patchwork poems, they are also coherent literary works with literary qualities of their own, and deserve to be analysed as such.

The method used to show this was based on the belief that centos are best described as 'open works,' with a wide 'field of possibilities' for the reader to explore. The reader has a large freedom of interpretation and he or she is highly involved in the making of meaning; this essentially agrees also with Ausonius' description of cento. It was further argued that three nodes limit the field of possibilities in the cento: (1) the context in the cento; (2) the context in the text of origin; (3) the genre-expectations. Correspondingly, the cento may ideally be read from three different starting-points: (1) the cento *per se;* (2) the cento and its text of origin; (3) the cento and its genre.

In the analyses a hermeneutical approach was applied: the different parts and the different quotations used in the cento were interpreted in relation to the cento as a whole; and vice versa, the cento as a whole was interpreted in relation to its different parts and to the quotations used in it. This approach sometimes implied that a first interpretation of passages and quotations had to be modified during a later stage of interpretation.

Empirical readers' different interpretations of the wedding centos were only occasionally touched upon in this study; instead, the so-called Model Reader's interpretations were in focus. The Model Reader lies implicit in a text, because the author has placed him or her there, and he or she collaborates in a wished-for way with the author in the creation of meaning in the text. It was argued that the Model Reader of a cento collaborates with the author by associating the cento with both its text of origin and its genre.

The genre to which *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* belongs was tentatively called *wedding-related texts.* Such texts were treated in the second part of this work; and relevant texts were found in lyric poetry, epic, recited drama and rhetorical prescriptions. Particularly relevant for the wedding centos was the so-called *late antique epithalamium of occasion* and epic descriptions of wedding-like situations. It was found that antique epic descriptions of wedding-like situations never depict happy events; they remark on the fallacy in the situations described, and they are so negative that they may

all be labelled *anti-epithalamia.* Also in other *wedding-related* texts, negative notes occur. Poems which celebrate actual weddings that took place in the age when the poems were written were called *epithalamia of occasion* in this work; both *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* appear to be *epithalamia of occasion.* Even in such poems, some negative notes regularly occur. It was argued that it is necessary to keep an open eye for dubious notes when analysing *epithalamia of occasion,* but that it is also necessary to show a certain degree of acceptance for negative connotations in poems that must nonetheless be considered to presage essentially happy marriages.

The hermeneutical approach uncovered some unexpected, previously overlooked turns in the analysis of *Cento Nuptialis* (Chapter 12). This cento consists of eight sections; the first seven sections thematically resemble the *late antique epithalamium of occasion,* while the last section (*Imminutio*) has no known antecedents in the genre. Earlier scholars have therefore generally treated the *Imminutio* part separately from the first seven sections. In this work, it was argued that the Model Reader would search for unity in the poem. In the search for unity, the Model Reader would re-read the poem, and possible associations with the text of origin in the first seven sections which forecast the events told in the *Imminutio* section of the cento would be found particularly useful.

The 'notion of combat' was identified as the unifying theme of the poem as a whole. Beneath the surface of the text in the first seven sections of *Cento Nuptialis*, there are unmistakable traces of combat. In the *Imminutio* section of the cento, the notion of combat moves from beneath the surface up to the surface of the text. The poem ends with a portrait of the groom's fruitless ejaculation, without any reference to subsequent childbirth. In a contemporary context, this is so noteworthy that it most probably elicits the Model Reader's reinterpretation of the poem as a whole. As a result of this reinterpretation, the cento is best understood not as an *epithalamium of occasion,* but as an *anti-epithalamium of occasion.*

Furthermore, it was shown that the 'notion of combat' characterises the relationship between the spouses throughout the poem, and particularly so in the *Imminutio* section. The groom is portrayed as a hero, and often identified with Aeneas and his allies. By contrast, the bride is portrayed as potentially dangerous, and is often identified with persons who get in Aeneas' way in the *Aeneid*. The bride's dangerousness is for the most part linked with her sexuality, which may pose an active threat to the groom. This agrees well with how 'brides' are portrayed in *anti-epithalamia.* The 'notion of combat' is, however, also essential for the immediate circumstances lying behind the composition of *Cento Nuptialis,* i.e. Ausonius' literary competition with the emperor. The two kinds of battle (sexual and literary), and the double circumstances lying behind its composition, entail a double-edgedness of the poem as a whole.

In the *Imminutio* section, the humorous side of the cento is striking. Although the events are portrayed as essentially analogous through consistent associations in the cento with battle scenes in the text of origin, the Model Reader perceives a harsh contrast between the context in the cento (love-making) and in the text of origin (battle). This simultaneous analogy and contrast between cento and text of origin is perceived as comic; the humour of the *Imminutio* was explained through the so-called incongruity theory of humour and laughter.

It was also shown that two 'nodes', text of origin and genre, are for the most part not interwoven with each other in *Cento Nuptialis.*

The structure of *Epithalamium Fridi* clearly shows that it belongs to the tradition of *late antique epithalamia of occasion.* In the analysis (Chapter 13), a most significant

influence was found also from the epithalamium-like passages *Aen.* 1. 657–726 and 4. 102–168 throughout the cento. Luxorius uses strikingly many quotations from these passages; and because they can be read as 'epithalamia,' it is particularly difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the influence from the text of origin and from the genre in *Epithalamium Fridi*. These two 'nodes' interfere throughout the cento; but the genre undoubtedly prevails over the text of origin. Unlike the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis,* there is no humorous contrast between the contexts in *Epithalamium Fridi* and its text of origin.

The atmosphere in *Epithalamium Fridi* is characterised by a significant sense of closeness. There is a sense of closeness between the historical events and the present events in Carthage; between the human and divine spheres; and between groom and bride at the end of the poem. All these proximities contribute in different ways to the panegyric scope of the poem. Primarily, they do so by associating the present wedding with the well-known love story between Dido and Aeneas. In *Epithalamium Fridi,* the love story between Dido and Aeneas has totally lost its elsewhere negative connotations. The main reason for this is that it has been altogether subordinated to the panegyric scope of the *epithalamium of occasion.*

General conclusions and further discussions were included in the fourth part of this study. This part of the work built much upon the analyses of *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi;* the aim was nonetheless to contribute to better general understanding of cento poetry.

Two functions of meaningful associations with the text of origin were identified in *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi:* These functions were called 'external' and 'internal' (Chapter 14a). It was argued that the external function of a meaningful association is to link the events in the cento with a somewhat analogous event in the text of origin; and by contrast, the internal function of a meaningful association is to strengthen the thematic coherence within the cento itself. All meaningful associations with the text of origin have some kind of external function, but only some have internal functions in the cento. It was further argued that consistent associations with passages in the text of origin which could be understood as generically related to the cento would convince the Model Reader to go back to the text of origin with the intention to reinterpret it through the lens of the cento (Chapter 14b). It was suggested that such reconsideration could have two different effects: (1) thought-provoking and (2) comic.

The discussions held in Chapter 14 showed an unexpected connection between the generic resemblance between the texts and the effect of the Model Reader's reconsideration of the text of origin through the lens of the cento. When the wedding centos, or a certain part of them, turn out to be generically related to the text of origin, the reconsideration of the text of origin through the lens of the wedding cento has a thought-provoking effect. By contrast, when a part of the wedding cento turns out *not* to be generically related to the text of origin, although this was initially assumed by the Model Reader, the reconsideration of the text of origin is interrupted halfway with a comic effect. These findings call for further scholarly examination as regards their potential relevance also for other centos.

In Chapter 15, it was argued that centos may guide their readers beyond a wide field of possibilities; in *Cento Nuptialis* and *Epithalamium Fridi* this was done through different kinds of inclination towards the genre and through the use of internal associations. The different kinds of inclination towards the genre were called steady, fluctuating and 'false' (Chapter 15a). A steady inclination towards the genre provides the Model Reader with firm guidance, and centos with such inclination presuppose a

less advanced Model Reader than other centos. *Epithalamium Fridi* is characterised by a steady inclination towards the genre; and this cento presupposes a less advanced Model Reader than *Cento Nuptialis,* which only occasionally is moulded upon generically related passages in its text of origin. A 'false' inclination towards the genre does not guide the Model Reader's understanding beyond the comic; this is true e.g. of the *Imminutio* part of *Cento Nuptialis.*

Internal associations were frequent in *Cento Nuptialis* (Chapter 14b). It was argued that the use of internal associations as guides for the interpretation presupposes a more advanced Model Reader than the use of a steady inclination towards the genre; such associations also seem to demand a Model Reader who re-reads the cento several times. Although *Cento Nuptialis* is best understood if read and re-read in private, it may *also* aim at less advanced readers. Possibly also other cleverly composed centos simultaneously aim at different Model Readers: one more immediate and less sophisticated, and one which involves an advanced Model Reader's recognition of various allusions to text of origin and genre. This suggestion calls for further examination as regards its potential relevance for other centos.

It was finally suggested that internal associations may be particularly apt guides in centos without a steady inclination towards the genre. The reason for this is that such centos draw little of their meaning from other texts than themselves; therefore, the general urge for coherence seems to be higher in such centos than in other centos. This suggestion too calls for further scholarly examination.

In the last chapter of this work (Chapter 16), it was argued that centos may be particularly apt for the following functions: markers of sophistication and social status; occasional poems; poetic games; subversive poems; and humorous poems. The latter two functions were presented as particularly interesting, and it was suggested that it is basically the same blurring feature in centos which may have these very different ends.

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Abbreviations follow *L'année philologique.*

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