Thirty Years of the 'Jeweled Style'*

CILLIAN O'HOGAN

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In seventh-century Wiltshire, a scholar-monk began to write classicising Latin poetry. In bold terms he describes himself as the first of the Germanic peoples to write Latin poetry ('neminem nostrae stirpis prosapia genitum et Germanicae gentis cunabilis confotum in huiuscemodi negotio [i.e. poetry] ante nostram mediocritatem tantopere desudasse').[1] His programmatic statements cite Virgil explicitly, and allude to Prudentius and Sedulius.[2] His is a poetry that sets out a stall for the beginning of something new, but does so by making clear his predecessors. For Aldhelm, as for much of the Middle Ages, the canonical models of Latin poetry included classical Latin authors as well as the Christian Latin poets of Late Antiquity.

Fourteen centuries on, late antique Latin poetry may not have quite the same status as it did for Aldhelm and his Anglo-Latin successors, but three decades after the *annus mirabilis* of 1989, it is safe to say that it has finally become properly established as a subject worthy

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[1] Ehwald 1919: 202.
[2] For Aldhelm's engagement with his predecessors see Orchard 1994: 126–224; McBrine 2017: 234–9.

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of study in the Anglophone academy.[3] Since the mid-2000s, a steady stream of monographs dedicated to the topic, as well as increasing numbers of translations, articles and conferences, and the establishment of the International Society for Late Antique Literary Studies, has meant that we are in probably the most fertile and productive period for late antique poetic studies in the English-speaking world we have ever seen.[4] It is remarkable that so much of this has taken place despite the constraints within which scholars of late Latin poetry have to operate: proper modern critical editions are often lacking, and most works do not have detailed scholarly commentaries. In short, we have to do without the apparatus that scholars of republican and early imperial literature take for granted.[5]

The publication of four recent edited volumes relating to late Latin poetry, along with a single-author monograph updating and synthesising previously published essays, provides an opportunity to examine the key trends of current scholarship in the field.[6] In what follows, I focus in turn on four of the most prominent issues in the field that emerge from the five books, namely genre, intertextuality, the 'jeweled style' and the nature of 'late antique poetics', before concluding by outlining several areas in which there is considerable opportunity for further work to be done. More reflection on the wider contexts of late Latin poetics is needed: although Karla Pollmann speaks explicitly about this throughout her book, in the edited volumes such overt theorising is less common. Aside from the contributions by Marco Formisano (in both *Classics Renewed* and *Poetics*) and Jesus Hernández Lobato (in *Poetics*), the clearest theoretical statements and most ambitious pieces come from Helen Kaufmann (in *Poetics*), Michael Squire (in both *Poetics* and *Morphogrammata*), Jaś Elsner and Hernández Lobato (the introduction to *Poetics*) and Marc Mastrangelo (in both *Classics Renewed* and *Poetics*).

I GENRE

The range of new and modified genres that appear in late antique poetry has long been a focus of scholarly study. Alongside the traditional genres (epic, lyric, elegy, epigram), we find a number of hybrid genres (Prudentius' *Peristephanon*, long poems in lyric metres, have been called 'ballads'; the elegiac metre is reused for a range of purposes; the rise of the Christian hymn throws things further out of sync). This 'mélange des genres' has governed approaches to late antique genre for decades.[7] Is biblical epic, for example, something that differs palpably from classical epic?[8] What about panegyrical poetry: is it a subset of epic, or something wholly new?[9] Shorter epics like the *Psychomachia* and the *Romulea* of Dracontius have been called *epyllia*, but is this term, already controversial when applied to Hellenistic and earlier Latin texts, really transferrable to

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[3] 1989 saw the publication of three landmark monographs in English: Malamud 1989; Palmer 1989; Roberts 1989, as well as the first volume of a new literary history of Latin, dealing with the period 284–374 C.E.: Herzog and Schmidt 1989.

[4] There has always been a great deal of attention paid to late Latin poetry by continental scholars, and a number of Anglophone academics have long been working diligently to promote the field.

[5] There are some promising signs, however: the past few years have seen new critical editions of Paulinus of Nola (Dolveck 2015) and Dracontius (Zwierlein 2017). Landmark commentaries on late Latin poetry include Green 1991, Dewar 1996, Fux 2003 and 2013, Kaufmann 2006, as well as the commentaries in progress on the poetry of Sidonius Apollinaris.

[6] The books follow a cluster of ambitious monographs dealing with the nature of late Latin poetics: Hernández Lobato 2012; Pelttari 2014; Cullhed 2015.

[7] For the term see especially Fontaine 1975 and 1988.

[8] See Putter 2018. McBrine 2017 is comprehensive but less strong on genre; Kuhn-Treichel 2016 sees the marginal work of Marius Victor as comprising a hybrid of epic and didactic.

[9] Ware 2012.

the late antique context?[10] The current tendency, in keeping with wider trends in the criticism of late Latin poetry (to be discussed later), is to stress continuity with the classical past where possible. So, for instance, Scott McGill (in *Classics Renewed*) foregrounds Juvencus' epic aspects and stresses that Juvencus sees himself as operating in a continuing tradition of classical epic, similar to Catherine Ware's reading of Claudian's hexameter poetry as being primarily epic in nature.[11] Even where contributors identify generic polyphony, they tend to describe it in terms that are classicising: Ware (in *Classics Renewed*) and Stephen Harrison (in *Poetics*) both approach Claudian's prefaces (to *De VI consulatu Honorii* and *De raptu Proserpinae* respectively) from a perspective that shares ground with Harrison's work on 'generic enrichment' in the Augustan poets.[12]

This stress on continuity is all well and good, but it runs the risk of collapsing the temporal distance between the poets of Late Antiquity and their earlier models.[13] Late antique authors, especially after the first generation, not only allude to their republican and imperial models, but also to their own late antique predecessors — something that is not always sufficiently acknowledged in these papers. To take one example, Eric Hutchinson's study of Sedulius' interaction with Virgil (in *Classics Renewed*) does not engage in any significant way (aside from a couple of footnotes) with the presence of Juvencus, Sedulius' biblical epic predecessor. Each poet operating in a tradition restates the terms for their successors. The few papers in these collections that do attempt to follow a tradition through Late Antiquity stand out for their scarcity: most notably, two contributions on the fortunes of elegy in Late Antiquity by Michele Cutino (in *Culture and Literature*) and Michael Roberts (in *Classics Renewed*). One way forward may be that outlined by Ad Putter in a recent study on biblical poetry (not exclusively epic), who foregrounds the rules of the game rather than more rigid generic schemata.[14]

When used with caution, however, rigid generic schemata can be productive. In a chapter on 'The Test Case of Epic Poetry in Late Antiquity' (37–75), Pollmann identifies five different types of epic ('not necessarily exhaustive', 40): mythological, panegyrical, allegorical, biblical and hagiographical. In her view, it is possible to identify characteristics that help us to distinguish between variants of epic, even if these characteristics can sometimes overlap subgenres. This examination of genre is exemplary of Pollmann's approach throughout the volume, which tends towards the typological. Typologies inevitably invite nit-picking and counter-arguments (for example, the arguments on 45–6 against seeing Claudian's *De bello Gildonico* as a historical epic are in my view unconvincing),[15] but Pollmann has provided an apparatus for approaching late Latin hexameter poetry, and shows us how genres are at the very least 'good to think with' (21–3). Broader statements about the fluidity of genre in Late Antiquity sit alongside focused investigations of individual generic strands. The next step is to explore whether these subcategories exist in their own traditions: should we be speaking of the panegyrical successors of Claudian (Merobaudes, Sidonius, Corippus), or the allegorical successors of Prudentius (though these are mostly medieval, e.g. Milo of Saint-Amand's *De sobrietate* or Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus*)?[16]

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[10] For the terminology see Bright 1987; Wasyl 2011.

[11] Ware 2012.

[12] Harrison 2007; see also Ian Fielding's study of generic interlopers in Maximianus (in *Classics Renewed*).

[13] I think here of the infamous claim at Cairns 1972: 32 that genre in antiquity existed in a 'time-free zone' — but in fact Cairns' conception of genre might be a very productive way to analyse late Latin poetry.

[14] Putter 2018.

[15] One example: Pollmann argues that Claudian's use of the divine apparatus is not in keeping with Lucan's practice, but as she notes in a footnote (46 n. 45), Silius and Petronius do involve the gods — as does Ennius. Can we really say, then, that historical epic ought to exclude the divine?

[16] There are decades' worth of dissertations to be done on the medieval reception of Prudentius: the survey of Vest 1932 (frequently cited but apparently rarely read) merely maps the terrain.

Part of the problem with making sense of this is that traditions get messier in Late Antiquity.[17] Poets continue to signal their indebtedness to specific generic models, but they often do so while also veering far away from these same models. Perhaps the best example is the marvellous pastoral dialogue *De mortibus boum* by Severus Sanctus Endelechius. As Petra Schierl shows in her detailed analysis (in *Classics Renewed*), Endelechius 'recasts' Virgilian bucolic for Christian purposes and combines both *Eclogues* and *Georgics* to produce a new type of pastoral poem, one that also draws on the traditions of Horatian lyric and the nascent genre of Christian hymnography. Endelechius makes his debt to Virgil clear (the herdsmen are called Aegon, Bucolus and Tityrus), but the transformation into a lyric setting (with thirty-three stanzas, one for each year of Christ's life) also marks a break with the classical tradition and a shift towards biblical traditions (the shepherd David as composer of psalms, Jesus as Good Shepherd and so on).

II INTERTEXTUALITY

Genre and traditions become more slippery in the fourth and fifth centuries. One tried-and-tested way to find one's footing is by relying on philologically-founded intertextual criticism. How does the way in which authors choose to allude reflect how they perceive their place in a tradition? Intertextual criticism, which has become the dominant (default?) method of criticism in the study of Latin poetry over the past two decades, is well represented in these collections. This has often been done uncritically, and resulted in somewhat unimaginative applications of the methodologies of Hinds and Thomas to late antique poetry.[18] We ought to question, as Formisano does (*Poetics*, 207–8), the extent to which the critical tools developed by scholars of Augustan and imperial Latin poetry (works primarily written in or near Rome and within a relatively short span of time between the middle of the first century B.C.E. and the end of the first century C.E.) are really applicable to literature written across the Roman Empire over a span of three centuries. For Formisano, this approach perpetuates the notion that late antique literature is merely an appendage to classical Latin literature, rather than a vibrant and flourishing body of work in its own right. I would add that such an approach often ends up painting the rich palette of late Latin poetry into a shade of grey.

Earlier generations of scholars wrestled with the question of how, exactly, to interpret Christian Latin imitation of Virgil (above all): is it *Kontrastimitation* (a specifically Christian version of *oppositio in imitando*), *chresis* (utilitarian deployment of classical literature geared towards praise of God), or something else?[19] As Mastrangelo notes, these formative efforts 'established the special character of Late Latin reuse' (*Classics Renewed*, 32). In addition to Mastrangelo's contribution to *Classics Renewed*, we have Kaufmann's take on intertextuality in *Poetics*, as well as Aaron Pelttari's work on allusion in his important 2014 monograph.[20] All three focus in particular on the new late antique phenomenon of widespread 'nonreferential allusion' (i.e. allusions that make no specific claims about the relationship between the contexts of alluding and alluded

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[17] This is especially true of lyric poetry and poetry collections, as shown by Joseph Pucci in his study of Ausonius' *Bissula* (in *Classics Renewed*) and by Vincent Zarini in his study of Ennodius (in *Culture and Literature*).

[18] Hinds 1998; Thomas 1999. The argument about whether to call it 'allusion' or 'intertextuality' apparently still lives: see the comments of Hutchinson (in *Classics Renewed*, 273–4) and Kaufmann (in *Poetics*, 150). The words we use do of course matter, but I would be surprised if many Latinists still have very strong feelings about a terminology debate from the Latin theory wars of the 1990s.

[19] For *Kontrastimitation* see Thraede 1962; for *chresis* see Gnilka 1984; a good summary is provided by Mastrangelo in *Classics Renewed*.

[20] Mastrangelo responds to both Kaufmann and Pelttari, and is a useful entry-point to the debate.

texts), sometimes also called 'formal' or 'unmarked' allusions.[21] Yet each looks at these features in different ways. For Pelttari, they help to show how much more space late Latin poets make for readers to interpret their works, while Kaufmann maps them onto one extreme of an intertextual continuum, seeing them as 'formal features' (159) used by authors to add classical flavour to late antique texts. Mastrangelo, rather than stressing the role of the reader or the author, reminds us of the wider contexts of both: placement within a literary tradition, and interpretability by a scholarly community. The centrality of exegesis and the importance of interpretation *ad litteram* must also shape how we think about intertextuality, especially with regard to Christian literature. As Isabella Gualandri emphasises (in *Poetics*), attention to individual words is heightened in the fourth and fifth centuries. It is hard to see how Christian readers of late Latin poetry, so primed towards close reading of every single word of the Bible, would be able to avoid following up the references produced by allusion in these poems. Ultimately, as McGill puts it, the late Latin author directs the reader back to the classical source in order 'to activate the content of the source text and to compare and contrast it with the content of the later text' (*Classics Renewed*, 65).

Even if I am not convinced by Pelttari and Kaufmann's treatment of 'nonreferential allusions', it is heartening that they (along with Mastrangelo and Gualandri) are making clear efforts to articulate what it is that distinguishes late Latin imitation from Augustan and imperial practice. The contributions in the volumes under review may not always acknowledge that sufficiently, but the more theoretical approaches to intertextuality developed by these four authors will have to be the starting-point for all future work on imitation in late Latin poetry.

III THE JEWELED STYLE

The attention to individual words that characterises late antique intertextual studies can also be seen in a related feature of late Latin poetry, namely the parallels between late antique literature and late antique art. This cultural comparison was pioneered by Michael Roberts' *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (1989), which saw clear links in creative approaches taken by the poets and plastic artists of Late Antiquity, especially a tendency towards fragmentation and miniaturisation, an emphasis on the visually appealing, and the isolation of 'independent units' (words, stones) within larger works of art. Although Roberts was guarded about the wider applicability of his work (6–7), it has nevertheless shaped a great deal of the Anglophone scholarship on late Latin poetry over the past three decades. The fundamental question of the relationship between art and text continues to appeal: intertextuality (especially in relation to the *cento* and to Optatian) has been likened to the use of *spolia* in late antique monuments (Mastrangelo in *Classics Renewed*, 36–7; Squire in *Poetics*, 24; though the analogy has long been noted, see Roberts 1989: 97, with further references).

While such interactions between art and literature are not uncommon in antiquity (or in other historical periods), it is nevertheless true that the artistic (or 'jeweled') nature of late Latin poetry speaks to something more than simply a shared cultural origin. The appearance of an edited volume devoted to the poems of Publius Optatianus Porfyrius foregrounds this play between art and text. As Michael Squire puts it (*Poetics*, 28), Optatian 'makes sense only in the context of late antique visual culture'. Optatian's word art takes the form both of *imagines metrorum* (poems in the shape of the objects they are about) and *carmina cancellata* (gridded poems, laid out in squares, that hide

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[21] For the term see Pelttari 2014: 130–7.

additional words and verses in shapes within the grids). Optatian's poetry is meant to be read (on the page, first and foremost),[22] but it is also meant to be looked at.[23]

Optatian draws on a long tradition of play between seeing and reading (as Squire notes in *Poetics*, 43–6). In a famous passage, Paulinus of Nola apparently uses the word *relegere* to refer to the act of viewing images on the wall of his basilica (*Carm.* 27.586): he notes that *tituli* in verse are inscribed next to the images, to tell the viewers what they are looking at. These *tituli* (the most prominent extant example of which is Prudentius' *Dittochaeon*) are described by Francesco Lubian as 'examples of notional *ekphrasis*' (*Culture and Literature*, 57), 'notional' because it is impossible to know whether or not they really did accompany the works they describe. Whatever the real purpose of the *tituli*, they at least purport to be public-facing poetry, that is, poetry written for a large community. Another example of such public-facing poetry is the large range of metrical inscriptions produced in the fourth century. Dennis Trout (in *Classics Renewed*) places epigraphic poetry in its spatial contexts, by looking at the relationship between several poems written by or for members of the Constantinian imperial family and preserved on monuments. These poems interact with one another, making the landscape of Rome into a map of words.

At the same time as words are made into works of art, their limits as means to description become increasingly apparent. Late antique authors repeatedly refer to the impossibility of describing things accurately in human speech. This is seen most prominently in the difficulties Christian authors have in talking about God (Prudentius uses terms such as *elinguis* and *mutus*), but it is expressed also (albeit in somewhat cliched terms) by the writers of panegyric.[24] Hernández Lobato identifies this as a 'poetics of silence' (*Poetics*). This is perhaps not quite the right term, given how much poets talk explicitly about the difficulties they have in using language to describe that which is beyond language (be it God or the Emperor). A more appealing approach is taken by Mastrangelo (in *Poetics*), who sees Prudentius and Boethius as honestly acknowledging the limits of corporeal language and working within these constraints to describe as best they can, not least by using tools such as metaphor, allegory, ekphrasis and allusion.

IV PERIODISATION AND THE LIMITS OF 'LATE LATIN POETRY'

The volumes under review focus overwhelmingly on the literature of the fourth and fifth centuries, with a few stand-outs from the sixth century, and little beyond that. How do we define late antique Latin poetry, and how should it be related (if at all) to the parameters of late antique history or art? Inevitably, any attempt to set hard dates is likely to be futile.[25] It is instructive, however, to see explicit attempts at defining an endpoint (the relative absence of poetry in the third century makes defining a starting-point much easier). So, for instance, McGill and Pucci (*Poetics*, 14) set the chronological limits for their book as the fourth to sixth centuries (although both Roberts and David Bright extend down to the Carolingian era). Kaufmann identifies 'a clear endpoint to late Latin intertextuality' (*Poetics*, 173) in Venantius Fortunatus, who is probably the most popular contender, nowadays, for the title of last Latin poet of

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[22] This raises the issue of silent reading, for which see most recently McCutcheon 2015.
[23] Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe (in *Morphogrammata*) makes explicit the 'jeweled style' link, by comparing Optatian's poems to late antique amulets and gemstones.
[24] For Prudentius see Gerard O'Daly (*Classics Renewed*, 236–9), also Malamud 2011 and Dykes 2011. For panegyric see Ware (*Poetics*, 362–3).
[25] See the review article of Shanzer 2009.

antiquity. I will return later to my own quibbles with such limits. What is important to note, however, is that to all intents and purposes late antique Latin poetry is usually defined according to the criteria of fourth- and fifth-century texts. This results in two issues.

First, this approach prioritises literature written while the Western Roman Empire was still standing, and runs into difficulties when dealing with poetry written under Burgundian or Visigothic rule (Fortunatus, Dracontius, Boethius). Second, it inadvertently perpetuates the notion that late antique literature is a terminus (the 'end of ancient poetry'), not least through smoothing the way for the relatively uncritical adaptation of tools developed by authors working on Augustan and imperial Latin poetry to the contexts of Late Antiquity. (This approach has been criticised repeatedly by Formisano.)[26] The classicising approach to Late Antiquity also means that the dramatic influence this poetry went on to have on the literature of the Middle Ages (especially the following centuries) is overlooked; there are hardly any attempts to trace the development of traditions from Late Antiquity through to the high Middle Ages in the volumes under review.[27]

On the one hand, it is reasonable to approach fourth- and fifth-century literature from the perspective of classical poetry. After all, Prudentius, Claudian and Sidonius all considered themselves Romans and inheritors of the Roman literary tradition. On the other hand, this means that the innovations of these authors, and the ways in which they modify the classical tradition and set the terms for their own successors, are not fully acknowledged. As Elsner and Hernández Lobato remark in the introduction to their volume, it is late antique literature that establishes the model for how to negotiate the competing demands of classical and Christian traditions for authors throughout the Middle Ages and beyond.[28]

In an effort to make sense of the poetics of late antique literature, a number of scholars reach for later parallels, or think about reception (beyond the Middle Ages). This approach was pioneered by Georgia Nugent almost three decades ago, and is exemplified in the volumes under review in the article by Hernández Lobato (in *Morphogrammata*), as well as (briefly) by Kaufmann (in *Poetics*).[29] While some of these approaches are illuminating (it is remarkable just how much some authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reached for late antique texts), ultimately it can come across as yet another *apologia* for late antique literature, and I am not sure how much we gain from the broad brush-stroke claims for similarity between the two periods. A more productive reception-oriented approach may be to think about how reading late antique texts shapes how readers approach their classical models. As reception theory has taught us, once we have read Anne Carson, we will always read Sophocles or Sappho with her in mind.[30] Philip Hardie has recently tried a similar experiment by asking how Prudentian the *Aeneid* is.[31] And for Aldhelm and other early medieval authors, as I mentioned at the beginning, Virgil has to be read through the intermediary of Prudentius and Sedulius.

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[26] See especially Formisano 2007, 2012 and 2014, and his contribution to *Poetics*.
[27] Roberts' analysis of the elegiac tradition in *Poetics* is a notable exception. Bright in the same volume is primarily interested in Hrabanus Maurus, rather than his late antique predecessors; Pollmann deals with traditions in a couple of chapters, but does not always do enough to spell out the relationship between authors working in those traditions.
[28] A point also made, with regard to prose literature, by Vessey 2014 and 2015.
[29] See Nugent 1989; see also the various reception-themed contributions to Formisano and Fuhrer 2014 and Schottenius Cullhed and Malm 2018.
[30] Still essential is Martindale 1993.
[31] Hardie 2017.

V FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Thinking about the early medieval reception of late antique poetry invites a much messier question: where do we draw the boundary between 'late antique' and 'early medieval' poetry? Any efforts to pick a date will be frustrated. Picking Venantius Fortunatus (d. *c.* 600/609) as the endpoint, as many instinctively will, raises the question of whether the rhythmical poetry attributed to Columba (d. 597) should also be considered 'late antique' rather than 'medieval' — and does it exclude the metrical poetry of Visigothic poets like Eugenius of Toledo (d. 657)? If we are going to allow Visigothic poetry, why not the earliest Anglo-Latin poetry of Aldhelm (linked to the 'ending of Late Antiquity' by one recent monograph)?[32] But Aldhelm intitiates a strong tradition of Anglo-Latin poetry that culminates in Alcuin — should this be included? And if Alcuin, why not the rest of Carolingian poetry? My point is not that we should move from thinking about 'late antique poetry' to thinking about 'poetry of the first millennium' (though it is tempting), but rather that late antique poetry shares as much with poetry of the tenth century as it does with poetry of the first: by adopting a primarily classicising perspective, we are only telling half the story.[33]

Expanding the chronological range examined by scholars of Late Antiquity is one logical next step. Another is to engage more with scholarship on the other poetic traditions of Late Antiquity. Despite the common perception that late antique Greek and Latin literature went down divergent paths, there are clear points of crossover: for example, Claudian's origins among the 'wandering poets' of late antique Greek Egypt, as well as the ways in which Maximianus' use of Philodemus can be paralleled in sixth-century Greek poetry (as shown by Fielding in *Classics Renewed*). Yet even in instances where direct links cannot be established, it would surely be productive to trace parallel trends between Latin and Greek poetry (not to mention poetry written in Syriac, Hebrew, Arabic and other late antique languages).[34] Some tentative steps in this direction have been taken at a number of recent conferences exploring Latin and Greek poetry in dialogue (at Ghent in 2016, Wuppertal in 2019 and, looking also at Syriac, Hebrew and Samaritan Aramaic, at Waterloo in 2018).[35] But there is a great deal more to be done in this regard.

Finally, it would be good to see greater consideration of late Latin prose in relation to late Latin poetry. Although there is a great deal of discussion of prose in *Culture and Literature*, the chapters that deal with prose authors do not have very much to say about poetry. The two studies of the *Panegyrici Latini* by Ware and Roger Rees in *Poetics* are more successful at showing the links between prose panegyric and poetry, while Pollmann looks at how two specific prose source-texts (Eucherius of Lyon, 120–39, and Sulpicius Severus, 191–214) are versified by authors working at different periods across Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. These are exceptions, however, and because of the tendency to focus on intertextuality and on late Latin poetry in relation to Augustan and imperial predecessors, relatively few contributions respond to the important work of Mastrangelo on the changing fortunes of poetry in Late Antiquity (with the exception of Pollmann, given her focus on poetic authority).[36]

The range of approaches covered in the volumes under review is remarkable, and has forced me to make some difficult choices. I have not had a chance to write, for example,

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[32] Dempsey 2015.
[33] For 'first millennium studies', see Fowden 2014.
[34] For example, Pollmann notes (74) the need for further study of Greek and Latin epic in tandem.
[35] I was one of the organisers of the Waterloo conference.
[36] Mastrangelo 2009; see also Vessey 2007. The tireless group of scholars working on Sidonius Apollinaris also necessarily deal with the interaction between prose and verse, given that author's output. See for example, van Waarden and Kelly 2013.

about the critical role exegesis plays in late Latin (especially Christian) poetry, something discussed especially by Mastrangelo (in both *Poetics* and *Classics Renewed*) and Pollmann.[37] And I have only touched briefly on the question of literary materiality and the 'matter of the page', something that recurs repeatedly in the contributions to *Morphogrammata*.[38] Finally, *apologiae* for the study of late Latin poetry abound in these volumes.[39] A plea for these to disappear in the 2020s: the books under review make clear the value and appeal of late Latin poetry, as well as the opportunities for more work yet to be done.

University of Toronto
cillian.ohogan@utoronto.ca

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[37] See further the edited collection Otten and Pollmann 2007.
[38] The term is taken from Butler 2011; for more on literary materiality in Late Antiquity, see Ross 1995; Fielding 2014; O'Hogan 2016.
[39] See for example, Pollmann (1); the introduction of *Poetics* (3–4); Bret Mulligan (in *Classics Renewed*, 133–4).

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