

AN URBAN PREFECT AND HIS WIFE

Clodius Celsinus *signo* Adelfius was prefect of the city of Rome from 7 June to 18 December 351: the precise dates are certified by the list of *praefecti urbis* from 254 to 354 included in the contemporary almanac conventionally styled *The Chronographer of the Year 354* or the Calendar of Filocalus (*Chr. Min.* 1.65–9).¹ Adelfius had much earlier held office under Constantine as *corrector* of the Italian province of Apulia et Calabria before 333 (*CIL* 9.1576 = *ILS* 1239 [Beneventum]), which implies that he was born before 303. Shortly after his Italian *correctura*, Adelfius was *consularis* of Numidia, in which post he is attested between the investiture of Constans and Dalmatius as Caesars on 25 December 333 and 18 September 335 respectively (*CIL* 8.7011 = *ILAlg* 2.587 = *ILS* 715 [Cirta]: *perpetuae victoriae ddd. nnn. Constantini maximi triumphatoris semper Aug. et Constanti[ni] et Constanti et Constantis nobilissimorum et florentissimorum Caesarum*).² Some modern reconstructions of his career hold that Adelfius was subsequently proconsul of Africa in 339–340, but the one item of evidence for this post is late, unreliable, and probably erroneous. Isidore of Seville calls the poetess Proba *uxor Adelfi proconsulis* (*De viris illustribus* 22 (18) [*PL* 83.1093]), where a notice in a Vatican manuscript has *uxor Adelfi ex praefecto urbis* (*CSEL* 16.519),³ and the discrepancy is most plausibly attributed to a lapse of memory by Isidore.

Adelfius was appointed prefect of the city of Rome by Magnentius, who had supplanted Constans as the ruler of the western Roman Empire in January 350, but failed to obtain recognition as a legitimate ruler from the eastern emperor Constantius. It seems, therefore, that the aristocratic Adelfius, who had probably held no official post between 337 and 350 while Constans ruled Italy and Africa, was brought out of retirement in an attempt to lend legitimacy to the usurping regime at a time when the decisive battle between Magnentius and Constantius was expected in the Balkans. When Adelfius was appointed prefect on 7 June 351, the eastern emperor Constantius was residing in Sirmium and had proclaimed his cousin Gallus Caesar on 15 March (*Descriptio consulum* 351.3). During Adelfius' prefecture, on 28 September 351, Constantius' troops defeated the army of Magnentius at Mursa (*Descriptio consulum* 351.1). Nearly three months later, Adelfius' prefecture ended abruptly in

¹ A complete and properly critical edition of the whole work is badly needed to replace the old separate editions of different parts of it by T. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* 1. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Auctores Antiquissimi 9 (1892), 39–148; J. Strzygowski, *Die Calenderbilder des Chronographen vom Jahre 354*, Jahrbuch des kaiserlichen deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Ergänzungsheft 1 (Berlin, 1888); A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina* 1.2 (Leipzig, 1906), 135–6, no. 665 (*Monosticha de mensibus*); *CIL* 1² 254–79 (the *natales Caesarum*): see J. Divjak, 'Der sogenannte Kalendar des Filocalus', in A. Primmer, K. Smolak and D. Weber (edd.), *Textsorten und Textkritik. Tagungsbeiträge, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 693 (Vienna, 2002), 19–38; W. Wischmeyer, 'Die christlichen Texte im sogenannten Filocalus-Kalendar', *ibid.* 45–57.

² For the two posts under Constantine, see T. D. Barnes, *New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 164, 173. All the ancient evidence relating to Adelfius and his wife is reprinted (though not always correctly evaluated) by A. Chastagnol, *Les Fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1962), 131–4, no. 55.

³ Adelfius' proconsulate is accepted by Chastagnol (n.2), 134, but rejected in T. D. Barnes, 'Proconsuls of Africa, 337–392', *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 144–53, at 145–6.

circumstances which Ammianus Marcellinus narrated in one of the lost books of his history and to which he refers back in his account of what happened at the court of Constantius during the campaigning season of 356:

sed specialiter eum insectabatur Dorus quidam ex medico Scutariorum, quem nitentium rerum centurionem sub Magnentio Romae provectum rettulimus accusasse Adelphium urbi praefectum ut altiora coeptantem. (16.6.2)

Arbitio was particularly hounded by one Dorus, a former medical orderly of the Scutarii; I have already related how, after being promoted under Magnentius to serve as the centurion guarding the public buildings of Rome,⁴ Dorus accused Adelfius, the urban prefect, of nursing improper ambitions.⁵

Since recent exegetes have not done full justice to this passage,⁶ some preliminary annotation is required before any substantive deduction is drawn from it.

(1) In many contexts, even military ones (for example, Vegetius, *De re militari* 3.2.8), the term *medicus* means ‘doctor’ in general.⁷ Here the Penguin translation takes it to mean ‘military surgeon’ (unnecessarily suppressing the name of the unit in which Dorus served). But standard works on the Roman army gloss *medicus* as ‘military orderly’, citing the late-second-century jurist Tarrutenius Priscus as quoted in the *Digest* (50.6.7),⁸ and that may well be the meaning here. If that is the case, Dorus had been an orderly in one of the Scholae Scutariorum, an élite corps of troops who attended the emperor closely, which was either created by Constantine or, more probably, reorganized by him though founded earlier.⁹ Ammianus, who was probably the son of a high-ranking military officer, joined the élite corps of the *protectores domestici* as a young man, and between 354 and 357 he was a staff officer attached to the general Ursicinus: hence the historian may well have encountered Dorus in person at the court of Constantius, and his remark that the man had once been a mere *medicus* might reflect both a sense of social superiority and personal dislike of Dorus.¹⁰

(2) According to Ammianus, in 350 or 351 Dorus was promoted under Magnentius, that is, he was promoted from *medicus* to the post of *centurio rerum nitentium*, not vice versa.¹¹ This post is otherwise unattested, but the *Notitia Dignitatum* registers a

⁴ For the meaning of *res nitentes*, see the instructions addressed to the urban prefect of Constantinople on 17 July 389: *sublimis eminentia tua, quidquid talis astutiae deprehenderit fraude violatum, id, si publicis nitoribus faciem aspectus deterioris inducit, . . . iubebit amoveri* (CTh 15.1.25).

⁵ I have used and corrected the translation by W. Hamilton in W. Hamilton and A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354–378)* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 94.

⁶ É. Galletier, *Ammien Marcellin: Histoire* 1 (Paris: Budé, 1968), 272, n. 301; W. Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Römische Geschichte* 1 (Berlin, 1968), 292, nn. 56–9; P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVI* (Groningen, 1972), 64–5.

⁷ TLL 8.549, s.v. *medicus* I A 2 a β, cf. F. Lammert, *RE Suppl.* 4 (1924), 1093–4.

⁸ G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (London, 1969), 76, 181–2, n. 178; G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army* (London, 1985³), 119. On the different types and status of military *medici*, see R. W. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army* (Edinburgh, 1989), 211–14.

⁹ R. I. Frank, *Scholae Palatinae. The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire* (Rome, 1969), 48–9. The future emperor Maximinus had been a *scutarius* some time before 305 (Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 19.6).

¹⁰ What Ammianus reveals about his own career is set out in *PLRE* 1 (1971), 547–548 Marcellinus 15; on his origin and social background, see T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 54–64.

¹¹ As is assumed by O. Seeck, *RE* 3 (1897), 1965.

tribunus rerum nitentium, who served in the *officium* of the urban prefect at Rome (Occidens 4.17). It is reasonable to assume that the *tribunus rerum nitentium* ‘was responsible, presumably under the *curator statuarum*, for the protection of bronze and marble statues’ and that the rank of the soldier responsible for protecting the statues was upgraded from centurion to tribune during the second half of the fourth century.¹² In this capacity, Dorus was a subordinate of the *praefectus urbi*, so that he brought an accusation against a man who was his superior in the administrative hierarchy.

(3) The charge of which Dorus accused Adelfius was treason: the centurion accused the prefect not merely of planning usurpation, but of actually entering into a conspiracy to seize power. Ammianus’ use of the word *altiora* in political contexts is clear and precise: in 354 the Caesar Gallus was suspected of planning higher things (14.7.19: *altiora meditantis*; 14.11.2: *altiora meditaturum*); in late 361 two tribunes of the Scholae Scutariorum were exiled after being convicted of attempting things too high for their station (22.11.2: *agitasse convicti quaedam suis viribus altiora*); in 364 the generals who had elected Valentinian emperor decided that on the following day, when the new Augustus was to be formally acclaimed by the army, no one of high rank or who was suspected of imperial ambitions should show himself before the troops (26.2.1: *ne potioris quisquam auctoritatis vel suspectus altiora conari procederet postridie mane*). Ammianus uses the exact combination *altiora coeptans* only once elsewhere in the extant books. In his account of the ‘usurpation’ of Silvanus, who was *magister militum* in Gaul in 355, he recounts how a genuine letter of Silvanus was erased, except for the subscription, and a forged text substituted in which the general appeared to solicit support for a proclamation as emperor:

alter multum a vero illo dissonans superscribitur textus: velut Silvano rogante verbis obliquis hortanteque amicos agentes intra palatium vel privatos, inter quos et Tuscus erat Albinus alique plures, ut se altiora coeptantem et prope diem loci principalis aditurum . . . (15.5.4)¹³

A text quite different from the original was written. In this Silvanus appeared to be indirectly begging his friends, both court officials and private individuals (among them were Tuscus Albinus and several others) to support him in an attempt to gain a higher position and in the near future the imperial throne . . . (trans. W. Hamilton)

Although one or more words have been lost, it is clear that Ammianus here uses the phrase *altiora coeptantem* to refer to the initial stages of an attempt at usurpation, whatever the true facts may be about an episode which ended with the assassination of Silvanus in which he himself participated.¹⁴

Late in 351, therefore, while still in office as *praefectus urbi*, Adelfius was accused by a subordinate of plotting rebellion in Rome, perhaps even of conspiring to have himself proclaimed emperor, as Nepotianus, the son of Eutropia, the half-sister of

¹² A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), 691.

¹³ In his Teubner edition, W. Seyfarth marks a lacuna after *aditurum*. From the sixteenth century onwards, several attempts have been made to repair the obvious gap in the text as it had survived the Middle Ages by conjectural emendation. M. Haupt, *Opuscula* 2 (Leipzig, 1876), proposed *loci principalis <adiuent culmen> aditurum*, but without claiming to restore Ammianus’ exact words, only the general sense of the passage.

¹⁴ For well-founded doubts about whether Silvanus ever actually proclaimed himself emperor, see J. F. Drinkwater, ‘Silvanus, Ursicinus, and Ammianus: fact or fiction?’, in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and History* 7, Collection Latomus 227 (Brussels, 1994), 569–76; Barnes (n. 10), 18–19.

Constantine, had been in June 350.¹⁵ What was the outcome of Dorus' accusation? Adelfius was clearly dismissed from office. But was that the end of the matter? Modern scholars appear to assume that it was when they suppose either that Adelfius was acquitted¹⁶ or that he lived on after Constantius recovered control of Rome and Italy in the early autumn of 352, even if he never held office again.¹⁷ But Adelfius had been accused of treason by a centurion who served under him. Consequently, it is legitimate to deduce that, if the normal rules and procedures of Roman law were applied, Adelfius must have been convicted of the crime of which Dorus accused him. For, had Adelfius been acquitted, then Dorus would surely have been punished and probably executed for making a false accusation against his superior.¹⁸ Hence the fact that Dorus not only survived after Adelfius was dismissed from office, but had become a person of influence at the court of Constantius by 356 appears to imply that the prefect was convicted as well as dismissed. If he was convicted, what then was his sentence? In December 351, it seemed clear that the armies which had recovered the western Balkans for Constantius during the summer and autumn would invade Italy in the following campaigning season, as they in fact did in September 352, apparently after Constantius had conducted an expedition against the Sarmatians.¹⁹ Ammianus' lost narrative of the prefecture of Adelfius described his trial, either by the Senate or trusted supporters of Magnentius (who was presumably in Gaul), and its outcome. Given the gravity of the charge and the political circumstances in which it was made, it would seem reasonable to infer that Adelfius was probably sentenced to death rather than merely to exile.

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Adelfius also appears on the following inscription, which is known only by report and whose precise significance must be established by careful argument:

Clodius Adelfius v(ir) c(larissimus) ex praefectis urbis uxori incomparabili et sibi fecit.
(*CIL* 6.1712 = *ILCV* 1850 = *ICUR*, N. S. I.19)²⁰

The inscription, printed here as continuous prose, was engraved in very short horizontal lines descending vertically down a column: it comprised no fewer than twenty-eight lines, more than half of two letters only and none longer than four. In the sixteenth century the column was near to the high altar of the Church of Saint Anastasia, where it was seen by Celso Cittadino (1553–1627) and Philippe de Winghe of Louvain (d. 1592); by 1700 it was in the Borghese gardens, where it was seen by Domenico Montelatici and later by Scipione Maffei (1675–1755);²¹ but it had

¹⁵ The literary sources for Nepotianus' brief tenure of power (3–30 June 350), are collected in *PLRE* 1 (1971), 624, Nepotianus 3; for coins minted in his name, see J. P. C. Kent, *Roman Imperial Coinage* 8 (London, 1981), 261, nos. 166, 167; 265–6, nos. 198–203; 291.

¹⁶ So Seyfarth (n. 6), 292, n. 59: 'Adelphius war nicht geurteilt. Seine Gattin war die Dichterin Proba.'

¹⁷ Thus, for example, Chastagnol (n. 2), 134.

¹⁸ The acquittal of a defendant almost automatically entailed a charge of *calumnia* against his accuser: T. Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Berlin, 1899), 491–8.

¹⁹ T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 221, cf. 314, n. 30.

²⁰ For subsequent bibliography, see G. Alföldy, *CIL* 6.8.3 (Berlin, 2000), 4741.

²¹ A transcription retaining the original lineation was published by D. Montelatici, *Villa Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana* (Rome, 1700), 42. For the other reports, I rely on Henzen's annotation to *CIL* 6.1712.

disappeared by the middle of the nineteenth century, so that all modern editions of it derive from these earlier reports.

The nature of this inscription has sometimes been misunderstood. André Chastagnol took it to be a dedication to Proba, which is totally impossible.²² John Matthews, who discussed it at some length, started from the proposition that the form of the inscription ‘might even suggest the possibility that it was the column itself, as an attribute of some larger structure to which it belonged (such as an altar canopy) that was dedicated by Adelfius – along, no doubt, with the now forgotten donations of others’ and went on to argue that the fact that Adelfius ‘provided an altar column in his own name and that of his wife’ demonstrates his connection with ‘the building and embellishing of the new church’ of Saint Anastasia in the 350s.²³ But the inscription does not record any sort of dedication, either of the column itself or of any structure of which the column formed a part. It records that Adelfius made something ‘for his incomparable wife and himself’. What was it that he had constructed? In her discussion of how fourth-century Roman aristocrats represented themselves epigraphically, Heiki Niquet correctly identified the inscription as a *Grabinschrift*, though she did not choose to elaborate on the significance of this fact.²⁴

As numerous similar inscriptions make clear, the unexpressed object of the verb *fecit* is a tomb or funerary monument, which Adelfius had constructed in his lifetime for his wife and himself. Of the more than seven hundred *tituli sepulchrales* which Hermann Dessau included in his selection of Latin inscriptions (*ILS* 7818–8560), about fifty record that someone (occasionally more than one person) constructed a tomb or monument for himself or herself (or themselves) and one or more others (almost invariably close family, freedmen and/or freedwomen). Moreover, in many of these inscriptions the grammatical object of the verb *fecit* or *fecerunt* is left unstated. Two examples will provide sufficient illustration of the point:

d. m. somno sepulchro aeternali sacrum. Eutychie quae vixit annis XXX Onesimus coniugi dulcissimae et sibi amantissimae fecit
(*CIL* 6.17430, cf. p. 3521 = *ILS* 8023)

Annia Festa fecit sibi et coniugi carissimo et quos in testamento heredes nominavero
(*CIL* 6.7474 = *ILS* 8260)

Accordingly, given Adelfius’ wealth and status, it may be inferred that the inscribed column formed one element in a substantial tomb or funerary monument, though there is no need to assume that it originally stood inside the church of Saint Anastasia and hence no justification for drawing historical conclusions from the supposed fact that the inscription had some connection with the original building of the church in the middle of the fourth century.²⁵

The epigraphic parallels also suggest another important inference. Tombs and funerary monuments were often constructed in advance of the deaths of the persons

²² Chastagnol (n. 2), 132: ‘Proba est la dédicataire de l’inscription.’

²³ J. F. Matthews, ‘The poetess Proba and fourth-century Rome: questions of interpretation’, in M. Christol, S. Demougin, Y. Duval, C. Lepelley, and L. Pietri (edd.), *Institutions, société et vie politique dans l’Empire romain au IV^e siècle ap. J.-C. Actes de la table ronde autour de l’oeuvre d’André Chastagnol (Paris, 20–21 janvier 1989)*, Collection de l’École française de Rome 159 (Rome, 1992), 277–304, at 299–302.

²⁴ H. Niquet, *Monumenta virtutum titulique. Senatorische Selbstdarstellung im spätantiken Rom im Spiegel der epigraphischen Denkmäler* (Stuttgart, 2002), 124, 142.

²⁵ On the Church of Saint Anastasia, see M. Cecchelli, in M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1 (Rome, 1993), 37–8.

named in the inscriptions that adorned them, and that fact is often explicitly stated (for example, *ILS* 8089, 8264, 9265, 8324, 8326, 8291a). But many tombs, perhaps most, were constructed after the death of the person who is commemorated. What of tombs constructed by a husband or wife for himself or herself and his or her spouse? There appears to be a significant difference between the formulae *sibi et uxori/coniugi fecit* (almost always with an epithet expressing esteem or affection)²⁶ and *uxori/coniugi* (with an epithet expressing esteem or affection) *et sibi fecit*. In the first case, either both spouses are still alive or the one who commissioned the tomb died before his or her spouse; in the second case, the spouse who commissioned the tomb was still alive, while the conjugal partner for whom he or she commissioned it was already dead. Sometimes this is explicitly stated, as in the following three examples of the formula *sibi et alicui*, of which two do not relate to married couples:

[A]fricanus Aug. verna . . . [s]ibi et suis posterisque eorum de suo se vivo fecit
(*CIL* 6.5306 = *ILS* 7930)

Seia T. f. sibi et Vibennio Marcellino filio viva posuit (*CIL* 11.568 = *ILS* 8159: Cesena)

d. m. somno aeternali memoriae dulcissimae Vibiae C. lib. Parthenope, dignissimae et incomparabili feminae, M. Aurelius Aug. lib. Metras coniugi et sibi se vivo {s} fecit
(*CIL* 6.28875 = *ILS* 8024).

More often the obvious fact that the person who constructed the tomb was alive when the tomb was built is left unexpressed precisely because it did not need to be stated.

Adelfius did not construct the tomb ‘for himself and his incomparable wife’, but ‘for his incomparable wife and himself’ and the order indicates that Adelfius’ wife died before he did. If Adelfius was *ex praefectis urbis* when he constructed the tomb, then he had already left office as prefect of the city and the speculative arguments advanced above might appear to imply that he constructed it between his dismissal as prefect of the city and his execution not long afterwards. On the other hand, the designation *ex praefectis urbis* may simply describe Adelfius’ status at the time of his death, whatever the date at which he had constructed the tomb for his dead wife and himself, whether it was before, during or after his urban prefecture. It seems indisputable, however, that the funerary inscription which Adelfius commissioned indicates that his wife predeceased him. That fact is very relevant to the identity of the author of a biblical cento who has normally been presumed to be the wife of Adelfius.

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The *Cento Probae* tells the biblical story of the creation, the fall of man, Cain’s murder of Abel, the flood, and the birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus in a hexameter poem stitched together from whole and partial lines of Vergil.²⁷ Isidore of Seville twice identifies the author of the cento as Proba, the wife

²⁶ For the range of epithets used, see S. G. Harrod, *Latin Terms of Endearment and of Family Relationship. A Lexicographical Study based on Volume VI of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (diss. Princeton, 1909), who found 283 examples of *incomparabilis* in his material and described it as a ‘term of esteem rather than endearment’ (23–5).

²⁷ The standard edition remains that of Carl Schenkl, *CSEL* 16 (1888), 569–609: improvements to his text are offered by K. Pollmann, ‘Philologie und Poesie. Zu einigen Problemen der Textgestaltung in *CSEL* 16’, in A. Primmer, K. Smolak, and D. Weber (edd.), *Textsorten und Textkritik. Tagungsbeiträge, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 693 (Vienna, 2002), 211–230.

of Adelfius (Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 22 (18) [PL 83.1093]; *Etymologiae* 1.39.26 [PL 82.121]). This identification is also found in a Vatican manuscript of the ninth century (Palatinus latinus 1753, fol. 62^r)²⁸ and was seen in 1697 by Bernard de Montfaucon in a manuscript, now lost, which he inspected in a monastery between Modena and Mantua,²⁹ while another Vatican manuscript of the cento has the incipit *Flatonie (sic) Vetitie Probe cl. femine Vergilioecenton. Genesis et evangeliorum*.³⁰

In the long chronological and prosopographical introduction to his great edition of Symmachus, Otto Seeck accordingly identified the author of the cento as Faltonia Betitia Proba, the wife of Adelfius.³¹ This identification of the poetess Proba was universally accepted for more than a century until Danuta Shanzer argued in 1986 that the preface to the *Cento Probae* (15–17) imitates a passage from the so-called *Carmen contra paganos* (20–4),³² which has combined images and turns of phrase from both Statius' *Thebaid* (10.893–8) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (8.696–700), from which she drew the corollary that the cento cannot have been composed earlier than c. 385 and cannot be ascribed to the wife of Adelfius, but must be attributed instead to Anicia Faltonia Proba, who was the wife of Petronius Probus, consul in 371.³³ Although two standard works of reference have accepted Shanzer's dating and attribution of the cento,³⁴ what must now be regarded as the authoritative handbook of Late Latin literature rejected it outright,³⁵ while John Matthews and Roger Green reasserted the traditional date and attribution, the former in a disdainful rebuttal of Shanzer's treatment of the external evidence,³⁶ the latter in a mainly literary study which denies that the cento imitated the *Carmen contra paganos* and hence disallows Shanzer's chronological inference from the supposed imitation.³⁷

²⁸ First published by A. Reifferscheid, *Die römischen Bibliotheken 6. Die Vaticanische Bibliothek. a. Bibliotheca Palatina*, Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Classe 56 (Vienna, 1867), 441–556, at 552.

²⁹ B. de Montfaucon, *Diarium Italicum* (Paris, 1702), 36. This manuscript also stated that Proba, the wife of Adelfius, had previously written a poem on the *Constantini bellum adversus Magmentium*, which Montfaucon emended to *Constantii*—on the assumption that its attribution of the cento was correct.

³⁰ These three items are conveniently reproduced by Matthews (n. 23), 280–1.

³¹ O. Seeck, *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* 6 (Berlin, 1883), xcν–xcvi, cf. the index entry *Proba, Adelphii uxor, quae centonem Vergilianum scripsit* (349).

³² The poem is now best read in the edition by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Anthologia Latina* 1 (Stuttgart, 1982), 17–23, no. 3 (Carmen Codicis Parisini 8084).

³³ D. R. Shanzer, 'The anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* and the date and identity of the Centonist Proba', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 32 (1986), 232–48. For this Proba, see *PLRE* 1 (1971), 732–3, Proba 3. This Proba had been named as the author of the *Cento Probae* by J. Asbach, *Die Anicier und die römischen Dichterin Proba*, Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Classe 64 (Vienna, 1870), 369–446, at 420–8. But the dedicatory verses that Asbach quoted as proof of his identification are not in fact by Proba at all, but were added to a later calligraphic copy: see now Alan Cameron, 'Petronius Probus, Aemilius Probus and the transmission of nepos: a note on late Roman calligraphers', in J.-M. Carrié and R. Lizzi Testa (edd.), *'Humana sapit.' Études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (Turnhout, 2002), 121–30, at 126 (though Cameron is wrong to identify the emperor to whom the de luxe manuscript of the cento was presented as Theodosius II instead of Arcadius).

³⁴ *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* (Turnhout, 1995³), 484, no. 1480; T. Hübner, in S. Döpp and W. Geerlings (edd.), *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur* (Freiburg, 1998), 517.

³⁵ R. Herzog, *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike* 5 (Munich, 1989), 337–40 §562.

³⁶ Matthews (n. 23), 277–304.

³⁷ R. P. H. Green, 'Proba's Cento: its date, purpose and reception', *CQ* 45 (1995), 551–563, at 551–4. He states that 'It is not known when Proba 2 died' (541, n. 21).

In 1994 Shanzer restated and strengthened her original arguments, laying greater emphasis than she had before on the fact, which was not seriously in dispute among those who considered the matter carefully,³⁸ that Proba, the wife of Adelfius, predeceased her husband, though she too failed to bring out the full significance of the lost funerary inscription, which she characterized as merely a ‘semi-sepulchral dedication’ on the grounds that it lacks ‘any introductory formula appropriate to a tombstone’.³⁹

Although the traditional date and the traditional attribution of the *Cento Probae* have subsequently been reasserted against Shanzer’s restatement by Roger Green and Karla Pollmann,⁴⁰ they founder on the indisputable fact that Clodius Celstinus *signo* Adelfius constructed a tomb for his wife, who had predeceased him. If Adelfius died during the winter of 351–2, as has been argued above, then his wife Faltonia Betitia Proba cannot have composed the extant Virgilian cento attributed to a Proba. On the other hand, if Adelfius survived the charge of treason and lived on beyond the winter of 351–2, then his wife may have lived on too. But Adelfius was born before 303 and it is therefore unlikely, on grounds of age alone, that he lived on for several decades after his urban prefecture, whereas the aristocratic female poetess who composed the *Cento Probae* was mocked by Jerome as a *garrula anus* in 394 as if she was still alive at the very end of the fourth century (*Ep.* 53.7, quoting *Cento Probae* 403, 624 = *Aen.* 1.664, 2.650).⁴¹

There is thus contradiction between, on the one side, the later explicit attribution of the cento to Faltonia Betitia Proba by Isidore and manuscript subscriptions and, on the other, the implications of the contemporary evidence from the fourth century that the poetess must have been Anicia Faltonia Proba rather than Faltonia Betitia Proba. In such cases, the early evidence ought on principle to be allowed to outweigh the later.

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³⁸ See C. Schenkl, *CSEL* 16 (1888), 514: *prior decessit Proba Romae marito superstite*; *PLRE* 1 (1971), 732, Proba 2: ‘she died before her husband’.

³⁹ D. R. Shanzer, ‘The date and identity of the Centonist Proba’, *Recherches Augustiniennes* 27 (1994), 75–96, esp. 80–2. Following a suggestion of S. R. Barnish, Shanzer also argues plausibly that *Cento Probae* 690–1 (*adi pede sacra secundo / annua, quae differre nefas*) reflects the controversy over the correct date of Easter in 387, when the churches of Rome and Alexandria celebrated Easter on different dates for the first time since 343 (*ibid.* 90–6, cf. M. Zelzer, ‘Zum Osterbrief des heiligen Ambrosius und zur römischen Osterfestberechnung des 4. Jahrhunderts’, *Wiener Studien* 91 [1978], 187–204).

⁴⁰ R. P. H. Green, *CQ* 47 (1997), 548; Pollmann (n. 27), 226, n. 42, dating the poem ‘wohl zwischen 353 und 370’.

⁴¹ Shanzer (n. 39), 82.