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Antiquity, Authority, and Religion in the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus[1]

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Abstract. Virgilius Maro Grammaticus's origins and date have often been discussed: the setting he imagined for his works has not. How Virgilius imagined himself and his 'authorities' reveals a fascinating *mélange* of names, characters, and religious ideas plucked from history, all brought together to emphasise the antiquity and variety within the Latin language. Modelled on the atmosphere of familiar Late Antique and early medieval grammars, Virgilius's setting was probably created to allow veiled comment on the future of Latin in changing intellectual circumstances. There is considerable manuscript and citation evidence that the name Virgilius Maro Grammaticus was not used in the medieval period, and the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* are ascribed only to Virgilius Maro. The ambiguity this name created was strengthened by the presence of Aeneas and other classical-sounding authorities, and created much confusion amongst medieval readers and copyists trying to distinguish the grammarian from the poet.

Keywords: Medieval Latin, grammar, Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, Virgil, Isidore of Seville, Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, Aldhelm of Malmesbury, identity, paganism, nomenclature, Judaism, philosophy.

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The eccentric medieval author known to us as Virgilius Maro Grammaticus was responsible for two surviving works, the *Epitomae* and the *Epistolae*.[2] In external features these texts conform to many of the norms of Latin grammatical tradition. The order and titles of several of his *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* follow those of the sections of the *Ars maior* and *Ars minor* of Donatus, the most widely-read grammars of the early middle ages.[3] Yet even before one has finished perusing

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1. My thanks to Dr Rosalind Love for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper.

2. These have been edited four times since the early nineteenth century. The text used here is that of G. Polara & L. Caruso (ed & tr), *Virgilio Marone Grammatico: Epitomi ed Epistole* (Naples 1979), and reference is made to the corresponding pages in B. Löfstedt (ed), *Virgilius Maro Grammaticus: opera omnia* (Munich 2003). References are as in Polara & Caruso: A for *Epitomae*, B for the *Epistolae*, and the corresponding section numbers in Polara & Caruso.

3. For Donatus, see L. Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical: étude sur l'Ars Donati et sa diffusion (IVᵉ–IXᵉ siècle)* (Paris 1981); critical edition of the *Ars maior*, 603–74; and *Ars minor*, 585–602. For a table laying out the chapter headings of Virgilius and Donatus, see V. Law, *Wisdom, authority and grammar in the seventh century* (Cambridge 1995) 5–6.

the section titles it becomes clear that something has gone distinctly awry. The first section of Donatus's *Ars maior, De voce*, for instance, is replaced in the *Epitomae* with a discussion *De sapientia*, whilst the last six sections of the *Ars maior* on the vices and virtues of Latin style are replaced by Virgilius with three even more bizarre chapters on word games, etymology, and a catalogue of famous grammarians. Such quirkiness characterises the whole of Virgilius's surviving work, which juxtaposes legitimate—even dry—grammatical exposition often derived from sources such as Donatus or Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* with a bewildering array of other materials that certainly do not fall within the usual remit of Latin grammar.[4] Sometimes Virgilius interrupts or sidetracks his discussion to delve into the bipartite or tripartite nature of man,[5] to describe twelve different varieties of Latin,[6] recount a sleepless, fortnight-long debate on the vocative of *ego*,[7] or even highlight in particularly flamboyant, long-winded Latin the dangers of being distracted.[8] If nothing else, Virgilius gets full marks for ingenuity: he presents a welcome breath of fresh air, capable of arousing both amusement and scholarly curiosity among readers.

This scholarly curiosity has been hard at work on Virgilius for almost two centuries now, but has largely focused on two issues: when and where did Virgilius write?[9] Answers to these questions are the pre-conditions to any really firm judgement on two other, equally significant matters: what did Virgilius write and why? To begin with when and where, suggestions have ranged almost as widely as Virgilius's vivid imagination: at various times he has been assigned to Spain, Gaul, Ireland, and England, at any time between the fifth and ninth centuries, and he may or may not have been Jewish. Relative consensus has now been reached on the matter of date, on the basis of Virgilius's apparent know-

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4. G. Polara, 'Virgilio Marone e la parodia delle dottrine grammaticali', in I. Rosier (ed), *L'héritage des grammariens latins de l'antiquité aux lumières: actes du colloque de Chantilly, 2–4 septembre 1987* (Louvain & Paris 1988) 109–20, and 'A proposito delle dottrini grammaticali di Virgilio Marone', *Historiographia Linguistica* 20 (1993) 205–22.

5. A I.2 and II.1 (Polara & Caruso, 2–5, 8–11; Löfstedt, 104–05, 109–10).

5. A I.4 and XV.3 (Polara & Caruso, 6–7, 162–67; Löfstedt, 107–08, 240–42).

7. B II.2 (Polara & Caruso, 206–09; Löfstedt, 24–25).

3. B II.14 (Polara & Caruso, 222–23; Löfstedt, 35).

9. Fortunately, surveys providing guidance through the dense and murky depths of Virgilian scholarship (at least to the late 1970s) can be found in M. Herren, 'Some new light on the life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *Proc Roy Ir Acad (C)* 79 (1979) 27–71; repr. in his *Latin letters in early christian Ireland* (Aldershot 1996) no VII 42–57; and G. Polara, 'Gli studi su Virgilio Marone grammatico', *Vichiana*, NS 6 (1977) 241–78. Law, *Wisdom*, provides references to most subsequent works down to the 1990s.

ledge of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, published in 636, whilst a *terminus ante quem* can be derived from quotations of Virgilius in a letter by Aldhelm of Malmesbury, written between 673 and 690,[10] and in an Irish computistical text probably written in 658.[11] These fixed points serve to place Virgilius in the mid seventh century. Origin and intellectual background remain rather more contentious. The surviving manuscripts do not offer any immediately obvious evidence: most come from Frankish scriptoria in the ninth century and after, and are clearly at some distance from the original text, which may have spread across the Frankish empire from Charlemagne's court school. Many of the manuscripts of Virgilius contain other grammatical texts (often of Hiberno-Latin background), and there is one fragment from the eighth century in Insular script.[12] An eleventh-century note long led to his erroneous association with Toulouse,[13] whilst apparent familiarity with some Hebrew words caused certain scholars to identify him as a Jew, perhaps from Spain or southern Gaul.[14]

The most recent argument, propounded since the late 1970s by Michael Herren, places Virgilius in Ireland.[15] The evidence for this rests on some alleged

10. For the probable quotation of Virgilius by Aldhelm, see the closing verses of his *Epistola* 5 (R. Ehwald, (ed), *Aldhelmi opera*, MGH AA 15 (Berlin 1919) 494; translated in M. Lapidge & M. Herren (tr), *Aldhelm: the prose works* (Ipswich 1979) 163–64). For an account of the debate on Virgilius's knowledge of Isidore, see Herren, 'New light', 42–46.

11. See below, n 18.

12. A survey of the MS evidence for Virgilius can be found in M. Ferrarri, 'Nota sui codici di Virgilio Marone grammatico', in Caruso & Polara, xxxv–xlii; see also the remarks in the preface of Löfstedt, *Opera omnia*; and D. Poli, 'I frammenti di Virgilio Marone grammatico ser. n. 3762 dell'Österreichische Nationalbibliothek di Vienna', *Quaderni linguistici e filologici* 2 (1982–4) 107–38. The fragment in Irish script is in Milan, B. Ambrosiana, F 60 sup., f 33ʳ–34ʳ (s. viii).

13. The connection with Toulouse appeared with the first edition of Virgilius by Cardinal Angelo Maixin 1833 (A. Mai (ed), *Classici auctores ex Vaticanis codicibus* (10 vols, Rome 1828–38), v 349) and was based upon a reference to *Virgilius Tolosanus* in a short text attributed to Abbo of Fleury (†1004) (PL 139, 533–34 n 55). For recent comments attempting to explain the origin of this identification, see M. Herren, 'Virgil the grammarian: a Spanish Jew in Ireland?', *Peritia* 9 (1995) 51–71: 53–54.

14. The Jewish connection has been most thoroughly examined recently by K. Smolak, 'Der dritte Virgil: ein Jüdischer Satiriker des Frühmittelalters?', *Wiener Humanistische Blätter* 30 (1988) 16–27; and B. Bischoff, 'Die "zweite Latinität" des Virgilius Maro Grammaticus und seine jüdische Herkunft', *Mittellateinisches Jahrb* 23 (1988 [1991]) 11–16.

15. Herren, 'New light', 51–68; idem, 'The Hiberno Latin poems in Virgil the Grammarian', in L. Holtz (ed), *De Tertullian aux Mozarabes: mélanges offerts à J. Fontaine* (Paris 1992) 141–55; and 'Spanish Jew in Ireland?'. Herren was not the first to associate Virgilius with an Irish milieu, however: see his remarks in 'New light', 41, where he notes a connection with Ireland made already in R. A. S. Macalister, *The secret languages of Ireland* (Cambridge 1937) 84–86; and earlier by H.

knowledge of Old Irish in a few of his (mostly nonsensical) 'filosophical Latin' words,[16] use of Hiberno-Latin verse types and vocabulary,[17] and also on the fact that quotations from Virgilius first appear in Anglo-Saxon and Irish texts, one of which probably dates to 658.[18] The evidence for Virgilius's Irish origins is impressive but still cannot be described as conclusive and, even though his obscure and playful Latin is yet to yield decisive evidence for its author's origin, I shall proceed on the tentative basis that Virgilius was most likely writing in the Hiberno-Latin tradition sometime around the middle of the seventh century.

If determining when and where Virgilius was active has been so contentious, it is perhaps not surprising that few have dared to tackle the still greater problems of what he was trying to do and why he was doing it. Interpretations of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* have generally fallen short of the subtlety and diversity of the texts themselves, portraying them either as specimens of the decadence Latin learning had reached in the benighted post-Roman West,[19] or as parodies and satires of the drier but more regular grammatical texts current at the time, a view popularised since the 1920s by Paul Lehmann.[20] Attempts at more sophisticated analysis of Virgilius's aims are few and liable to founder without any anchors of

Zimmer, 'Über direkte Handelverbindungen Westgalliens mit Irland im Altertum und frühen Mittelalter', *Sitz-Ber K Preuss Akad Wiss* 51 (1910) 1031–98: 1118–19.

16. Though it has been pointed out that 'if three or four examples of puns or latinisations of vernacular words were taken as proof of national origin, Virgilius could as easily be shown to be Turkish or Tuareg': V. Law, *The Insular Latin grammarians* (Woodbridge 1982) 51 n 54.

17. For a challenge to this, citing alleged late and vulgar Latin features, see B. Löfstedt, 'Zum wortschatz des Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *Philologus* 126 (1982) 99–110; idem, 'Spät- und Vulgarlateinisches in der Sprache des Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *Latomus* 40 (1981) 121–26.

18. This is based on the evidence of a closely dated Irish computistical text which names and quotes Virgilius: D. Ó Cróinín, 'A seventh-century Irish computus from the circle of Cummianus', *Proc Roy Ir Acad (C)* 82 (1982) 405–30, repr. in idem, *Early Irish history and chronology* (Dublin 2003) 99–130; idem, 'The date, provenance, and earliest use of the writings of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', in G. Bernt et al. (ed), *Tradition und Wertung: Festschrift für Franz Brunhölzl* (Sigmaringen 1989) 13–22.

19. A summary of previous thought on Virgilius can be found in Law, *Wisdom*, 3–4, who cites the dismissive opinion of the great editor of Latin grammatical texts, Heinrich Keil ('omnium ... longe ineptissimus': *De grammaticis quibusdam latinis infimae aetatis commentatio* (Erlangen 1868) 5). Domenico Comparetti likewise saw him as an 'enigmatical monstrosity, at once comic and tragic, who ... gives the impression of little else than a grim joke', though he did also admit that 'no one has ever yet succeeded in explaining what this Vergil really was' (D. Comparetti, *Vergil in the middle ages*, tr. E. F. M. Benecke, with introduction by J. M. Ziolkowski (Princeton NJ 1997) 124).

20. P. Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter* (Munich 1922) 9–10, 21–22. Again, the origins and development of this view are discussed in Law, *Wisdom*, 3–11.

locale and environment and, in the case of texts which are almost certainly not meant to be taken at face value, it is very difficult to know what communicates the author's true thoughts or whether, in fact, we must turn everything on its head. Despite these difficulties, the few modern studies on Virgilius's aims and motives have provided valuable food for thought. Luigi Munzi has attempted to tread a middle ground between parody and seriousness, highlighting Virgilius's literary and didactic features[21] and Vivien Law, in particular, stands out for her careful studies in this complex and treacherous area. She has proposed a different reading of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* as pleas for diversity in an increasingly straitjacketed scholarly world.[22] Law is certainly correct in highlighting the diversity of Virgilius's *oeuvre*, and one must always hesitate before assigning any single over-arching plan to his writings. It is not enough to simply pigeonhole him as either a common trickster, a dull fool, or indeed with any other single label. On the contrary, Virgilius's complex *mélange* of truth and fiction, humour and wisdom, resists the imposition of a single grand plan, but does allow for the possibility of multifarious messages and meanings concealed in the kaleidoscope.

It is possible, however, to go further and see diversity as a means rather than an end in itself. The astonishing breadth of subject matter contained within the *Epitomae* and the *Epistolae* might serve to reflect the importance of grammar and language in general as the conveyors of knowledge and wisdom, not least in the context of Latin's rich history, grammatical, gentile, and christian. As I hope to show, at least one of Virgilius's aims was to create an approximation of the atmosphere one encountered in late antique grammars; not, however, an exact replica. Virgilius was not averse to creative anachronism, and it is likely that one reason for the creation of this background was to examine the interaction of the ancient, grammatical and christian elements of Latin learning. In this way, the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* reveal comments and concerns about the history and, by implication, future of Latin studies, including views which were definitely not orthodox in seventh-century christendom, as comparison with other authors will show. Although the most important overall, Virgilius believed, the christian

21. L. Munzi, "'*Tertius Vergilius ego*": l'etica della grammatica', *Res publica litterarum: studies in the classical tradition* 16 (1993) 69–83.

22. This is fully developed in her *Wisdom,* though also important are her 'Serious aspects of the wordplay of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', in Rosier, *L'héritage des grammariens latins,* 121–31, and 'Learning to read with the *oculi mentis*: Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', *J Lit Theol* 3 (1989) 159–72, repr. with modifications in her *Grammar and grammarians in the early middle ages* (London 1997) 224–45.

tradition—merely the latest to influence Latin—should not drown the other two, as it was threatening to do in many quarters of western Europe.

In order to accommodate these views, Virgilius had an unusually broad understanding of wisdom: *sapientia*, he claimed, encompassed both divine and earthly matters, opening up realms superior to man,[23] and anyone learned in either heavenly or worldly matters should be called a philosopher.[24] These *filosophi*, sometimes specifically the *antiqui filosophi*, are responsible for much of the more outlandish Latin in Virgilius's works. Although he sometimes challenges their theories and sets the *filosophi* against scripture and the *antiquioribus Hebreorum legibus*,[25] Virgilius just as often claims allegiance to them, or at least a love and respect for their writings. Particularly at the outset of his work, Virgilius was concerned to establish the validity of their pursuit, and to emphasise that although it could not compete with heavenly wisdom and scripture, it was nevertheless well worth studying for its own merit:

> *nemo sane in hac me carpat pada, quod veluti praeposterato telleam aetreae ordine antetulerim* 'No-one in his right mind can find fault with me in this matter, that I have placed the earthly kind before the heavenly, reversing the usual order'.[26]

Virgilius was right to be anxious about the reaction his unorthodox means and ideas would provoke, and even mentions in the *Epistolae* the anger his *Epitomae* aroused among those

> *qui nos profano et canino ore latrant ac lacerant dicentes nos in omnibus artibus contradicos videri nobis invicem, cum id quod alius adfirmat alius distruere videatur, nescientes quod Latinitas tanta sit et tam profunda, ut multis modis fonis fariis sensibus explicare necesse sit* 'Who rage and tear against us with profane and dog-like jaws, saying we seem to contradict ourselves on every matter and who do not know that Latin is of such a nature and is so complicated that it is necessary to explain in many ways and with diverse words and meanings that which one person approves of and another sees as harmful'.[27]

gilius's positive attitude towards the *filosophi* and their dangerous ideas was bably one of the main causes of this ire. Gregory of Tours might have been ɔng the *latrantes ac lacerantes*: in the preface to his *Libri miraculorum* he

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23. A I.1 and II.1 (Polara & Caruso, 1, 8; Löfstedt, 104, 108–09).
24. A IV.6 (Polara & Caruso, 26; Löfstedt, 123).
25. A I.2, XI.1 and B pref.1–2 (Polara & Caruso, 4, 148, 174–76; Löfstedt, 2–3, 104–5, 228).
26. A I.2 (Caruso & Polara, 2; Löfstedt, 104).
27. B III.1 (Polara & Caruso, 228; Löfstedt, 38).

wrote that

> *non poetarum figmentis, aut philosophorum sententiis, sed Evangelicae veritati insis-*
> *tendum esse* 'One must not pursue the fantasies of the poets or the musings of the
> philosophers, but the truth of the evangelist'[28]

and he was equally damning of the *philosophi* elsewhere. Another Insular author
concurred with Gregory in the *Expossitio latinitatis* of Anonymus ad Cuimna-
num:

> *sed sicut auctores catholici per hanc* [grammaticam artem] *misteria sacrorum narrant*
> *uoluminum, ita etiam philosophi mundi suas per eandem ferunt fabulas utique conexas*
> *mendaciis* 'But just as faithful authors explain the mysteries of holy books with this
> [grammatical art], so too do worldly philosophers use it to tell their fables, bound
> up with lies at every point'.[29]

Aldhelm of Malmesbury felt the need to warn one of his correspondents about
the allures of *philosophi* he might meet with in Ireland.[30] Unfortunately for Vir-
gilius, the only biblical comments specifically dealing with *philosophia* did not
portray it in a positive light.[31]

He was not alone in his affection for the *filosofi*. Among those who approved
of *philophia* was Isidore of Seville, a hugely influential author whose works were
probably known to Virgilius, and who reported that

> *est enim philosophus qui divinarum et humanarum rerum scientiam habet, et omnem*
> *bene vivendi tramitem tenet* 'For a philosopher is whoever has knowledge of divine
> and human things, and follows every path of living correctly'.[32]

Despite the continuing disapproval, things were beginning to change in the
christian West: eventually, *philosophia* was to be so reconciled with christian
thought that it became synonymous with *sapientia*, a process that, ultimately
under Greek influence, was already reflected in the works of Isidore:

> *porro sapientiam veteres philosophiam vocaverunt, id est omnium rerum humanarum*

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28. PL 71, 714.

29. Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, *Expossitio latinitatis* (B. Bischoff & B. Löfstedt (ed), *Anonymus
ad Cuimnanum: Expossitio latinitatis*, CCSL 133D (Turnhout 1992) 12).

30. Aldhelm, *Epistola* 3 (Ehwald, 479; tr. Lapidge & Herren, 154–55).

31. Col 2:8 and Acts 17:18 (R. Weber et al. (ed), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (4th ed.
(Stuttgart 1994) 1728, 1822).

32. Isidore, *Etymologiae* VIII.6.1 (W. M. Lindsay (ed), *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum
sive Originum libri xx* (2 vols, Oxford 1911), i 316).

atque divinarum scientiam 'For the ancients called wisdom philosophy, that is, knowledge of all matters both human and divine'.[33]

It can also be seen at work in an Insular context in the first of the *Aenigmata* composed by Tatwine of Breedon in the early eighth century, *De philosophia*: *est felix mea qui poterit cognoscere iura* 'Blessed is he who can know my laws'.[34] However, this understanding of *philosophia* would not be common until at least the Carolingian period,[35] and Virgilius cannot have been unaware of the insinuations that surrounded his *filosophia*.

Yet even the harshest critics must have noticed that Virgilius admitted his *filosophi* could not replace divine knowledge and power: his theory seems to have been that *filosophia* to some extent coincided with 'earthly' wisdom, in contrast with rivers of heavenly wisdom and Hebrew laws, and he sees it rather as a more humble means of understanding and investigating earthly and heavenly matters. What was unusual about Virgilius is his unabashedness in pursuing this humbler side of wisdom, and at times one gets the distinct impression that, in spite of his initial claims, he did not always consider it quite so very humble after all.

Although grammar lies more on this earthly side, Virgilius emphasises its link to *filosophia* and its importance as the basis of all reading,[36] and he even goes on to examine its 'spiritual' side, likening the grades of comparison to human life and placing stages of grammatical learning at different points in a man's life.[37] Virgilius was not the first to harbour such opinions about the importance of grammar.[38] For Isidore of Seville it was the *origo et fundamentum liberalium*

33. Isidore, *Differentiae* II.39.149 (PL 83, 93D).

34. Tatwine, *Aenigmata*, no 1 line 11 (F. Glorie & M. de Marco (ed), *Tatuini opera omnia. Variae collectiones aenigmatum Merovingicae aetatis. Anonymus De dubiis nominibus*, CCSL 133 (Turnhout 1968) 168).

35. For general accounts of changing christian attitudes towards *philosophia*, see J. Leclercq, *Études sur le vocabulaire monastique du moyen âge*, Studia Anselmiana 48 (Rome 1961) 39–67; I. Hadot, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris 1984) 207–14.

36. A IV.9 (Polara & Caruso, 30; Löfstedt, 126).

37. A I.2 (Polara & Caruso, 2–4; Löfstedt, 104–05); see also A V.14 (Polara & Caruso, 62–64; Löfstedt, 158–59). For the place of Virgilius's etymological techniques in this framework, see M. Amsler, *Etymology and grammatical discourse in late antiquity and the early middle ages* (Amsterdam & Philadelphia 1989) 197–207.

38. Holtz, *Donat*, 316. For another interesting Hiberno-Latin attempt to place grammar in a wider context of learning, see Anonymus ad Cuimnanum's preface to his *Expossitio latinitatis* (Bischoff & Löfstedt, 1–3): like Virgilius, Anonymus values the *auctoritas* of ancient authors, Virgil in particular, and eschews *consuetudo* of the present time.

artium 'the origin and basis of the liberal arts',[39] and it is worth restating that the titles Virgilius applied to his two collections, *Epitomae* and *Epistolae*, did not in themselves carry any particularly grammatical overtones, and in both cases open and close with decidedly non-grammatical material. Some of the grammatical texts known to Virgilius had already gathered distinctly non-grammatical adjuncts and asides aimed at the edification of readers who came for the Latin but stayed for the wisdom. In the case of Isidore, the first book of his *Etymologiae*, included as much information on grammar as many specifically grammatical texts, such as Donatus's two works, but in the midst of definitions, lists and examples he inserted a good deal of matter quite extraneous from a purely grammatical point of view. He even begins with definitions of *disciplina* and *ars* and a list of the seven liberal arts, whilst in the discussion of letters that follows he pauses to explain the role of the letter Y as an *exemplum vitae humanae* instituted by Pythagoras.[40] Although Isidore wrote in a tradition to some extent distinct from that of grammarians such as Donatus and Priscian,[41] he was nevertheless revered as an authority on wisdom in general, and his writings on grammar in the *Etymologiae* circulated as a separate collection.[42] Viewed from the Isidorean perspective of grammar as a unifying part of a much broader canvas, Virgilius's asides and interest in wisdom and the nature of man do not necessarily seem so out of place, and are different in degree rather than substance. Grammar, though part of the lesser kind of wisdom, could still open the door to fascinating and profound realms of knowledge.

The degree of difference between Virgilius and these other texts is, however, often quite substantial, and some of the means Virgilius adopted went quite beyond the pale of early medieval Latin literature. Grammar was, as a rule, a highly conservative genre: authors trimmed and excerpted from earlier works to create new arrangements populated by the same *exempla* and explanations.[43]

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39. Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.5.1 (Lindsay, i 32). This theme is returned to by Tatwine, who describes *philosophia* as surrounded by *alarum septena ... circumstantia* (*Aenigmata*, no. 1 l. 1 (Glorie, 168)).

40. Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.1.1 and I.3.7 (Lindsay, i 25, 27).

41. For a brief discussion of Isidore's sources and place in the well-established encyclopedic tradition, see S. A. Barney et al. (tr), *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge 2006) 10–17, with references to other important works.

42. Law, *Insular Latin grammarians*, 23–24.

43. These processes among early medieval grammarians often leave it unclear when one can be justified in talking about a 'revision' or 'recension' of an established work, and a new grammar based heavily on existing models: see V. Law, 'When is Donatus not Donatus?', *Peritia* 5 (1986)

Virgilius flew in the face of this tradition and although he quotes profusely from the verse and prose of around a hundred named authorities almost none of these apparent sources can be traced, and they include a number of highly unlikely-sounding characters responsible for even more outlandish Latin.[44] Indeed, there is a sharp contrast between the Latin of Virgilius, which is generally quite correct, sometimes even elegant, and the Latin of his 'sources', which furnishes most of the examples of strange and arcane practices avoided by the author himself. Some of these eccentricities are ascribed to apparently well-known figures. Thus, according to Virgilius, Lucan was the author of the line 'bones viros urbi dedit Sicilia', featuring a novel transformation of the adjective *bonus* into *bonis*; whilst Cicero, Virgilius says, occasionally used the word *et* to mean 'because'.[45] These and other familiar-sounding authors are made to rub shoulders with a long list of individuals never mentioned in any other text, sometimes with fantastic-sounding names and often provided with an air of classical verisimilitude by cognomina linking them to locations redolent of the ancient past: Balapsidus, Bregandus Lugenicus and Galbungus join Estrius the Spaniard, Origen of Athens, Falanx the Spartan, Lupus the Christian, and even women such as Sibyl of Carthage and Sufphonia the Hebrew. It is highly unlikely that such a vast body of knowledge as Virgilius claims to have had access to has perished without a trace, or that all of the names he quotes represent the pseudonyms of a circle of playful grammarians,[46] and it must be presumed that most or all of these names and the works associated with them are fabrications, presumably created by Virgilius himself. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that a good many of these authors' names are clearly nonsensical, though Vivian Law and others have discerned in some of them clever attempts to exploit patristic sources, particularly Jerome's

235–61. For an account of the importance of such conservatism to Late Antique grammar, see R. A. Kaster, 'Islands in the stream: the grammarians of Late Antiquity', *Historiographia linguistica* 13 (1986) 323–42.

44. There is a convenient index of 'authors' and proper names in Polara & Caruso, 371–76.

45. 'Sicily gave good men to the city'. A v.15 and IX.7 (Polara & Caruso, 64, 120; Löfstedt, 160, 208).

46. This theory goes all the way back to Mai's preface: *Classici auctores*, v p xiii–xiv: Mai drew a parallel with the pseudonyms employed by Alcuin and his contemporaries at the court school of Charlemagne. Further development came in J. Quicherat, 'D'un autre Virgilius Maro', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*1 2 (1840–41) 130–43: 141–42, who imagined Virgilius as the last in a line of grammarians at a school based in Toulouse, and similar theories have been resurrected several times. Yet it is difficult to imagine that all of the 'authorities' known to Virgilius are pseudonyms, and surely picking the genuine pseudonyms from the fictitious characters is impossible.

Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum.[47] A number of these obscure persons are fleshed out with details and anecdotes, supplied either by their own (alleged) words or by Virgilius; but none become more alive than the author himself and his teacher Aeneas. It is striking in itself that these names were selected, presumably as pseudonyms, associated as they were with the foremost Latin poet and the hero of his epic (though the name Vergil was used in Ireland, in the Hibernicised form Fergil).[48] By the seventh century, the poet Vergil was a wondrous figure, whose wisdom was the subject of legend and whose poetry was the benchmark of proper Latin usage and style.[49] Consequently, as custodians and explicators of the Latin language, the grammarians of Late Antiquity focused strongly on Vergil in their writings. Priscian produced a grammatical textbook based on minute analysis of the first line of each book of the *Aeneid*,[50] whilst Donatus' *Ars maior* included about a hundred quotations from ancient authors, of which some eighty came from Vergil's poems.[51] Commentaries on and biographies of Vergil, especially those by Servius, circulated widely in the early middle ages, as did Virgil's poems themselves. How much of this material our Virgilius knew is not entirely clear, but it is likely that his direct acquaintance with classical literature was quite limited: Donatus' grammars and Servius' commentary were widely read in early Ireland, but full texts of Vergil's poems were probably not known there before the eighth or ninth centuries.[52] Still, Virgilius

47. Law, *Wisdom*, 11–17, and 'Serious aspects'.

48. For general discussion of the usurpation of names of authority in early Ireland, see M. Herren, 'The pseudonymous tradition in Hiberno-Latin: an introduction', in J. J. O'Meara & B. Naumann (ed), *Latin script and letters AD 400–900: Festschrift presented to Ludwig Bieler on the occasion of his 70th birthday* (Leiden 1976) 121–31; repr. in his *Latin letters*, no. V, with particular reference to Virgilius at 125–31. Herren suggests that Virgilius's names and locations are cover-names for individuals and locations in contemporary Munster, and he goes on to make a case for identifying the *Carthago* and *Roma* of Virgilius's writings with, respectively, the Irish monastery at Less Mór (founded by St Carthach) and either its rival Caisel or an even more enigmatic house of learning known as the *domus Romanorum*.

49. Still useful for a general account is Comparetti, *Vergil in the middle ages*, esp. chapter ix.

50. Priscian, *Partitiones duodecim versuum Aeneidos principalium* (H. Keil (ed), *Grammatici latini* (8 vols, Leipzig 1855–80), iii 459–515; and M. Passalacqua (ed), *Prisciani Caesariensis opuscula* (2 vols, Rome 1999), ii 45–128).

51. Comparetti, *Vergil in the middle ages*, 70 n 68.

52. The question of knowledge of Vergil and other classical authors in early Ireland was discussed at length in M. Herren, 'Classical and secular learning among the Irish before the Carolingian renaissance', *Florilegium* 3 (1981) 118–57. He concluded that knowledge of the classics in early medieval Ireland was transmitted via commentaries and quotations in grammars, and re-emphasises the point in his more recent 'Literary and glossarial evidence for the study of classical

would certainly have been aware that Aeneas was the central character of Vergil's *Aeneid* and an important figure in Roman history, and he would have known Vergil as a byword for wisdom and proper Latin. He must have known that the 'historical' Aeneas lived long before Vergil, and it is consequently odd that Virgilius chose to reverse the roles of Vergil and his subject, Virgilius becoming the pupil of the learned Aeneas. Aeneas thus becomes something of a scholar in Virgilius' version of events, the author of a wide range of works and Virgilius' first port of call when any challenging grammatical question came his way: a far cry in most respects from the *pius Aeneas* of the *Aeneid*, warrior and founding father.

Nevertheless, Virgilius displayed considerable love for and loyalty to his old teacher: none, he claims, could fault his knowledge on any matter, and thoughts of the long absence from his beloved master brought tears to Virgilius' eyes.[53] Aeneas, Virgilius says, inculcated in him a proper respect for *auctoritas* as well as disdain for *pecunia*, and warned him never to go through a single day without dedicating some time to gainful reading.[54] It was thanks to his teacher that Virgilius received his second name; for Aeneas, he wrote, noticed that his pupil and *filius* was *ingeniosus* and declared that he should be called by the name of a famous scholar active at the time of the great flood whose spirit seemed to be reborn in the new student.[55]

It was presumably to tap into the authority attached to Vergil and his works that our author adopted the name, and it should be noted that the description *grammaticus* added to his name by modern scholars is not found in the manuscripts, and seems to have been a creation of Cardinal Angelo Mai, the great classical scholar and Virgilius' first editor. None of the three main manuscripts (all

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mythology in Ireland A. D. 600–800', in H. C. Ó Briain, A.-M. d'Arcy & J. Scattergood (ed), *Text and gloss: studies in Insular learning and literature presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer* (Dublin 1999) 49–67. Rijcklof Hofman ('Some new facts concerning the knowledge of Vergil in early medieval Ireland', *Études Celtiques* 25 (1988) 189–212) attempts to build a case for direct knowledge of Vergil, though probably not until after the period when Virgilius was active.

53. A V.5 and V.9 (Polara & Caruso, 48, 54; and Löfstedt, 144, 149–50).

54. A V.9 (Polara & Caruso, 54; Löfstedt, 150).

55. *Repperit quod vir quidam Maro fuerit prope diluvium, cuius sapientiam nulla narrare saecula potebunt; unde Aeneas cum me vidisset ingeniosum hoc me vocabulo iussit nominari dicens: 'hic filius meus Maro vocabitur, quia in eo antiqui Maronis spiritus redivivit'* 'One finds that a certain Maro lived around the flood, whose wisdom no age will be able to fully express. It was for this reason that when Aeneas had seen that I was very talented indeed, he commanded that I should be called by this name, saying: "This son of mine shall be called Maro, for in him the spirit of the ancient Maro is reborn"'), A XV.8 (Polara & Caruso, 168; Löfstedt, 245).

of the ninth century) of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* ascribes the text to Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, but instead stick to *Ars Virgilii Maronis* and *Maronis Virgilius oriuntur aepithomae xv* in Paris, BN, lat. 13026; *Incipit praefatio Maronis* introduces the *Epistolae* in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, IV.A.34, whilst the *Epitomae* in this manuscript are opened with *In nomine Dei patris Maronis Virgili ordiuntur epithome*; and in Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, 426 the *Epitomae* are headed by *Incipit aepitome xvi Maronis ordinaria de sapientia*.[56] One late manuscript of the eleventh century (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, M 79 s.) diverges and opens its extracts from the *Epitomae* with *Hic secuntur ethimologie Virgilius presbiter Hispanus*, but the overwhelming majority of the direct witnesses and quotations in the large indirect tradition adhere to the name Virgilius (Maro).[57]

In contrast, throughout the preface to Mai's edition the author is referred to as Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, though Mai never pauses to explain where he is getting this full name from, and he comments only briefly on his surprise that the writings in the Naples manuscript ascribed to Virgilius Maro could certainly not be the work of the Augustan poet, despite his early hopes.[58] This initial reaction may not have been so very different from that of medieval readers, who likewise only knew the author as Virgilius Maro, though how many made Mai's second leap and realised he was not identical with the famous poet is less clear. The numerous quotations from Virgilius in other early medieval texts often reveal confusion between Virgilius and his namesake,[59] and taking Virgilius and his

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56. This can be gleaned most easily from the introductions to Polara & Caruso (xxiii–xxxi) and Löfstedt's edition, though J. Huemer (ed), *Virgilii Maronis Grammatici opera* (Leipzig 1886) iv–x also provides a helpful arrangement of this information.

57. However, for one unusual Irish case which describes *Virgilius filius Ramuth* as a *grammaticus philosophiae*, see below, n 109.

58. Mai, *Classici auctores*, v, p vi. On examining the Naples manuscript of Virgilius, he was struck by the number and range of unedited grammatical texts it contained, *quos inter animum meum praecipue commovit claritate ipsa nominis VIRGILIUS MARO: quem quum cupide lectitarem, quantum sermonis duritia offendebar, tantum copia eruditionis peregrinoque magisterii genere delectabar* 'among which one particularly stirred my interest with the very fame of the name VIRGILIUS MARO; and while I eagerly read through it, I was just as offended by the harshness of the language as I was delighted by the wealth of learning and by this strange kind of master'.

59. Anonymus ad Cuimnanum in his *Expossitio latinitatis* was just one author who made no distinction between quotations of the grammarian and the poet (Bischoff & Löfstedt, 16 lines 499–500 and 82 line 225 (for Virgilius Maro Grammaticus) and 44 line 165 and 152 line 132 (for just two of many quotations of Vergil)).

'authorities' at face value was in fact almost standard:[60] most readers seem to have had considerable difficulty with Virgilius' casual adoption of famous names like Cicero, Lucan, Horace, and others for very strange quotations. Widespread identification of Virgilius with the poet may indeed have helped spread the fame and increased the authority of his works. There even exists one manuscript (albeit of the eleventh century) of the poetic works of Virgil with selections from the *Epitomae* tagged onto the end.[61]

Such was the status of Virgilius' writings that even the venerable Bede fell into the trap of quoting Cicero's *De Prasio* (either a discussion of someone by that name, or of 'an emerald' or 'green slime') and Virgilius' associated musings on the signficance of various prefixes to the verb *clamare*, though neither here nor elsewhere did Bede ever go so far as to quote Virgilius by name.[62] Not many medieval authors penetrated the illusion. Aldhelm of Malmesbury seems to have understood that Virgilius was not meant to be taken in all seriousness,[63] and rather later Alcuin noticed the fishiness of *De Prasio* when he quoted the same passage from Bede, and omitted the supposed reference to Cicero.[64] Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin[65] seem to have been rather more cautious than most: for the bulk of early medieval readers, Virgilius and his companions could very easily blend into the classical and Late Antique background that was still standard fare in Latin grammars of the time.

60. Polara ('Virgilio Marone e la parodia', 118) took this to indicate that Virgilius was probably not of Insular origin, since a tradition in which grammar and classical poetry were still alive would have noticed the strangeness of Virgilius's writings. But because most of the quotations of Virgilius, at least from the seventh and eighth centuries, occur in Insular works, it is difficult to be sure what contemporaries on the continent might have made of Virgilius.

61. Paris, BN, lat 7930 (E). For this manuscript, see J. J. Savage, 'The scholia in the Virgil of Tours, Bernensis 165', *Harvard Stud Class Philol* 36 (1925) 91–164: 100–02.

62. Bede, *De orthographia*, C (C. W. Jones (ed), *Bedae venerabilis opera didascalia*, CCSL 123A–C (3 vols, Turnhout 1975–80), i 7–57: 19 lines 284–89). For discussion see J.-M. Picard, 'Bede and Irish scholarship: scientific treatises and grammars', *Ériu* 54 (2004) 139–47: 144–47.

63. See above, n 10. Aldhelm's aim in quoting Virgilius may have been to put a sting in the tail of his satire on Irish learning and also, possibly, to highlight Virgilius's metrical deficiencies in contrast to his own expertise: see Lapidge & Herren, *Aldhelm*, 202; S. Gwara, 'Aldhelm's Ps and Qs in the *Epistola ad Ehfridum*', *Notes & Queries* 36 (1989) 290–93; and David Howlett, 'Aldhelm and Irish learning', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 52 (1994) 37–75: 52–54.

64. Alcuin, *De orthographia* (S. Bruni (ed), *Alcuino: De orthographia*, Millennio Medievale 2 (Florence 1997) 6 §33).

65. Although it has not yet been fully edited, it is likely that the grammatical satire contained in the *Ars Serg(il)ii* also recognised that Virgilius was not meant to be taken in all seriousness: Herren, 'Spanish Jew in Ireland', 60.

Virgilius must have been well aware of the confusion he would cause to future readers, though it should be noted that he never makes his identification with the Augustan poet explicit. In addition, he seems to have considered his alter ego a *grammaticus*, since he includes himself in the last *Epitoma, De catalogo grammaticorum*.[66] Several of the manuscripts mentioned above also place the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* in the midst of other grammatical works. But that is not to say that Virgilius explicitly precluded identification of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* as the supposed grammatical writings of Vergil the poet: despite the fact that the description *grammaticus* could often be attached to a name, particularly a famous name such as Donatus, as an honorific or professional title stretching all the way back to the 'secondary school' teachers of the Roman empire,[67] it was not necessarily an exclusive occupation. A poet, rhetor, philosopher or historian could also be a grammarian,[68] and at times it could be applied broadly to any teacher of great learning or one whose writings were of sufficient merit to be used as *exempla* in grammatical texts.[69] This may have applied to some of the writers named and quoted by Virgilius, but although the author's own persona probably was envisaged as a grammarian, and subsequent scribes picked up on this fact, the relationship with the 'original' Vergil was left rather more ambiguous than the modern name Virgilius Maro 'Grammaticus' implies.

A number of effects and aims may have been met by Virgilius in his usurpation of ancient names of authority. On one level it is likely that he was simply buying into the enormous respect that was attached to ancient authors and their works, and thus exploiting the ignorance of his readership; but inevitably one wonders

66. *Tertius Virgilius ego* 'I am the third Virgil', A xv.2 (Polara & Caruso, 162; Löfstedt, 239).

67. Ancient education was founded on primary, secondary, and tertiary stages, which were the responsibility of, respectively, the *paedogogus* or *ludi magister, grammaticus,* and *rhetor.* In the third and fourth centuries the *grammaticus* became the most favoured and best paid of the educational professions; see H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (6th ed. Paris 1965) 389–421, 434–36.

68. Ausonius of Bordeaux saw himself as a grammarian, rhetor and poet (PL 19, 824C 861A), whilst Jerome described himself as a *philosophus, rhetor, grammaticus,* and *dialecticus* (PL 23, 462A).

69. Thus Isidore at one point insinuated that he saw Cicero as a *grammaticus: grammatici dicunt sceleratum illum esse in quo fit scelus; ut Cicero: 'O te scelerate, qui subactus et prostitutus es'* 'The grammarians say that something is wicked if there is wickedness in it, as when Cicero said: "How wickedly you act; you who have slept around and acted as a prostitute"'. *De differentiis verborum* 507 (PL 83, 61A). The *Ars Serg(il)ii*'s description of Virgilius himself as a *grammaticus philosophiae* is a good example of *grammaticus* being used in a wider context of 'teacher' or 'learned person': see below, n 109.

whether there might be more to it. Just what kind of milieu did Virgilius think the study of grammar had occupied through history? In a world where Virgil and Aeneas could be contemporaries almost anything was possible, including thousand-year old grammarians and armies clashing over the second declension:[70] just as many of the fundamental rules of Latin grammar and composition are turned completely on their heads, so the established relationship between author, authorities, fact, and fiction breaks down in the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae.*

The world behind most Latin grammatical texts was very distant from the christian civilisation of the seventh century. Written as reference guides for native speakers, they presupposed a considerable basic knowledge of Latin, and dwelt mainly on more advanced points; in short, they were not very user-friendly for those who had not been raised in Latin, such as readers in the early medieval British Isles.[71] They were also predicated on a quite different educational milieu to that which most seventh-century readers would have known. By this time, even though christianity had long been the dominant religion, Late Antique grammars and adaptations of them were still laced with examples drawn from pagan literature that did not reflect the normal reading material of most students. This fact was often commented on by ancient authors. St Jerome in his letter to Eustochium famously asked what Horace had to do with the psalter, Vergil with the gospels or Cicero with the apostles,[72] whilst in the preface to his *Moralia in Iob* Gregory the Great lamented the tyranny Donatus exerted over christian learning:

> *Quia indignum vehementer existimo, ut verba coelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati* 'Since I strongly consider it offensive that I should restrain the words of the heavenly oracle with the rules of Donatus'.[73]

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70. A XV.1, B III.10 (Polara & Caruso, 162, 242; Löfstedt, 48, 238).

71. The interaction of early medieval Irishmen and Anglo-Saxons with Latin grammar is discussed in Law, *Insular Latin grammarians*, and 'Late latin grammars in the early middle ages', *Historiographia Linguistica* 13 (1986) 365–80. For general background on the evolution of grammar and grammatical studies, see Holtz, *Donat*, sections 2 and 3; and R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of language: the grammarian and society in late antiquity* (Berkeley CA & London 1988).

72. Jerome, *Epistula* 22 (PL 22, 416). This is based on Tertullian, *De praescriptionibus adversus haereticos*, c. 7 ('Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et christianis?' (PL 2, 20B), and both depend ultimately on 2 Cor 6:14–15 (which in the Vulgate runs 'Quae enim participatio iustitiae cum iniquitate; aut quae societas luci ad tenebras; quae autem conventio Christi ad Belial; aut quae pars fideli cum infidele' (Weber, 1794)).

73. Gregory, *Moralia in Iob*, preface (M. Adriaen (ed), *S. Gregorii Moralia in Iob*, CCSL 143 & 143A–B (Turnhout 1979–85), i 7 line 217).

Admonitions against reading pagan poems, as in Isidore's *Sententiae*,[74] largely
fell on deaf ears, or rather ears able to understand the language of learning only
through contact with grammars containing pagan literature. By the time of
Virgilius, that is to say, around the middle of the seventh century, a number of
authors had started to take more decisive action to remedy this situation. Latin
education was now in the hands of the church, and regardless of the material
contained in grammars, Latin was intended as a vehicle for christian learning: its
students began with the psalter and moved up through a series of christian
texts.[75] Grammars retained an important place as guides and references in this
scheme, and were gradually changed to fit the tastes of a new generation. Exam-
ples drawn from the bible and christian poets started to replace those from ear-
lier pagan works, partially in some cases, as with the examples selected by Isidore
in his *De grammatica* within the *Etymologiae*,[76] but more fully in others. There
appeared a thoroughly christianised version of Donatus's grammatical works,[77]
and another christian adaptation of them travelled under the name of the *Ars
Asporii*,[78] in which one finds many of Donatus's most basic examples being
replaced with examples more palatable to pious tastes: *doctissimus poetarum*
becomes *pereminentissimus prophetarum Helias* or *sapientissimus regum Salomon*,
whilst the specimen masculine, feminine and neuter nouns are no longer *magis-
ter*, *Musa* and *scamnum*, but *iustus*, *ecclesia* and *ieiunium*.[79] The *Ars Asporii* is
particularly significant, since it is one of the precious few sources which one can
say with confidence was known to Virgilius: he discusses, in his first *Epitoma*,
the opinions of Glengus and his follower Asperius on the *partes orationum*,

74. *Ideo prohibetur christianus figmenta legere poetarum* 'Therefore a christian may not read the
fabrications of the poets', Isidore, *Sententiae* III.13.1 (P. Cazier (ed), *Sententiae: Isidorus Hispa-
nensis*, CCSL 111 (Turnhout 1998) 236).

75. Holtz, *Donat*, pp. 265–67. For further discussion of this aspect of Latin learning in a non-
native speaking context, see M. Lapidge, 'Anglo-Latin literature', in S. B. Greenfield & D. G.
Calder (ed), *A new critical history of Old English literature* (New York & London 1986) 5–37; repr.
in his *Anglo-Latin literature 600–899* (London & Rio Grande 1996) 1–35: 1–3.

76. Thus an example of names joined by a conjunction is *Augustinus et Hieronymus*, and Dt
33:6 is used as an example of superfluous verbs (*Etymologiae*, 1.12.1 and 1.34.7 (Lindsay, i 39,
61)).

77. Law, *Insular Latin grammarians*, 32–34; Holtz, *Donat*, 256–58.

78. H. Hagen (ed), *Anecdota Helvetica quae ad grammaticam latinam spectant ex bibliothecis
Turicensi Einsidlensi Bernensi*, Grammatici Latini: Supplementum (Leipzig 1870) 39–61. It may
have originated in sixth-century Gaul. For discussion, see Law, *Insular Latin grammarians*, 35–41,
and 'When is Donatus not Donatus?'; Holtz, *Donat*, 272–83.

79. These and other examples are given in Holtz, *Donat*, 275.

which corresponds closely to the wording in a section of the *Ars Asporii*.[80] This is, however, the only instance of Virgilius letting slip a real, named source amidst the usual run of bogus authorities and non-existent works; and even if he does occasionally reveal elsewhere some acquaintance with grammatical texts, Isidore, the bible or the poet Vergil,[81] Virgilius never otherwise states the real name of the author or source. Thus when he adapted the famous line from Vergil's third *Eclogue* 'qui Bavium non odit amet tua carmina, Maevi',[82] into 'qui favum mellis non amat, odit tua carmina, Maevi',[83] Virgilius leaves it anonymous, and elsewhere ascribes a line based on the beginning of Genesis to the otherwise unknown translation of *lex nostra* from Greek into Latin by Balapsidus of Nicomedia.[84]

Yet whilst the world Virgilius conjures up contains precious few genuine figures, it does succeed in capturing the flavour recondite grammatical discourse may have had for students in the seventh century. A student in the seventh-century west—particularly in the British Isles—would not necessarily have been familiar with the names and histories of classical authorities, regardless of whether or not he had direct knowledge of their original works. Those with access to Isidore's *Etymologiae* could have known that some ancient authors were poets, rhetors or philosophers[85] but, with the possible exception of Vergil, one must wonder how much more could have been found out. Frequent reference in Donatus and other grammarians to the works of authors such as Lucan, Horace, Ennius, and Cicero may have sounded very elegant and impressive, and provided numerous useful models for early medieval readers, but at the same time these references were divorced from their original context and inserted into dry discourse: they were small nuggets of ancient knowledge and literature that could, when properly construed, leave a vague but tantalising impression of the realms these authorities of antiquity had inhabited. It is likely that, for most

80. A I.3 (Polara & Caruso, 6; Löfstedt, 106–07). The use of *partes orationum*, rather than the *partes orationis* which feature in the opening of Donatus' *Ars minor*, corresponds exactly to the wording in one branch of the *Ars Asporii*. For discussion of the nature of the relationship between the *Ars Asporii* and Virgilius, see Law, *Insular Latin grammarians*, 35 n 27, 39; Holtz, *Donat*, 273, and 'Le rôle des irlandais dans la transmission des grammaires latines', in R. Chevallier (ed), *Influence de la Grèce et de Rome sur l'occident moderne* (Paris 1977) 55–66 : 59.

81. These references are collected in Löfstedt's edition (248–49), but represent a meagre list.

82. Virgil, *Eclogae* III.90 (R. Coleman (ed), *Vergil: Eclogues* (Cambridge 1977) 51).

83. B V.6 (Polara & Caruso, 300; Löfstedt, 85).

84. A XV.7 (Polara & Caruso, 168; Löfstedt, 245).

85. Isidore, *Etymologiae* VIII.6–7 (Lindsay, i 316–21).

readers, this was all one could expect: the backgrounds of the original authors and texts were quite obscure, and a grammar supposedly written by the greatest of poets and teeming with *exempla* from the most respected of authors—and many new ones, too—must have seemed very appealing.

Virgilius was alive to all of these features of intellectual life in the seventh century, and whilst the verse his characters sometimes employ is of the rhythmic type favoured in early christian Ireland,[86] the words they use often hark back to themes and subjects similar to those one encounters in the quotations extracted by grammarians. This extends beyond Virgilius' (often twisted) grammatical doctrines: even the famous disputation of Galbungus and Terrentius finds parallels in the numerous *altercationes* of earlier grammatical works.[87] Virgilius' grammarians are linked to the most distant corners of the known world, but also to both ancient and relatively recent history: the geographical horizons of Virgilius' sources stretch to Carthage, Africa, Spain, Asia, and Persia, but focus particularly on Rome and Italy;[88] and according to Virgilius' catalogue of the grammarians, the first grammarian was one Donatus of Troy, who joined Romulus at his new foundation of Rome.[89] Elsewhere, Virgilius mentions having sent a letter he wrote on sapphic and heroic verses to Donatus at Rome.[90] Since Virgilius was alive to meet Virgil of Asia, the pupil of Donatus of Troy's own protegé (another Virgil), it must be presumed that no great sum of years separated the author's *alter ego* from the traditional foundation of Rome by Romulus in 753 BC. Even if Donatus of Troy did live for a thousand years, this would still place Virgilius' *floruit* long, long before the seventh century after Christ, and quite possibly long before the birth of Christ.

In this appearance of Donatus, the doyen of grammarians, at the dawn of Roman history, our author appears once again to be taking advantage of one of the most revered names in Latin literature, one powerful enough to have inspired multiple subsequent grammarians, since besides Donatus of Troy, Virgilius also mentions a teacher of his called Donatus, who had a twin brother called

86. Herren, 'Hiberno Latin poems', which is based on the conclusions of P. Lejay, 'Le grammairien Virgile et les rythmes latins', *Revue de philologie* 19 (1895) 45–64.

87. Munzi, '*Tertius Vergilius ego*', 77–79.

88. e.g., A X.7, X.8, X.9, XV.1, XV.3, B I.9, III.2, III.6, III.10, III.11, III.21, III.28 and IV.4 (Polara & Caruso, 140–44, 162–64, 194, 230, 236, 242–44, 258–60, 270–72, 284; Löfstedt, 16–17, 40, 44, 48–49, 58, 66, 75, 222–24, 238–40).

89. A XV.1 (Polara & Caruso, 162; Löfstedt, 238–39).

90. A IV.14 (Polara & Caruso, 38–40; Löfstedt, 136).

Don and a father called Julian, and also one 'Donatus the Praetor'.[91] How these Donatuses connect with one another is quite hazy: they may even all refer to just one individual. Virgilius is reticent on this point, and leaves the chronology of most of his characters quite vague. It must also be remembered that there is never any direct admission or identification of the 'real' Donatus, Vergil, or Aeneas: either they lurk somewhere among Virgilius' dubious authorities, as indicated by the use of a line from Vergil's third *Eclogue*, but more probably they have simply been edited out to emphasise the wealth of untapped intellectual reserves Virgilius claims to reveal.

It is not only in time and place that Virgilius' characters occupy a somewhat warped and elongated perspective: they also belong to a very confused religious milieu that again contributes to the air of antiquity about the text. Virgilius only rarely drops hints as to his own personal affiliations, but despite apparently living long before the birth of Christ, one can deduce that his sympathies ultimately lay with the monotheistic christians. At one point he mentions writing a series of commentaries *adversus paganos* on the creation of the world, in which he affirmed that *absque deo nullus est solo, qui omnia creat* 'without God alone, who creates all things, there is no-one'.[92] Nevertheless, Virgilius's anachronistic religious perspective allowed him to be flexible in his attitude towards the use and quotation of texts by pagans, and on pagan themes in general his views were very liberal. It is no surprise given the chronological basis of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* that most of the authorities Virgilius quotes are pagans. At various times, his authorities offer examples in which they say such things as *sanctem deorum cultorem quis non laudabit?* 'Who shall not praise the holy worshipper of the gods?' or *vos vicistis et dii vos iuverunt* 'you conquer because the gods help you'.[93] One of the oddest claims comes from Virgil of Asia, who declared that

> *reges antiquitus secundum mores sibi solitos legittimis populos deorum statibus regebant; quos si nunc quoque istius temporis reges imitati fuerint, bene et conpetenter regnare* 'In the past kings ruled the people according to their established customs, with the legal status of gods. If the kings of nowadays would imitate those of that age, they would rule well and effectively'.[94]

The presence of the old gods in the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* is certainly very

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91. A IV.10, IX.7 (Polara & Caruso, 30, 122; Löfstedt, 127, 208).
92. B VII.4 (Polara & Caruso, 322; Löfstedt, 99).
93. A V.15 and IX.7 (Polara & Caruso, 64, 120; Löfstedt, 160–61, 208).
94. B III.21 (Polara & Caruso, 258; Löfstedt, 58–59).

manifest in these and other supposed quotations, but alongside them are also comments which belong to the sphere of knowledge derived from christian, biblical tradition, and if the frequency and fervour of these comments are any guide, Virgilius was quite lukewarm in his devotion. Only very rarely is Christ or the church even mentioned anywhere in his works.[95] Among these few instances a number are found in the epistolary preface to the *Epistolae*, addressed to one Julius Germanus the Deacon, which concludes with a request that this *sanctissime Christi minister* pray for Virgilius.[96] It is also likely that the 'chosen one and his companions' mentioned as companions of almighty God in the very last *Epistola* should be read as a reference to Christ.[97] One—and only one—of the authorities cited by Virgilius is described as a christian: Lupus the Christian, an Athenian who, perhaps significantly, extolled the practice of picking and choosing whatever seemed most pleasing from the writings of earlier scholars on the complex subject of word order.[98] Virgilius returns again to this issue of the christian church's flexible attitude towards pagan learning in an aside on the history of libraries at Rome that is worth repeating in full:

> *Hunc namque morem ex apostolicorum auctoritate virorum Romana tenuit ac servavit aecclesia, ut Christianorum libri filosophorum repositi a gentium scriptis haberentur; cum enim necesse haberent homines in liberalibus saecularis litteraturae studiis nati educatique, ut sapientiae ipsius consuetudinem fideles adhuc retinerent, videntes ecclesiastici doctores non potuisse eos ab hac quam coeperant intentione develli, simul etiam quia maxima ex parte eloquentes viri ad conponenda ornandaque essent caelestis et divinae sapientiae profuturi, si conversi ad Dominum et sua eloquentia permanentes prava ad recta studia verterent, hoc consultissime statuerunt, ut duabus librariis conpositis, una fidelium filosophorum libros et altera gentilium scripta contineret, ne fidelibus infidelia commiscentes nulla discretio inter munda fieret et immunda, ut si quis vellet gentilis legere, semotim haberet* 'The Roman church, following the authority of the apostles, inherited and maintained this custom: that the books of christian philosophers were kept separate from the writings of the pagans; for since they had need of men born and educated in the liberal studies of secular literature so that the faithful might yet retain the tradition of the pagans' wisdom, the doctors of the church saw that they could not remove them from the scheme which they had established, and also that for the most part men learned in composing and ornamenting works on heavenly and divine wisdom were still to come; but in case those who had con-

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95. Though Hebrew and the Hebrews feature quite prominently: see below, 80–85
96. B praef.5 (Polara & Caruso, 180; Löfstedt, 6).
97. B VIII.2 (Polara & Caruso, 328; Löfstedt, 102).
98. B III.15 (Polara & Caruso, 248–50; Löfstedt, 52).

verted to the Lord and retained their eloquence might turn their twisted studies to proper use, they most wisely instituted this custom, and put together two libraries, one holding books of faithful philosophers and the other pagan writings, lest there be no gap between the clean and the unclean, the infidel mixing with the faithful, so that if anyone wished to read a pagan work, he had to do so separately'.[99]

In contrast to the library Virgilius imagined, most surviving evidence indicates that pagan and christian texts normally stood side by side in late antique and early medieval libraries.[100] This point was not lost on Virgilius, for aside from being the last instance in which Christ or christianity is explicitly mentioned, this anecdote, one of Virgilius' longest, neatly sums up the attitude of most christian authors towards heathen literature: that it was important to reaching any standard of Latin learning, even christian learning, but at the same time was to be frowned upon and, at least in some quarters, kept very distinct from proper christian learning. Virgilius was hardly the only observer to pick up on this awkward fact; and one more early Insular author, Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, shared Virgilius' concern about discussing material that was not of an entirely christian background:

> *in his autem omnibus generibus sapientiae quaedam relegioni catholicae, quaedam gentili conueniunt, quaedam utrique, quia scriptura sacra, ut ait Agustinus, non ideo debet suas iecere partes, quod eas sibi gentiles uendicant; aurum namque argentumque Aegyptiorum commoto domino in aedificationem tabernaculi Dei adsumptum est* 'Amongst all these varieties of wisdom some pertain to the christian religion, some to the pagan religion and some to both, because, as Augustine said, holy scripture must not cast out its parts [of speech] just because they also praise the pagans; for the gold and silver of the Egyptians, once turned to the Lord, was used for the building of God's tabernacle'.[101]

The tension felt on this issue is thus clearly reflected at several points in the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae*; but unlike most other commentators, Virgilius saw no need for condemnation of the non-christian elements: in his bizarre fantasy world the whole history of Latin is the focus of interest, and it takes its rightful

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99. B III.6 (Polara & Caruso, 236–38; Löfstedt, 44).

100. A particularly telling example is found in the letter of Sidonius Appolinaris († c.487) to Donidius, in which he describes with firm approval a library where Augustine, Varro, Horace, Prudentius, and Origen could all be found side by side (Sidonius, *Epistulae* II.9.4–5 (C. Luetjohann (ed), *Gai Sollii Apollinaris Sidonii epistulae et carmina*, MGH AA 8 (Berlin 1887) 31)). For a summary of knowledge of ancient and Late Antique libraries, see M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon library* (Oxford 2006) chapter 1.

101. Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, *Expossitio latinitatis* (Bischoff & Löfstedt, 11 lines 335–40).

place alongside Greek and Hebrew, even though its practitioners in the ancient world had been pagans.

This eagerness to place Latin in context alongside Greek and Hebrew—the other two sacred languages of scripture, with Latin forming the *tres linguae sacrae*—was common in texts of Virgilius' own day: St Jerome's writings include many Greek and Hebrew etymologies, and other authors, including (though certainly not exclusively) many from Ireland, followed suit in later years.[102] Virgilius often imitates the imaginative use of supposed Greek and Hebrew words found in these other texts. On several occasions, the other sacred languages are mentioned in quite a vague manner: Latin is, Virgilius says, much broader than the other two tongues, as anyone who attempts a translation into it will realise, and he notes that discussion of Greek metrics is just too different and wide a subject for him to explain.[103] This is not surprising, for when Virgilius does provide supposed Greek and Hebrew words it becomes clear that his knowledge of these languages seems to be superficial at best, though the true extent of his familiarity with Hebrew is still the subject of some debate.[104] His Hebrew vocabulary includes some genuine but often mangled words used in a more or less correct context, such as his claim that [*h*]*el* or *hele* translates to *deus* among the Hebrews, for which *el* or *eloim* would be more correct.[105] Particularly good examples of apparent knowledge of Hebrew include the alphabet names *res* and *sade* which he equates with *caput* and *iustitia*, and his title for the second of the

102. The subject of the *tres linguae sacrae* is tied up with the hotly debated matter of 'Hiberno-Latin' biblical exegesis. For the classic statements, see R. E. McNally, 'The *tres linguae sacrae* in early Irish bible exegesis', *Theol Stud* 19 (1958) 395–403; and B. Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter', *Sacris Erudiri* 6 (1954) 189–281; repr. in his *Mittelalterliche Studien* (3 vols, Stuttgart 1966–81), i 205–73: 219–20. These views have been challenged, particularly by M. Gorman, 'A critique of Bischoff's theory of Irish exegesis: the commentary on Genesis in Munich clm 6302 (Wendepunkte 2)', *J Medieval Latin* 7 (1997) 178–233: 202, and 'The myth of Hiberno-Latin exegesis', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000) 42–85: 49–50. Gorman's conclusions are challenged in M. Herren, 'Irish biblical commentaries before 800', in J. Hamesse (ed), *Roma magistra mundi: itineraria culturae medievalis* (3 vols, Louvain-la-Neuve 1998), i 391–407; and D. Ó Cróinín, 'Bischoff's Wendepunkte fifty years on', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000) 204–37: 228.

103. A I.3 and IV.14 (Polara & Caruso, 4, 40; Löfstedt, 106, 136).

104. Herren, 'New light', 60–62, and 'Spanish Jew in Ireland?', 56–61; Smolak, 'Der dritte Virgil'; and Bischoff, 'Die "zweite Latinität"'.

105. A IV.10 (Polara & Caruso, 34; Löfstedt, 130). Like so much of Virgilius's nonsense or pseudo-nonsense, the different manuscripts and editions give different forms of the word: the three main manuscripts agree on *hel*, but different editors have either reduced this to *el* (Mai, followed by Polara & Caruso) or expanded it to *hele* (Huemer).

twelve varieties of Latin, *assena*, which is close to *hasseni*, Hebrew for second.[106] However, there is also a lot of nonsense, and even some cases of Greek reported as Hebrew and vice versa. A list of constellations in the fourth *Epitoma* describes the supposedly 'Greek' name for the twelve signs of the zodiac as *mazoron*, a corruption of the Greek Septuagint word *mazouroth*, which is itself derived from Hebrew.[107] In the allegedly Greek names for sixteen star signs that follow, one finds the Hebrew words *margaleth* and *raphalut*. Most, though not all, of Virgilius' supposed knowledge of Hebrew can be accounted for by exegetical works listing Hebrew words from the bible, particularly Jerome's handbooks on Hebrew names.[108] Those which are not found in such standard sources have aroused considerable interest and, although it is possible that some of his apparent errors are intended as subtle puns, the number of such mistakes made by Virgilius suggests that he was probably not a native speaker of Hebrew. Nevertheless, the prominence of the Greeks and Hebrews in Virgilius's discourse is striking.[109] In fact, at several points Virgilius seems to be unusually positive in his portrayal of the Jews. Virgilius ascribed to the first grammarian in Cappadocia a poem explaining the power behind thunderous winds which went

> summa summis
> quis potens caelis
> celsaque cuncta
> gubernat cela?[110]

The answer to this riddle is 'the god of the Hebrews'; and just as the heavens are ruled over by the Hebrew god, so Virgilius recognised at the very outset of his

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106. A XV.3 (Polara & Caruso, 164; Löfstedt, 240–42).

107. A IV.12 (Polara & Caruso, 34; Löfstedt, 131–2). See Herren, 'New light', 62.

108. Most notably *Hebraicae quaestiones in libro Geneseos* (P. de Lagarde et al. (ed), *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera*, CCSL 72 (Turnhout 1959) 1–56) and *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (de Lagarde, 59–161).

109. Possibly to the extent that in Ireland he was remembered by a Hebrew name, *Virgilius filius Ramuth*: see Herren, 'Spanish Jew in Ireland?', 60. A different interpretation has been proposed by Paul Russell ('Virgilius filius Ramuth: Irish scribes and Irish nomenclature', *Peritia* 14 (2000) 432–33) who sees this title as a possible corruption of *Virgilius Maro grammaticus*, and although the appellation *grammaticus* seems to have been rare in manuscripts and citations of Virgilius (see above, n 57) the text in which this phrase occurs (a probably Irish grammar ascribed to Sergius or Sergilius) does include the words *Virgilius filius Ramuth qui grammaticus fuit philosophiae* (Russell, 'Virgilius filius Ramuth', 432).

110. 'Which powerful being rules the lofty heavens and all the high-up skies from the highest heavens?'. A XV.4 (Polara & Caruso, 166–68; Löfstedt, 243).

works the primacy of the *Hebraeorum leges* over the *peritia filosophorum*, however great his admiration for the latter:

> *etenim quicumque hancce, quam nos valde aemulem putamus, ita defendunt peritiam filosophorum, ut auctoritatem primae Hebreorum minulae huicce quamvis ornatae recentiori sectae postferant, incassum omne suum expendunt audatum* 'For all who defend this wisdom of the philosophers—which we truly think worthy of imitation—to the point of putting the authority of the foremost rules of the Hebrews second to the more recent though well-ornamented custom, spend all their eagerness in vain'.[111]

Strong though the allure of Latin and the *filosophi* might be, Virgilius knew where ultimate authority was to be found.

Particularly interesting is Virgilius's complete avoidance of any word for the Jews other than *Hebraei*, eschewing *Israelitae* and *Iudaei*. Christian authors writing before Virgilius seem to have had different usages, and 'Hebrew' and 'Jew' carried a number of different connotations, 'Hebrew' (the more positive of the two) in general being used in the context of Jewish antiquity and language:[112] it was normally used for the earliest history of the Jews up to their entry into Israel and the establishment of a line of kings from the tribe of Judah. Although 'Jew' became standard after that time, the Jewish language was also usually referred to as Hebrew. Certain writers had more complex usages. Eusebius of Caesarea, for instance, developed in his *Historia ecclesiastica* and *Praeparatio evangelica* a sophisticated theory by which the early Jews and the most holy of their race were referred to as 'Hebrews' and proto-christians.[113] Virgilius may have known this view via the Latin translation of the *Historia* by Rufinus of Aquileia: in it, discussion of the antiquity of the Hebrew nation is immediately followed by

> *omnes ergo illos, qui ab Abraham sursum versus usque ad primum hominem generationis ordine conscribuntur, etiamsi non nomine, rebus tamen et religione Christianos fuisse si quis dicat, non mihi videtur errare* 'Therefore, it would not seem at all mistaken to me if anyone were to say that all of those said to have lived from Abraham

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111. A I.2 (Polara & Caruso, 4; Löfstedt, 105).

112. Michael Herren ('Gli ebrei nella cultura letteraria al tempo di Carlo il Calvo', in C. Leonardi & E. Menestò (ed), *Giovanni Scotto nel suo tempo: l'organizzazione del sapere in età carolingia* (Spoleto 1989) 537–52: 544) saw 'Hebrew' as a generally more positive description, but offered little in the way of background or references.

113. A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against paganism* (Leiden 2000) chapter 4.

right back to the first man were christians in custom and religion even if not in name'.[114]

In contrast, Isidore of Seville, like the bulk of early medieval authors, seems to have used *Iudaei*, *Hebraei* and *Israelitae* almost interchangeably,[115] even though he was aware of the etymologies and historical connotations of all three words.[116]

Virgilius' exclusive use of *Hebraei* is thus distinctive, but probably had a more specific significance than a vaguely positive attitude towards the Jews. Even if Virgilius recognised that the truly sublime lay with the *deus Hebraeorum* and his *lex*, that did not render the more humble learning of Latin and its grammar without value, and in his view it certainly needed to be considered in the same context as the more ancient Greek and Hebrew traditions. Whatever Virgilius' personal feelings towards the Jews, he seems to have been seeking to emphasise their language and antiquity in order to juxtapose them with the range of supposedly ancient Latin authors that he so often invoked.

The importance of the Hebrews, their language, laws, and god, thus links Latin to the oldest of the *tres linguae sacrae*, and also generally strengthens the air of antiquity about the text and Latin itself. Virgilius expended much effort to bolster the ancient aura of the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* but ended up with quite a bizarre and confusing mix of very ancient Hebrew and Roman history standing alongside classical authors and christians and characters bearing the name of the fourth-century grammarian Donatus. If one were forced to choose a single historical period that had to accommodate in some way most of the features of the background to Virgilius' writings, it would have to be the fourth or fifth century, in which many of the greatest grammarians were hard at work and the confrontation between classical paganism and christianity was still a very real issue, though the latter was gaining the upper hand. It is no coincidence that it was around this time that many of the grammars still used in his own day were written down. However, it appears much more likely that he was not thinking in such restrictive, specific chronological terms: his wish seems to have been to provide a broad conspectus of the history of Latin seen from outside the bounds of chronology, based on its grammar and grammarians and explained in the words of the greatest Latin poet. Time, place and authority in Virgilius' grammatical

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114. *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.4.6 (E. Schwartz & T. Mommsen (ed), *Die Kirchengeschichte*, Eusebius Werke 2 (2 vols, Berlin 1903–08), i 41)

115. B. Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du moyen âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris 1963) 100–01.

116. *Etymologiae* IX.2.51–3 (Lindsay, i 350).

fantasy were very flexible commodities, and whatever else Virgilius may have sought to do, it is clear that one of his aims was to create an approximation of the ancient world of Latin grammar comparable to that found in Donatus, Priscian, Isidore, and other texts. From the point of view of beginners in Latin literature in the seventh-century West, some of the more unusual features of classical authors exhibited in these grammars must have seemed almost as bizarre and alien as Virgilius' pastiche of them.

However, the balmy grammatical yesterday created by Virgilius was not identical to that of his ancient models: one finds occasional acknowledgements of christianity and its important Hebrew antecedents, as well as numerous references to Greek learning. Yet it is possible to see rhyme and reason of sorts in this scheme. Writing at a time when Asporius and other grammarians were attempting to finally bring Latin learning and grammar into line with christian literature and thought, Virgilius positively revelled in the ancient features of Latin and its presentation in Late Antique grammatical texts. However, he also recognised that times were changing, and although he sought to preserve and celebrate this rich heritage, he had to place it in its proper relationship with the laws and god of the Hebrews. In his ideal world, it seems, these two traditions could exist side by side, even if *filosophia* had to give way to the laws of the Hebrews and be kept separate from the works of faithful writers, as in the imaginary double library at Rome.

Virgilius' ideal seems to be best reflected in the vision of Tarquinius, an ancient Persian prophet whose prophecy Virgilius described to the deacon Julianus Germanus, recipient of the *Epistolae*.[117] Tarquinius saw a river of wine flow from the sky to mingle with a stream of water coming from the earth. These made a single river of wine that gladdened both heaven and earth as lambs and calves on the banks sang a nuptial song together. According to Virgilius, the river of wine from on high was the heart of man, streaming from the Son of God ensconced in the heavens, whilst the river of earth was comprised of the *eloquentiola philosophiae* 'eloquent little sayings of philosophy' and together they made a joyful flow of heavenly scripture combined with the learning of the philosophers.

> *Felix et beatus erit qui in illis vixerit temporibus quibus haec conplenda erunt quae in hac visione contenentur* 'Happy and blessed will be he who lives in the days when the things contained in this vision come to pass'

So said Tarquinius. Those days, Virgilius thought, could not come soon enough.

117. B Praef.1 (Polara & Caruso, 174–76; Löfstedt, 1–3).