Drijvers, J.-W., 1992a. *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross.* Leiden: Brill.
Drijvers, J.-W., 1992b. Flavia Maxima Fausta: some remarks. *Historia* 41: 500–6.
Drijvers, J.-W., 2011. Helena Augusta, the cross and the myth: some new reflections'. *Millennium (Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.)* 8. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 125–74.
Fowden, G., 1994. The last days of Constantine: oppositional views and their influence. *JRS* 84: 146–70.
James, L., 2001. *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium.* Leicester: Leicester University Press.
Longo, K., 2009. *Donne di Potere nella tarda antichità: Le Auguste attraverso le Immagini Monetali.* Reggio Calabria: Falzea Editore.
Rose, M.E., 2006. The Trier ceiling: power and status on display in late antiquity. *Greece and Rome* 53: 92–109.
Sabbah, G., 1992. Présences feminines dans l'histoire d'Ammien Marcellin. In den Boeft, J., den Hengst, D., and Teitler, H., eds, *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus.* Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, pp. 91–105.
Salzman, M.R., 2002. *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Santa Maria Scrinari, V., 1991. *Il Laterano imperiale I: Dalle aedes Laterani alla Domus Faustae.* Monumenti di antichità cristiana 11. Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archaeolgia Cristiana.
Smith, R., 2011. Measures of difference: the fourth century transformation of the Roman imperial court. *AJP* 132: 125–51.
Smith, R.R.R., 1997. The public image of Licinius I; portrait sculpture and imperial ideology in the early fourth century. *JRS* 87: 170–202.
Tougher, S., 1998. The advocacy of an empress: Julian and Eusebia. *CQ* 48: 595–9.
van Bremen, R., 1996. *The Limits of Participation.* Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben.
Woods, D., 1998. The death of the empress Fausta. *Greece and Rome* 45: 70–86.

12

'Being Female': Verse Commemoration at the *Coemeterium S. Agnetis* (Via Nomentana)

Dennis Trout

INTRODUCTION

At some point during his pontificate, Damasus composed an influential *elogium* for the virgin martyr Agnes. The short poem, like so many Damasus wrote for other Roman saints during the years of his tumultuous episcopacy (366–384), was elegantly inscribed on a marble panel and installed near the heroine's subterranean tomb.[1] Somewhat surprisingly, Agnes is the only female martyr commemorated in Damasus' extant poetry, but the bishop was not Agnes' first poet—nor was she to be the only young woman celebrated in verse at the *coemeterium S. Agnetis*. In fact, by the time Damasus became her impresario, Agnes had already enjoyed the patronage of an empress. Thereafter, among the many epitaphs of the S. Agnese complex on Rome's Via Nomentana can be found at least eight verse inscriptions dedicated to young women of rather less exalted social rank than a daughter of Constantine and the bishop of Rome.[2] Though hardly immune to the frustrations that plague extraction of the lives of women from the patristic and literary sources of the age,[3] the inscribed epigrams of S. Agnese offer a distinctive vantage

[1] Ferrua (1942) pp. 175–8, no. 37; context at Sághy (2000).
[2] All texts are cited from *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae, Vol. 8* (hereafter *ICUR*) Ferrua (1983), unless otherwise indicated. Alternate readings and further bibliography are noted when relevant. The eight epitaphs are: 20799, 20811, 20819, 21015, 21049, 21306, 21513, 21516. Two other fragmentary texts may also commemorate females: 21517 and 21522. See Appendix. Other abbreviations are: Ihm = Ihm (1895); *CLE* = Buecheler (1895–7) and Lommatzsch (1926); *ILCV* = Diehl (1925–31) and Moreau and Marrou (1967); and *PCBE* = Pietri (1999–2000). Special thanks to Christopher Trinacty for discussion of the translations included here.
[3] For the sentiment see G. Clark (1993) p. 120, introducing a chapter entitled 'Being Female' (with a section titled 'Inferiority'); for astute methodological reflection see E. Clark (1998), with elucidation of the limitations the *vitae* of female ascetics; and for reiterated reservations, Evans-Grubbs (2009) pp. 201–2.

point from which to survey anew the nature of 'being female' in late antiquity. Ironically, in the more mundane light cast by funerary commemoration certain facets of this problem take on slightly brighter hues.

A good deal of women's history, of course, has already been written from the information preserved in funerary epigraphy. Epitaphs in aggregate, because of their formulaic character, yield the kind of evidence that has aided computation of such *realia* as the age of Roman girls at marriage or the mortality and fertility rates of Roman women,[4] while Christian funerary epigraphy in particular has been a valuable ally for scholars estimating the average duration of Roman marriages.[5] In comparison to the vast majority of prose inscriptions whose revelations populate demographic data fields, however, metrical epitaphs are typically longer and more idiosyncratic. Biography and agency appear to hover closer to their surfaces—even when such epigrams share images and vocabulary with one another or draw upon the classical repertoire that formed part of the age's literary inheritance.[6] To be sure, seductions lurk in the sentiments of affection, hope, and sorrow and it is too easy to imagine that epitaphs offer unobstructed views of the lives they commemorate. Still, the risk is worth taking. Moreover, at S. Agnese—apart from the *elogium* of Damasus and the verses of Agnes' imperial benefactress, Constantina—the metrical epitaphs considered below commemorate lives lived outside the narrow confines of the late empire's senatorial and episcopal ranks. Thus this body of verse offers an approach to 'the experience of the woman' along byways other than those charted by elite literature. The journey ahead is undertaken as both complement and compliment to a pioneering book that pointed the way forward.[7]

AGNES ON THE VIA NOMENTANA AND EPITAPHS IN AGGREGATE

Agnes' popularity on the Via Nomentana was early and long-lived.[8] She makes her first appearance in history in the festal calendar known as the *depositio*

[4] E.g. Nordberg (1963), a study based on 'more than 11,000' Christian epitaphs from Rome; Carletti (1977), with a data set of 417 Roman texts; and Shaw (1987) with the reservations of Scheidel (2007).

[5] Shaw (2002) pp. 240–1: 'the *average* . . . seems to have been set at not more than fourteen years, and was perhaps significantly less', a brevity due to high rates of mortality not divorce. For 14.8 years based on the data of 286 marriages see Nordberg (1963) pp. 64–6, who also stresses the limitations of the data.

[6] Trout (2010). Verse epitaphs thus run counter to the observation that the expression of personal sentiments regarding marital partners attenuates in late Latin Christian epigraphy: so Shaw (2002) p. 215; Evans-Grubbs (2009) p. 206.

[7] The quote is from Frier (2006) pp. 20–1; the pioneer, of course, is G. Clark (1993). For the feminist debate on the legitimacy of the 'woman's experience' as a category of recovery see E. Clark (1998) pp. 5–10.

[8] Overview and bibliography at Barbini (2001).

martyrum, a document included in the Codex-Calendar of 354. In this list of 24 memorial celebrations, probably initially compiled in 335 or 336, Agnes' burial is assigned to 21 January and located on the Via Nomentana.[9] It is impossible to say how the tomb venerated as hers was then architecturally defined, but in the 340s Constantina, eldest daughter of Constantine I, funded the construction of a grand ambulatory basilica less than one hundred metres to the west of Agnes' subterranean gravesite,[10] announcing her patronage in the 14 inscribed hexameters considered below. One of the largest of the six known ambulatory basilicas that appeared in the Roman suburbs in the early and mid fourth century,[11] Constantina's funerary hall, and the imperial benefaction it embodied, significantly increased the appeal of Agnes' cult. The site's enhanced fortunes are evident, for example, in the expansion of the area's network of catacombs, an older section of which housed Agnes' tomb, as well as in the proliferation of burials within the basilica itself.[12] Moreover, it is almost certain that Damasus, as part of a renovation of Agnes' underground *memoria*, soon installed there the marble panel bearing his *elogium*.[13] If some sort of surface memorial then also stood directly over Agnes' catacomb shrine, Pope Honorius' (628–638) construction of a new *basilica ad corpus* in the early seventh century obliterated its remains. In any case, this Honorian basilica testifies to the continuing allure of the Via Nomentana site in the early medieval period, as does the inclusion of Honorius' *ecclesia* in seventh- and eighth-century *itineraria*.[14]

In addition to the verse inscriptions installed at S. Agnese by Constantina and Damasus, the site's epigraphic corpus, assembled by Antonio Ferrua in volume eight of *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (1983), includes at least a further 22 *carmina epigraphica*. This sum of 24 metrical texts falls roughly into two categories. Six can be designated *elogia* or dedicatory inscriptions; only two of these, the epigrams of Constantina and Damasus, are considered here.[15] The other 18 are epitaphs. Fourteen of these, one of which (20819) commemorates two individuals (a brother and sister), are sufficiently well preserved to serve this study (see the Appendix); the other four are too fragmentary.[16] The 24 complete and fragmentary *carmina* from the *coemeterium* represent 2.8% of the inscriptions preserved at the Via Nomentana

[9] Valentini and Zucchetti (1942) p. 17: XII kal. feb. Agnetis in Nomentana.

[10] Brandenburg (2005) pp. 69–86.

[11] Fiocchi Nicolai (2002) p. 1196; Diefenbach (2011) pp. 68–71.

[12] Barbini and Severini (2002).

[13] On Damasus' mixed motives see Sághy (2000) pp. 279–81.

[14] E.g., Valentini and Zucchetti (1942) pp. 78–9; 115.

[15] The six are *ICUR* 8.20752–7. The four left out of discussion here are 8.20754, three small fragments which, as Ferrua observed, are likely to have been part of at least two other monumental texts in verse; and 20755, 20756, and 20757, which relate to the early seventh-century building projects of Honorius.

[16] The four poorly preserved texts are *ICUR* 8.21515, 21519, 21521, and 21523.

complex.[17] Although this is, in fact, a higher percentage of metrical texts than is (roughly) calculable for Christian Rome overall in later antiquity,[18] the slightness of the figure highlights the rarity of verse in the city's epigraphic corpus, a feature of the late antique epigraphic habit that the limits imposed by poetic literacy and higher costs must in part explain. For the same reasons, perhaps, in the fourth and fifth centuries Rome's extant metrical epitaphs, as well as the city's martyrial *elogia* and dedicatory epigrams, cluster around such grand suburban monumental centres as S. Lorenzo on the Via Tiburtina, St Paul's on the Via Ostiensis, and St Peter's, where, however, they adorn the graves of otherwise unknown Romans and clerics as well as the mausolea of wealthy nobles and the tombs of the city's bishops.[19]

A similar mix of elite patronage, metrical commemoration, and social stratification is evident at the S. Agnese complex. The dedicatory epigram of Constantina, which can be dated to the 340s, may well be the first metrical text inscribed at the newly monumentalized site. Damasus' *elogium* of Agnes, which probably falls earlier rather than later in his episcopate (366–384), followed soon after. The bishop's spectacular display, in turn, only shortly precedes the two earliest dated private epitaphs, whose consular references assign them to the years 381 (20798) and 382 (20799) and thus to the final stage of Damasus' episcopate. Furthermore, among the 11 names of commemorands and commemorators preserved in the 14 epitaphs under consideration only one is otherwise recognizable: Flavius Merobaudes, the well-documented senator and *magister utriusque militiae* of 443.[20] The other ten are unknown apart from the epitaphs that memorialize them. While the *carmina* that decorate their tombs attest to some financial means as well as literary interests, it is likely that most of these individuals resided in the same sub-elite social strata revealed by a recent survey of inscribed late antique sarcophagi from Rome. In a corpus of 310 sarcophagi only 46 can be associated with senatorial patrons; the remainder were commissioned by a diverse group of civil, military, and ecclesiastical functionaries as well as a *grammaticus*, a stone-merchant, and other artisans.[21] The metrical epitaphs from S. Agnese, less costly than marble sarcophagi, open access to similar social terrain.

[17] As published in *ICUR* 8, the inscriptions from S. Agnese, including the 24 *carmina*, total 837 (20752–21589).

[18] Carletti (2008) estimates the number of Latin Christian inscriptions of Rome at 31,200. Christian metrical epitaphs number approximately 350; see Carletti (1998) p. 61. To these can be added approximately 75 non-funerary metrical texts (author's estimate). These 425 *carmina* represent 1.36% of the 31,200 texts. A (very rough) estimate for the entire corpus of ancient Latin inscriptions is 1.6%, based on a total of 250,000 texts and nearly 4,000 *carmina Latina epigraphica*; see Sanders (1991) pp. 180–1 and p. 197.

[19] Picard (1998) and Carletti (1998) pp. 61–2, with e.g. Trout (2001) and Cameron (2002) on the epigraphic landscape at St Peter's.

[20] *ICUR* 8.21048. See *PLRE* 2, 'Fl. Merobaudes'; Cugusi (1996) pp. 110–11.

[21] Desken-Weiland (2004).

Gender issues immediately stand out in this landscape of funerary poetry—where female commemorands outnumber males two to one;[22] the males, with the exception of the *puer* Remus, are adults commemorated anonymously as professionals;[23] and the females are overwhelmingly young and exclusively commemorated as daughters and wives by parents and husbands. Four of the eight certain female commemorands are daughters commemorated by parents: Urbica (20811) died at 12, while Arcontia (20819), the sister of Remus, was in her 'fifth three-year span,' between 12 and 15, therefore, and just reaching marriageable age. Prenuptial status can also be assumed for Evodia (21015) and the anonymous of 21513. The remaining four certain females are wives commemorated by husbands. Of this group Theodora Afrodite (20799) *vixit annos XXI*. Otherwise age is not recorded but relative youth is likely for at least one other: Thecla (21306), it seems, was predeceased by the twins recalled in her epitaph; perhaps she herself died of birthing complications.[24]

The pattern is neither surprising nor unexpected, of course. Men were traditionally honoured for their public and professional lives while domestic and familial roles typically circumscribed the funerary representation of Roman girls and women. The presence and responsibilities of surviving male kin might seem adequate to account for this feature of memorialization, but the very decision to commemorate a life on stone (and even more so in epigraphic verse) was conditioned by cultural not demographic forces. Indeed, the starkly gendered imbalance and distinctions of the S. Agnese metrical dossier highlight the centrality of choice in commemoration.[25] The fact, however, that female commemorands are twice as numerous as males and are young in comparison, while no woman appears as a metrical commemorator on her own, raises questions about the semiotics of metrical commemoration that can only begin to be answered by a widening of the lens.

How, then, does the profile of S. Agnese's metrical dossier correlate with broader trends in funerary epigraphy in prose as well as verse? Tellingly, when

[22] The 15 individuals commemorated in the 14 epitaphs break down as follows. Four are certainly male and one is most likely to be; eight are surely female and two very likely to be. The ratio, therefore, is five males to ten females. See Appendix.

[23] In addition to Merobaudes, solely styled *orator* in the subscription to his lacunose epitaph, are the two presbyters Celerinus (*PCBE* 2.1, 'Celerinus 1') and Augustus (*PCBE* 2.1, 'Augustus 1'). For Remus's epitaph (20819), shared with his sister Arcontia, see below; he was, it seems about 18 years old. Anonymity: the epitaph of Celerinus (20798) is well preserved and includes only the date of deposition; only two large fragments of Merobaudes' epitaph (21048) remain while Augustus' verses (20919) are contained in a sylloge. The possibility that commemorators were recorded in the latter two cannot be dismissed.

[24] 8.21306: 'quae caro pectore vivens/demisit geminum pignus'. The text is not without problems of interpretation and may be lacunose; see Ferrua (1978).

[25] Non-descending patterns, for example, might privilege sibling commemoration or the epigraphic memorialization of parents by children.

compared to early imperial funerary inscriptions, fourth- and fifth-century epitaphs show an increased tendency for husbands to commemorate wives and for parents to commemorate children.[26] This shift in practice has been understood by Brent Shaw to signal both the 'more dominant' position of the nuclear family as late Roman society's affective unit and 'the much greater importance' attributed by Christians to the commemoration of children by parents.[27] Although this commemorative pattern is by no means proof of actual change (or improvement) in the physical and emotional lives of women and children,[28] nevertheless the higher percentages of late ancient husband-to-wife dedications and parental commemorations of children, particularly evident at Rome and even more pronounced in the verse epitaphs of S. Agnese, do signal clear changes over time in commemorative preferences. Moreover, equally prominent in the S. Agnese metrical assembly is not only the 'unusual dominance' of the young in the city's Christian funerary epigraphy,[29] but especially the newly achieved premier status of young women in their teens and twenties, who progressed from being 'decidedly not preferred' in the early imperial period to becoming the 'favored gender' in these two deciles in Christian Rome.[30] In this regard, only the exaggerated steepness of the pitch of S. Agnese's verse epitaphs towards the celebration of prenuptial daughters and young wives distinguishes it statistically. Within the confines of a complex dedicated to a virgin martyr, however, this is surely a distinction worth registering.

The metrical texts of S. Agnese thus lie at the busy intersection of commemorative practice and the possibilities of being female in late ancient Rome. The preponderance of verse commemorations of young women at this Via Nomentana site may correlate to some degree with the high mortality and high fertility regimes of the Roman world: short life expectancy coupled with early marriage and the dangers of childbirth left young women especially

[26] Shaw (1984) based on some 3500 Latin epitaphs primarily of the fourth and fifth centuries. Compare the (bracketed) percentages of husband-to-wife dedications in tables 8 (28), 9 (29), and 10 (39) with those in tables 1 (26), 2 (26), and 4 (32); and the bracketed percentages of descending nuclear family dedications in tables 8 (36), 9 (46), and 10 (36) with those in tables 1 (33), 2 (36), and 4 (34). See also Shaw (1996) table 2.

[27] Shaw (1984) pp. 485 and 473, where (n. 36) Shaw observes that some of the change in respect to commemoration of daughters may reflect a rise in the average age of marriage of women, leaving memorialization longer in the hands of parents. See further Shaw (1991) pp. 76–80.

[28] For doubts about changes in the conditions of childhood in late antiquity based on perspectives supplied by patristic sources, see G. Clark (2011).

[29] Shaw (1984) pp. 474–7. For the relevant data from Christian Rome see table E. The phenomenon is a natural corollary of a cultural praxis that privileged conjugal and parental epigraphic memorialization and not, therefore, transparent evidence for calculating life expectancy.

[30] Shaw (1991) pp. 82–3 with table 4.5, comparing 'Christians/Rome' and 'Urban/Rome' in the 11–20 and 21–30 deciles. See also Hopkins (1965) pp. 323–4, n. 54.

vulnerable. But the preference for memorializing daughters and wives was clearly culturally conditioned. Undoubtedly, the sentiments expressed often reflected the affective and emotional ties that bound parents to children and husbands to wives. Yet, the apparently sharp turn to classicizing verse for public representation of the lives of young women may also have been a manoeuvre toward a prized medium through which male commemorators could make highly nuanced statements about themselves and their households. The funerary epigram, that is, may have offered fathers and husbands the possibility not only of setting on display their own claims to a literary education but also of effectively aligning themselves and the *domus* they managed with the flow of social and religious discourse about masculinity and femininity in this age of cultural flux. For these reasons the recovery of the subjectivity of women from these texts may seem an enterprise no less daunting than the challenges presented to such a project by elite and patristic literature. On the other hand, it is not insignificant that the first dateable verse inscription from S. Agnese was almost surely composed by a woman—and that the self-assurance of that text resounds in later epitaphs.

CELEBRATING AGNES: IMPERIAL AND EPISCOPAL PATRONS

The earliest dateable *carmen epigraphicum* from the *coemeterium S. Agnetis* is a magnificent dedicatory epigram once inscribed on marble and installed in the ambulatory basilica funded by Constantina in the 340s. A poetic tour de force and blatant statement of Christian triumphalism, *Constantina deum venerans* not only adumbrated the complex political and religious motives behind the imperial building programme reshaping Rome's suburbs but also unapologetically promoted the social authority and literary sensibilities of a Roman woman in terms virtually unmatched in the city's epigraphic record.[31]

C onstantina deum venerans Christoque dicata
O mnibus impensis devota mente paratis
N umine divino multum Christoque iuvante
S acravi templum victricis virginis Agnes,

[31] 8.20752 = *CLE* 301 = *ILCV* 1768 = Ihm 84 = Ferrua (1942) 71. See also Carletti (2008) pp. 249–50, but with several misprints. The text survives now only in manuscript copies. For a recent presentation with further bibliography see De Santis (2010) p. 96. On Constantina, the eldest daughter of Constantine and Fausta, see *PLRE* 1, 'Constantina 2'. Born perhaps *c.*320, widowed in 337, Constantina was married to Caesar Gallus in 351. She died in Bithynia in 354 but was buried in a mausoleum (S. Costanza) adjoining the Via Nomentana basilica. On the dating see Trout (forthcoming).

T emplorum quod vincit opus terrenaque cuncta,
A urea quae rutilant summi fastigia tecti.
N omen enim Christi celebratur sedibus istis,
T artaream solus potuit qui vincere mortem
I nvectus caelo solusque inferre triumphum
N omen Adae referens et corpus et omnia membra
A mortis tenebris et caeca nocte levata.
D ignum igitur munus martyr devotaque Christo
E x opibus nostris per saecula longa tenebis,
O felix virgo, memorandi nominis Agnes.

I, Constantina, venerating God and consecrated to Christ,
having devoutly provided for all expenses,
with considerable divine inspiration and Christ assisting,
have dedicated the temple of the victorious virgin Agnes,
which surpasses the workmanship of temples and all earthly (buildings)
that the golden gables of lofty roofs illumine with reddish glow.
For the name of Christ is celebrated in this hall,
who alone was able to vanquish infernal death,
borne to heaven, and alone carry in the triumph,
restoring the name of Adam and the body and all the limbs
released from the shadows of death and dark night.
Therefore, martyr and devotee of Christ, this worthy gift
from our resources you will possess through the long ages,
O happy maid, of the noteworthy name Agnes.

As an exercise in (self)-portraiture *Constantina deum venerans* foregrounds the empress's piety, philanthropy, and poetic prowess, markers of social status increasingly valued by Rome's mid-century Christianizing aristocrats.[32] The epigram's acrostic (*Constantina Deo*), indulging the same penchant for clever wordplay evident in the poetry that Optatianus Porphyrius had addressed to her father two decades earlier,[33] is a clear sign, indeed the most obvious signal to casual readers, of Constantina's impulse to self-advertisement.[34] Her name, introducing the poem vertically as well as horizontally, frames her devotion and highlights her intimate relations with the *numen divinum* and Christ. The epigram's metrically meticulous verses were designed to grab attention as well as please readers of Vergil and Ovid.[35] The apostrophe of the final line, *O felix virgo*, for example, deftly transfers a Vergilian address from the *Aeneid*'s young Polyxena, a defiant Trojan princess brutally sacrificed to the shade of

[32] Succinctly at Salzman (2002) pp. 47–9; expansively at Cameron (2011). For an early and notable Roman epigraphic example see Cameron (2002) on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (d. 359), whose *fastigia Romae . . . tecta* (13–14) is reminiscent of Constantina's *summi fastigia tecti* (itself indebted to Vergil's *summi fastgia tecti* at *Aen.* 2.302).
[33] Barnes (1975); Levitan (1985).
[34] Zarker (1966) pp. 138–9; Sanders (1991) pp. 192–3.
[35] Carletti Colafranceso (1976) pp. 255–6, on prosody.

Achilles, to the Christian *virgo* Agnes, another victim (it appears) of the relentlessly male world of war and statecraft.[36] Yet it is Constantina not Agnes who dominates this epigram. While the latter appears here as little more than a shadowy *martyr* and *victrix virgo*, the empress's basilica rivals Christ as the real victor in these verses.[37] Furthermore, the acrostic signature and the implied *ego* of line four (*sacravi*) must also have announced the empress as poet,[38] a claim further advanced with a subtle nod to Ovid's *Tristia* 3.7.[39] Through a verbal cue recalling (sophisticated) readers to that poem, Constantina encouraged them to align her with Ovid's young poetess, Perilla, portrayed there by the Augustan poet as his disciple in the art of poetry. Moreover, as a poem that Ovid had constructed around the theme of his own and Perilla's literary immortality, *Tristia* 3.7 was a brilliant inter-text for a dedicatory epigram that trumpeted the (true) victory over death promised to those who, like Constantina, celebrated the *nomen Christi* in acts of piety and munificence. Clever poetry and vivid self-presentation went hand-in-hand.

Of all the *carmina* considered in this chapter *Constantina deum venerans* has the strongest claim to represent a (bold) conception of 'being female' fashioned by a late Roman woman. Whatever Agnes' story may have been in the 340s, on the walls of her basilica, on the threshold of a new age and imperial image, Constantina advertised foremost her own commitment to God (*devota mente*), realized in spiritually inspired action and articulated in classicizing poetry. Whether or not readers were aware of Constantina's widowhood at the time of the poem's composition or understood the empress's self-identification as *Christo dicata* to indicate a formal consecration,[40] her inscription's public marriage of piety and poetry would be re-enacted by a cross-section of society concerned to imagine and commemorate proper womanhood at S. Agnese and elsewhere in late ancient Rome.

Certainly piety and poetry are so entwined in the *elogium* that a generation later Damasus was installed near Agnes' tomb. Indeed, Damasus' closing lines, repositioning traditional imagery, configured poetic composition itself as prayer.[41] But Damasus also inscribed a version (our first) of Agnes' tale that

[36] *Aen.* 3.321: O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo.
[37] Compare line five's *quod vincit* and line eight's *potuit qui vincere.*
[38] Surviving manuscripts show both *sacravi* and *sacravit.* I follow here Ihm, *CLE*, *ILCV*, and the implication of the acrostic, against Ferrua (1942 and 1983), who preferred *sacravit.* For acrostic signatures in Vergil's poetry see Zarker (1966) pp. 129–31.
[39] Detected by Ihm (1895) p. 88. Ovid's line of praise (*Tristia* 3.7.20) is 'sola tuum vates Lesbia vincet opus [only the Lesbian poet will surpass your work]'. For a further echo of *Tristia* 3.7 compare Constantina's *victricis virginis Agnes* with Ovid's *teneris in virginis annis* (3.7.17); on the popularity of the *Tristia* as a source for verse *epitaphs* see Lissberger (1934) pp. 156 and 177–9. These and other points are further developed at Trout (forthcoming).
[40] So Ferrua (1942) p. 249.
[41] Reutter (2009) pp. 145–6.

balanced the young martyr's headstrong devotion with her reverence for traditional ideals of female sexual shame and honour.[42]

> Fama refert sanctos dudum retulisse parentes
> Agnen, cum lugubres cantus tuba concrepuisset,
> nutricis gremium subito liquisse puellam.
> sponte trucis calcasse minas rabiemq(ue) tyranni
> urere cum flammis voluisset nobile corpus.
> viribus inmensum parvis superasse timorem
> nudaque profusum crinem per membra dedisse
> ne domini templum facies peritura videret.
> O veneranda mihi, sanctum decus, alma, pudoris
> ut Damasi precibus faveas precor, inclyta martyr.
>
> Legend has it that a short time ago her holy parents reported that,
> when the trumpet had sounded its mournful music,
> the girl Agnes suddenly abandoned her nurse's lap.
> Freely she trod under foot the threats and madness of the savage tyrant
> when he wished to burn her noble body with flames.
> Despite her slight strength she vanquished the immense terror
> and set loose her hair to flow over her naked limbs—
> lest a countenance doomed to perish see the temple of the Lord.
> O kindly saint, worthy of my veneration, holy glory of modesty,
> I pray, renowned martyr, that you favour the prayers of Damasus.

The eroticized figure Agnes would become in Prudentius' *Peristephanon*[43] is Damasus' impetuous *puella*, initially hedged in by her parents and the nurse from whose lap she leaps. Indeed, the image of Agnes in *nutricis gremium* severely limits the metrically highlighted *puella* to its familial and filial connotations. Though she is preciously wilful (*sponte*), it is Damasus' praise of Agnes as *sanctum decus pudoris*, emphasized by the metrical caesura and stretching through a hemistich, that lingers at the poem's end and tames the tale that has gone before.[44] Thus an epigram that resonates with classicizing echoes[45] also ultimately celebrates Agnes' piety in rather conventional terms. To be sure, Damasus' Agnes reprises the subtle mix of devotion, assertiveness, and public action that energizes Constantina's self-portrait. At the same time, however, the (male) poet's parting gesture toward the young martyr's *pudor*, signalling her allegiance to virtues of modesty and propriety still esteemed by 'the

[42] 8.20753 = Ihm 40 = Ferrua (1942) 37.

[43] Burrus (1995); Jones (2007) for Agnes' fifth- and sixth-century domestication.

[44] It is, perhaps, possible to read the line as *alma pudoris* (mother of modesty/chastity), following Apuleius' description of Venus (*Met.* 4.30) as *alma totius orbis* (mother of the whole world), but this leaves *sanctum decus* orphaned. For *sanctum decus pudoris* see Weyman (1905) pp. 39–40; Reutter (2009) p. 82 ('heilige Zier der Keuschheit'); and Ferrua (1985) p. 40 ('santa gloria della virginità'). Elsewhere Damasus has *sanctus pudor*; see Ferrua (1942) no. 11 (*epitaphius sororis*). For *alma* as 'holy' or 'saint' see the references at Blaise (1954) 'almus.'

[45] Ihm p. 45; Weyman (1905) pp. 34–40.

patriarchal family and civic mores', inoculates her against the social disgrace such spectacular behaviour might otherwise have produced.[46]

Despite any ideological tensions holding them in strained balance, however, these two highly visible texts, an empress's epigram and a bishop's *elogium*, surely enhanced the appeal of metrical commemoration in fourth-century Rome—just as they revealed how classical poetry and familiar idioms of honour and praise might also collude in the remembrance of wives and daughters. Moreover, both texts forcefully recalled readers to the Christian promise of victory over death. That hope would inspire some of late Roman funerary epigraphy's most compelling imagery.

REMEMBERING WIVES AND DAUGHTERS

A good deal of funerary epigraphy is formulaic. Verse epitaphs, however, did hold out to commemorators the possibility of representing the individuality of the deceased—or at least of setting out their own views of feminine excellence and its rewards. The epitaphs of the young Evodia and Arcontia, preserving our only traces of their lives, demonstrate well that such convictions might diverge in ways unexpected in Christian Rome. Only a few years ago the fortuitous discovery of a photograph preserving the crucial final (lost) line of Evodia's epitaph completed the poem dedicated to her.[47] Like Arcontia, sister and co-commemorand of the *puer* Remus, Evodia died unwed and was commemorated by parents who composed or commissioned verses deeply indebted to Vergil and other classical poets. Moreover, like Arcontia's verses, Evodia's may reveal as much about her family's mourning and her society's expectations for the public articulation of grief as about Evodia's character or accomplishments. In this respect both epitaphs highlight the difficulty of finding the real lives of children in the texts that commemorate them.[48] One striking feature, however, does divide these two epitaphs, suggesting that convention did not fully override the expression in verse of a family's sorrow. Evodia's parents allowed her to proclaim her ascent to the celestial realm in terms increasingly characteristic of the age:[49]

> Ne tristes lacrimae ne pectora tundite vestra,
> O pater et mater! Nam regna celestia tango.

[46] Hagiographers were not always so conservative; see Burrus (2008) pp. 42–3.

[47] Colafrancesco (2007).

[48] Golden (1988) for the issues.

[49] 8.21015 supplemented by Colafrancesco (2007) = Carletti (2008) no. 120. *ILCV* 3420 = Lommatsch CLE 2018. The final line's *Christus* is expressed by a visually prominent chi-rho. For the challenges of scanning (as a pentameter) the sixth line, marked off as well by a subtle shift to the third person, see Colafrancesco (2007) p. 78, n. 4.

Non tristis Erebus, non pallida mortis imago,
sed requies secura tenet ludoque choreas
inter felices animas et amoena piorum.
Praestat haec omnia Xp(istus) q<u>ae Evodiam decorant.

No sad tears, beat not your breasts,
O father and mother! For I have reached the heavenly kingdoms.
Not mournful Erebus, not the pallid likeness of death,
but serene repose possesses me and I dance the chorus
amid happy souls and the pleasant places of the pious.
All these things that honour Evodia, Christ bestows.

Arcontia's family, however, hard struck by a double loss, expressed a far more sober vision of what death might mean:[50]

Epitafium Remo et Arcontiae qui natione Galla germani fraters (Latin cross)
adalti una die mortui et pariter tumulati sunt
Haec tenet urna duos sexu sed dispare fratres
quos uno Lachesis mersit acerba die.
Ora puer dubiae signans lanugine vestis,
vix hiemes licuit cui geminasse novem,
nec thalamis longinqua soror trieteride quinta
Taenareas crudo funere vidit aquas.
Ille Remi Latio fictum de sanguine nomen,
sed Gallos claro germine traxit avos.
Ast haec Graiugenam resonans Arcontia linguam
nomina virgineo non tulit apta choro.

An epitaph for Remus and Arcontia, siblings born in Gaul and
raised together, who died in the space of a day and were buried in like manner.
This urn holds two siblings, though different in sex,
whom pitiless Lachesis engulfed in a single day.
A boy showing cheeks with down of delicate covering
who was permitted to double scarcely nine winters.
And a sister not far from marriage in her fifth three-year span
(who) has looked upon the Taenarean waters in an untimely death.
That one assumed the name, fashioned from Latian blood, of Remus,
yet drew his Gallic forefathers from famous stock.
But this one, Arcontia, resounding a Grecian tongue,
bore a name ill suited to the maiden chorus.

Both poems press into service classical images and Vergilian phrases, but to quite different ends. By the late fourth century the shining *caelestia regna*, now

[50] 8.20819 + 8.21522 a and a' = *CLE* 1355 = *ILCV* 266. On the identification of 8.21522 a and a' see Cugusi (2007) p. 124. Reading with Ferrua (1983) *adulti* (<*adolescere*) for the stone's *adalti*. The subscription offers a date of 442: Depositi nonis Novemb. consul(atu) Dioscori v.c., making it the latest dated text considered here and the latest dated epitaph for Gauls at Rome; see Noy (2000) p. 209.

Evodia's home, had emerged as vivid shorthand for the astral dwelling place of Christian souls.[51] In Evodia's verses, moreover, that heavenly realm is enlivened by *loca amoena* imagery that so artfully evokes Anchises' description of his pleasant home in Vergil's underworld—*amoena piorum/concilia Elysiumque colo*—that her epitaph has been a touchstone for scholars searching for 'classical influence' in Christian inscriptions.[52] Arcontia's verses, too, are deeply indebted to Vergil.[53] But the devastating power of Erebus and *pallida mors*,[54] adamantly rejected by Evodia's poet, reigns unchecked in Arcontia's pitiless Lachesis and Taenarean waters.[55] No celestial Elysian fields receive her; rather Arcontia's death is a life cut short, a marriage never to be made.[56] If Christianity, filtered through classical imagery and concentrated into a christogram, offered Evodia's parents consolation in their grief, it seems to have failed the family of Arcontia. Death, arriving before its time, denied her the bridal chamber that still might seem to be the only proper end of girlhood. The news of Agnes' greater victory, announced in the Damasan *elogium*, had, it seems, fallen on deaf ears.

Arcontia's grim memorial, however, is exceptional. The epitaph of Theodora *signo* Afrodite, composed in the final years of Damasus' pontificate, better suggests how poets and commemorators at S. Agnese found inspiration not only in the bishop's wilful Agnes but also in Constantina's bravura. Deceased at 21 and commemorated by her husband, Theodora ascended to a heavenly paradise by living the kind of life only implicit in the roughly contemporary and thematically akin epitaph of the young Evodia.[57]

Theodora que vixit annos XXI M VII
D XXIII in pace est bisomu
A mplificam sequitur vitam dum casta Afrodite,
F ecit ad astr|a viam; Christi modo gaudet in aula.
R estitit haec mundo | semper caelestia quaerens.
O ptima servatrix legis fideique | magistra
D e<di>dit egregiam sanctis per secula mentem.

[51] Colafrancesco (2007) pp. 79–80, with comparanda; Carletti (2008) pp. 224–5.

[52] *Aen.* 5.734–735. Lattimore (1942) quote p. 313; Hoogma (1959) pp. 192–200, considering the influence in structure (imperative . . . *non* . . . *sed*) as well as language of *Aen.* 5.733–5, a deceased father's words to a living son (*nate*), now inverted.

[53] Hoogma (1959) p. 362: Cugusi (2007) p. 159 and p. 173.

[54] For line three's Vergilian and Ovidian forerunners see Hoogma (1959) p. 195; Colafrancesco (2007) pp. 81–2; and Carletti (2008) p. 225.

[55] The Fate, Lachesis, is *dura* at Ovid, *Trist.* 5.10.35 and *invida* at Martial 10.53.3. At Ver. *Geor.* 4.467 Orpheus passes through the *Taenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis.*

[56] For the tradition see Lattimore (1942) pp. 192–4.

[57] 8.20799 = *CLE* 669 = Ihm 85 = *ILCV* 316. For emendation to *de<di>dit* see Diehl at *ILCV* 316 and Carletti Colafrancesco (1976) pp. 257–8. The stone's subscription yields the date of 382: dep(osita) die . . . /Antonio et Syacrio con. Note that the poem was not arranged on the stone by lines of verse but in seven non-metrical lines, indicated here by the vertical marks, wherein a wider space signalled the beginning of a new hexameter. On Afrodite as a *signum* see Ferrua (1983) 20799.

I nde per eximios paradisi | regnat odores,
T empore continuo vernant ubi gramina rivis, |
E xpectatque deum superas quo surgat ad auras.
H oc posuit corpus tumulo | mortalia linquens,
F undavitque locum coniunx Evagrius instans.

Theodora, who lived twenty-one years, seven months,
twenty-three days, is in peace in a double tomb.
During the time that chaste Aphrodite pursued a splendid life,
she paved a pathway to the stars; she rejoices now in the palace of Christ.
She stood firm against the world, ever seeking heavenly things.
An excellent guardian of the law and teacher of faith,
she surrendered her noble mind to the saints through the ages.
Thus she reigns amid the choice fragrances of paradise,
where the grasses ever bloom along the streams,
and awaits God so that she may rise up to the lofty breezes.
Leaving her mortal remains behind she set her body in this tomb,
and her husband, Evagrius, assiduously attending, secured the place.

Once more Vergilian and classical echoes flourish.[58] Whether or not *casta Afrodite* playfully recalls Ovid's *casta Minerva*, the epigram's verbal juxtaposition is striking.[59] Lines six and seven, describing Theodora's astral home, are redolent with *loca amoena* imagery similar to that just met in Evodia's epitaph.[60] Moreover, some phrases appear designed to prompt the kind of intertextual reading encouraged by *Constantina deum venerans*. Vergil's Apollo had observed of the young Iulus' *virtus*: *sic itur ad astra*, crediting the prince's future apotheosis to a combination of merit and divine aid not unlike that affirmed in Theodora's epitaph.[61] In a charming reversal, Theodora's assumption that she would eventually (and corporally) 'rise up to the lofty breezes [*superas quo surgat ad auras*]' should have induced some readers to contrast her confidence with the Sibyl's disclaimer to an underworld-bound Aeneas: 'to recall one's steps and pass out to the upper air, this is the task [*sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras/hoc opus*].' The same poet's ill-fated Eurydice, had been about to do just that (*redditaque Eurydice superas veniebat ad auras*), in fact, when Orpheus' backward glance cost them the victory.[62] Like Constantina, Theodora's poet expected smart readers.

The panache on display in such gestures suits well this poem's projection of a young woman whose self-assurance not only echoes Constantina's but also seems fully at home in the Rome of Damasus and Jerome, whose circles

[58] Ihm (1895) p. 90; Diehl (1925–31) p. 73.
[59] *Am.* 1.7.18, noted by Ihm (1895).
[60] Including a verbal parallel: *semper caelestia quaerens* and *regna celestia tango*.
[61] *Aen.* 9.641. A verb preceding *in astra via* ends a pentameter line twice in Ovid (*Her.* 16.72; *Ep. ex Pont.* 2.9.62) and once in Propertius (3.18.34), in each case describing heavenly ascent.
[62] Ver. *Aen.* 6.128 and *Geo.* 4.486. Further comparanda at Hoogma (1959) p. 279; Lassère (2011) p. 534.

included a number of aristocratic women renowned for their ascetically grounded piety.[63] Theodora's name, prominent in the superscription, is reinforced by the announcement of her informal *signum* in the poem's first line and, more subtly, by an acrostic—*Afrodite H(onesta) F(emina)*—that also proclaims her social respectability.[64] A series of strong verbs—*fecit*, *restitit*, *dedit*—highlights her determination. Her spiritual commitments, and perhaps ascetic tendencies, are placed on display in her resistance to the *mundus*, her exemplary obedience to Scripture, her dedication to the martyrs, and the qualifying *casta*, whose artful elision with her *signum* makes name and virtue one.[65] Her epitaph is, it has been noted, equally remarkable for its unequivocal insistence on the direct ascent of Theodora's soul and the anticipated final resurrection of her body—a view of the Christian afterlife soon to be couched in quite similar expressions in the poetry of Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola.[66] Even if the verses of Theodora's epitaph are not her own composition, there is sufficient idiosyncrasy and creativity in them, as in those of Evodia and Arcontia, to suspect that they reflect some facet of the self-understanding of the young woman they honour.

But suspicion is not proof. The fourth- and fifth-century metrical epitaphs of the young women of the *coemeterium S. Agnetis*, unless it can be shown to be otherwise, must be read as the compositions or commissions of male commemorators. First and foremost, therefore, they should inscribe the self-interest of Roman men for whom careful household management had so long been a source of 'moral authority' and the modesty of their wives and daughters 'of use . . . only if it was widely acknowledged'.[67] Indeed, even in the sixth century, when marriage itself was being reconceived as a mutual and eternal commitment, elite Christian men are said to have found it advantageous to invite scrutiny of their households, validating their claims to social power by exposing the moral and sexual integrity sheltered within their

[63] For the issues, see, e.g. E. Clark (1981); Salzman (2002) pp. 166–9; with Cooper (2007a) pp. 60–1, on anachronistic reconstructions of the fourth and fifth centuries that marginalize conservative but 'exuberant senatorial Christianity', and Cain (2009) for the complications presented by Jerome's self-interest.
[64] Cameron (1985) on *signa* as 'domestic' names.
[65] In 382 the term should have signalled modesty and faithfulness, though eventually some Christian writers could hope to edge *castitas* toward sexual continence; see Cooper (2007a) pp. 175–86.
[66] Kajanto (1978) pp. 45–6; e.g. Prud. *Cath.* 10, where bodies *rapientur in auras* (43) and the dead inhabit the *caelestia regna* (86), while prior to the resurrection of the flesh *animae* enjoy the floral paradise of Abraham's bosom (153–7); and Paul. *Carm.* 31, where Christ calls us *in astra* (190) and paradise is a scented grove (587: *odoratum nemus*). See also Paulinus' Nolan epitaph for the young Cynegius (*ILCV* 3482), whose joyous soul *sancta placidae requiescit in aula* as he waits judgement day.
[67] Sessa (2012) pp. 35–62, quote p. 45; Cooper (1996) quote p. 13.

walls.[68] Allusive verse epitaphs, then, may appear to be of limited value for reconstituting the real lives of late antique women.

Yet, most funerary epigrams also offer a view of late Roman society less restricted than that framed by the letter collections of senatorial aristocrats or the debates of patristic writers—their verses often articulating the ideals of middling Romans for whom funerary cult and the veneration of the martyrs may have been the primary public expressions of their Christianity.[69] The preference among this population for memorializing daughters and young wives, a choice grounded in the gendered power structures of ancient society as well as affection, reveals strategies of representation that set a high premium on a sentimental paternalism always capable of restricting the freedom of those subject to it. At the same time, however, these metrical epitaphs, individualized and often idiosyncratic, portray agency in exceptionally vivid imagery. Evagrius allowed Theodora to pave her own pathway to the stars; Evodia could boast *regna celestia tango*. Such proclamations of victory, already endorsed on the Via Nomentana by the spectacular epigram of a Constantinian empress, may have initially eased the pains of bereavement, but—inscribed and displayed—should also have invigorated the possibilities of being female in late ancient Rome. Inclusive and spirited, the verse epitaphs of S. Agnese offer themselves as congenial guides to an ideological terrain that invites re-mapping.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barbini, P.M., 2001. S. Agnetis basilica, coemeterium. In La Regina, A., ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae: Suburbium*, vol. 1. Rome: Quasar, pp. 33–6.

Barbini, P.M. and F. Severini, 2002. Risultati archeologici del nuovo saggio di scavo 1999 nella basilica cimiteriale di S. Agnese. In F. Guidobaldi, F. and Guidobaldi, A. G., eds, *Ecclesiae Urbis: Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV–X secolo), Roma, 4–10 settembre 2000*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, pp. 757–70.

Barnes, T.D., 1975. Publilius optatianus porfyrius. *American Journal of Philology* 96: 173–86.

Blaise, A., 1954. *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*. Paris: Librairie des Méridiens.

Brandenburg, H., 2005. *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Buecheler, F., 1895–7. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica, Vols. I–II*, 2nd edn. 1964. Leipzig: Teubner.

Burrus, V., 1995. Reading Agnes: the rhetoric of gender in Ambrose and Prudentius. *JECS* 3: 25–46.

[68] Cooper (2007a) and (2007b).

[69] MacMullen (2009) and (2010).

Burrus, V., 2008. *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cain, A., 2009. *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cameron, A., 1985. Polyonomy in the late Roman aristocracy: the case of Petronius Probus. *JRS* 75: 164–82.

Cameron, A., 2002. The funeral of Junius Bassus. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 139: 288–92.

Cameron, A., 2011. *The Last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carletti, C., 1977. Aspetti biometrici del matrimonio nelle iscrizioni cristiane di Roma. *Augustinianum* 17: 39–51.

Carletti, C., 1998. Un mondo nuovo: Epigrafia funeraria dei cristiani a Roma in età postcostantiniana. *Vetera Christianorum* 35: 39–67.

Carletti, C., 2008. *Epigrafia dei cristiani in occidente dal III al VII secolo: Ideologia e prassi*. Bari: Edipuglia.

Carletti Colafrancesco, P., 1976. Note metriche su alcuni epigrammi cristiani di Roma datati. *Rendiconti delle sedute dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 31: 249–81.

Clark, E., 1981. Ascetic renunciation and feminine advancement: a paradox of late ancient Christianity. *Anglican Theological Review* 63: 240–57.

Clark, E., 1998. The lady vanishes: dilemmas of a feminist historian after the 'linguistic turn'. *Church History* 67: 1–31.

Clark, G., 1993. *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Lifestyles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clark, G., 2011. The fathers and the children. In *Body and Gender, Soul and Reason in Late Antiquity*. Franham: Ashgate.

Colafrancesco, P., 2007. Un caso fortunato: dall'integrazione alla ricomposizione di CE 2018. *Invigilata Lucernis* 29: 77–83.

Cooper, K., 1996. *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cooper, K., 2007a. *The Fall of the Roman Household*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, K., 2007b. Closely watched households: visibility, exposure and private power in the Roman *domus*. *Past and Present* 197: 3–33.

Cugusi, P., 1996. *Aspetti letterari dei Carmina Latin Epigraphica*, 2nd edn. Bologna: Pàtron.

Cugusi, P., 2007. *Per un nuovo Corpus dei Carmina Latina Epigraphica: Materiali e discussioni*. Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: scienze morali, storiche e filologiche. Memorie, 9.22.1. Rome.

De Santis, P., 2010. *Sanctorum Monumenta: 'Aree sacre' del suburbio di Roma nella documentazione epigrafica IV–VII secolo*. Bari: Edipuglia.

Desken-Weiland, J., 2004. Ricerche sui committenti e destinatari dei sarcofagi paleocristiani a Roma. In Bisconti, F. and Brandenburg, H., eds, *Sarcofagi tardoantichi, paleocristiani e altomedievali: Atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia Cristiana École Française de Rome, 8 maggio 2002*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, pp. 149–53.

Diefenbach, S., 2011. Kaiserkult und Totenkult: Konstantin und die christliche Sakraltopographie Roms. In Ehling, K. and Weber, G., eds, *Konstantin der Grosse: Zwischen Sol und Christus*. Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern.

Diehl, E., 1925–31. *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, Parts I–III. Berlin, Weidmann.

Evans-Grubbs, J., 2009. Marriage and family relationships in the late Roman west. In Rousseau, P., ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 201–19.

Ferrua, A., 1942. *Epigrammata Damasiana*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.

Ferrua, A., 1978. Lapide con due iscrizioni importanti a sant' Agnese fuori le mura. In *Miscellanea Amato Pietro Frutaz*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto, pp. 57–64.

Ferrua, A., 1983. *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae, Vol.* 8. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.

Ferrua, A., 1985. *Damaso e i martiri di Roma*. Vatican City: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra.

Fiocchi Nicolai, V., 2002. *Basilica Marci, Coemeterium Marci, Basilica Coemeterii Balbinae*: A proposito della nuova basilica circiforme della Via Ardeatina e della funzione funeraria delle chiese 'a deambulatorio' del suburbio Romano. In Guidobaldi, F. and Guidobaldi, A., eds, *Ecclesiae Urbis: Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma IV–X secolo. Roma, 4–10 settembre 2000, Vol. 2*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, pp. 1177–1201.

Frier, B.W., 2006. Marriage and motherhood in Roman Egypt. In Faris S. and Lundeen, L., eds, *Ten Years of the Agnes Kirsopp Lake Michels Lectures at Bryn Mawr College*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr Commentaries, pp. 1–31.

Golden M., 1988. Did the ancients care when their children died? *Greece & Rome* 35: 152–63.

Hopkins, K., 1965. The age of Roman girls at marriage. *Population Studies* 18: 309–27.

Hoogma, R.P., 1959. *Der Einfluss Vergils auf die Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Ihm, M., 1895. *Damasi Epigrammata*. Leipzig: Teubner.

Jones, H., 2007. Agnes and Constantia: domesticity and cult patronage in the *Passion of Agnes*. In Cooper, K. and Hillner, J., eds, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 115–39.

Kajanto, I., 1978. The hereafter in ancient Christian epigraphy and poetry. *Arctos* 12: 27–53.

Lassère, J.-M., 2011. *Manuel d'épigraphie romaine*. 3rd edn. Paris: Picard.

Lattimore, R., 1942. *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Levitan, W., 1985. Dancing at the end of the rope: Optatian Porfyry and the field of Roman verse. *TAPA* 115: 245–82.

Lissberger, E., 1934. *Das Fortleben der Römischen Elegiker in den Carmina Epigraphica*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Lommatzsch, E., 1926. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica. Vol. III: Supplementum*. Leipzig: Teubner.

MacMullen, R., 2009. *The Second Church: Popular Christianity A.D. 200–400*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

MacMullen, R., 2010. Christian ancestor worship in Rome. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129: 597–613.

Moreau, J. and Marrou, H.I., 1967. *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres. Vol. 4: Supplementum*. Berlin: Weidmann.

Nordberg, H., 1963. Biometrical notes. *Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae* 2.2: 1–76.

Noy, D., 2000. *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers*. London: Duckworth.

Picard, J.-C., 1998. Étude sur l'emplacement des tombes des papes du IIIe au Xe siècle. In *Évêques, saints et cités en Italie et en Gaule: Études d'archéologie et d'histoire*. Rome: École française de Rome, pp. 197–254.

Pietri, C. and Pietri, L., eds, *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire, ii. Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313–604)*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1999 [pt 1], 2000 [pt 2].

Reutter, U., 2009. *Damasus, Bischof von Rom*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Sághy, M., 2000. *Scinditur in partes populus*: Pope Damasus and the martyrs of Rome. *Early Medieval Europe* 9: 273–87.

Salzman, M., 2002. *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sanders, G., 1991. *Lapides memores. Païens et chrétiens face à la mort: Le témoignage de l'épigraphie funéraire latine*. ed. Donati, A., Pikhaus, D. and Uytfanghe, M. van. Faenza: Fratelli Lega.

Scheidel, W., 2007. Roman funerary commemoration and the age at first marriage. *CPh* 102: 389–402.

Sessa, K., 2012. *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shaw, B., 1984. Latin funerary epigraphy and family life in the later Roman empire. *Historia* 33: 457–97.

Shaw, B., 1987. The age of Roman girls at marriage: some reconsiderations. *JRS* 77: 30–46.

Shaw, B., 1991. The cultural meaning of death: age and gender in the Roman family. In Kertzer, D. and Saller, R., eds, *The Family in Italy From Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 66–90.

Shaw, B., 1996. Seasons of death: aspects of mortality in Imperial Rome. *JRS* 86: 100–38.

Shaw, B., 2002. 'With whom I lived': measuring Roman marriage. *Ancient Society* 32: 195–242.

Trout, D., 2001. The verse epitaphs of Petronius Probus: competitive commemoration in late-fourth-century Rome. *New England Classical Journal* 28: 157–76.

Trout, D., 2010. Borrowed verse and broken narrative: agency, identity, and the Bethesda sarcophagus of Bassa. In Elsner, J. and Huskinson, J., eds, *Life, Death and Representation: Some New Work on Roman Sarcophagi*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 337–58.

Valentini, R. and Zucchetti, G., 1942. *Codice topografico della città di Roma. Vol. 2*. Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo.

Weyman, C., 1905. *Vier Epigramme des hl. Papstes Damasus I*. Munich.

Zarker, J., 1966. Acrostic *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. *Orpheus* 13: 125–51.

APPENDIX: COMMEMORANDS AND COMMEMORATORS IN 14 VERSE EPITAPHS FROM S. AGNESE

ICUR 8/*CLE*	Commemorand	Commemorator(s)	Varia
Male Commemorands			
20798/ 668	Celerinus *praesbyter*	unattested	consular date 381
20819/ 1355	Remus (and Arcontia) *germani fratres*	(parents)	consular date 442
20919	Augustus *presbyter*	unattested	
21048/ 1756	Flavius Merobaudes *orator*	unattested	died after 443
21130	[*pr*]*aeclarus* (m?)		fragmentary
Female Commemorands			
20799/ 669	Theodora Afrodite	Evagrius *coniunx*	consular date 382 *vixit annos XXI*
20811/ 1753a	Urbica	(parents)	consular date 397 quasi metrical *ann. XII*
20819/ 1355	(Remus and) Arcontia *germani fratres*	(parents)	consular date 442
21015/ 2018	Euodia	(parents)	
21049	*domui meae regent* (materfamilias)	Fl(avius) Salvius	
21306	Tecla *coniu*[*nx*]	(husband)	
21513	*in pace recepta*	*parentes*	fragmentary
21516	*fidelis coniunx*/*casta*	(husband)	
21517	*haec*/*hanc* (f?)		
21522/ 2236	*haec* (f?)		

Too fragmentary for inclusion are *ICUR* 8.21515, 21519, 21521, and 21523.

13

Self-Portrait as a Landscape: Ausonius and His Herediolum

Oliver Nicholson

BEING CHRISTIAN IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

Being Christian in the fourth century must have meant navigating an ocean of uncertainties and undistributed middles. Christians had consistently claimed that they alone knew how to offer practical worship to the force which had made the universe out of nothing and that the worship of intermediate entities was at best futile, at worst downright destructive. For Lactantius at the beginning of the century, God alone was 'the builder of the world and the manufacturer of all things which make it up or exist in it', so he alone should be worshipped.[1] God's servants 'neither are gods, nor call themselves gods, nor wish to be worshipped, seeing that they do nothing apart from the will and command of God'.[2] Worshipping demons, forces which were not the servants of God, had baleful effects.[3] Only in Christianity was there a concatenation of practical wisdom and rational worship.[4] Constantine had given Christians like Lactantius the opportunity to put their convictions into practice; the sacrifices which had since time immemorial ensured the security of cities in the Roman world were made illegal.[5]

But not all the implications of Christian commitment were immediately obvious. Was it un-Christian to celebrate New Year's Day?[6] Resolving such dilemmas took time and reflection, and in the interim the church did not relax

[1] Inst. I. 6, 16. [2] *Inst.* I, 7, 5. [3] *Inst.* II, 14–16. [4] *Inst.* IV, 3–4.
[5] *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 10, 2, issued by Constans I in 341 to the Vicarius of Italy, threatens 'whosoever will have dared to observe sacrifices, contrary to the law of the divine prince our father and this the command of our clemency'; cf. Bradbury (1994).
[6] Markus (1990) pp. 103–6.