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## PACATUS THE POET DOING PLINIAN PROSE

ROGER REES

Comparison is a great engine of praise. To say “A is better than B” implies a spectrum, calibrated according to received opinion and invoked to authorize value judgements. And if B is selected with care, A can benefit a lot from the juxtaposition. In his treatise on how to praise an emperor (*Basilikos Logos*), Menander Rhetor is very precise on how to handle the figure: “You should then proceed to the most complete comparison (*synkrisis*), examining his reign in comparison with preceding reigns, not disparaging them (that is bad craftsmanship) but admiring them while granting perfection to the present” (2.377, trans. Russell and Wilson).<sup>1</sup> Comparison is a regular strategy in the *Panegyricus* and the *Panegyrici Latini*: compared with Titus, Pliny’s Trajan is deemed more worthy of deification (*Pan.* 35.4); he is more thrifty than Nerva (51.2); of more significance than him in granting consulships (61.7); the deified Nerva must be happy to be pushed into second place in a comparison with Trajan (89.1). Constantine is said to be more prudent than his father Constantius (VII[6]5.2) and to have surpassed his achievements (XII[9]24.4). But if comparison was a standard rhetorical device, taught in schools and practised in auditoria, the act of anthologising the texts of the *Panegyrici* put them next to each other; juxtaposed, they, too, invite comparison.

The anthology is not organised chronologically, or at least only at its start. A comparison between the manuscript sequence of the speeches (see the Introduction p. 151) and their chronological sequence is instructive (see table):

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1 Maguinness 1932.45–53. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

**Chronological Sequence of the Speeches in the *Panegyrici Latini***

<i>MSS</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Author/Emperor</i>	<i>Location</i>
I	100	Pliny to Trajan	Rome
X	289	Anon. to Maximian	Trier
XI	291	Anon. to Maximian	Trier
VIII	297	Anon. to Constantius	Trier
IX	298	Eumenius to Constantius	Autun
VII	307	Anon. to Constantine + Maximian	Trier
VI	310	Anon. to Constantine	Trier
V	311	Anon. to Constantine	Trier
XII	313	Anon. to Constantine	Trier
IV	321	Nazarius to Constantine	Rome (?)
III	362	Claudius Mamertinus to Julian	Constantinople
II	389	Pacatus to Theodosius	Rome

The only speech in the *XII Panegyrici Latini* not to change position when manuscript sequence is replaced by chronological order is Pliny's.<sup>2</sup> Not only is the *Panegyricus* the biggest work of the twelve by far: at twice the size of the next biggest (the *maximus*) and addressed to Trajan (the Optimus), it is the first in chronological and manuscript sequences (the *primus*)—the megalith, immovable.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, the closest speech to it in size moves the most when chronology resequences the manuscripts, from second in the transmission tradition to twelfth and last in time. Given the extravagance of this shift, one of the effects of the juxtaposition of the speech to Theodosius by Latinus Pacatus Drepanius with Pliny's is to invite comparison of the two.<sup>4</sup> We might, for example, pause to observe the career paths of Pliny and Pacatus which, if not exactly parallel, share similar trajectories: without wanting to suggest patterns of cause and effect, we can

2 On the tendency for modern editions to present the speeches in chronological order, see Vessey 2010.273 and Rees 2012c, where I offer a political reading of the sequence.

3 On Trajan as Optimus, see B. Gibson 2010.130–31.

4 N.b. Turcan-Verkerk 2003.65 on the Spanishness of Trajan and Theodosius. Author, emperor, and location (Rome) are detailed in the manuscript *excipit*.

note Pliny's success under Domitian, his consulship and speech to Trajan, and his provincial appointment. In Pacatus's case, some time spent under the rule of Magnus Maximus in Gaul, his delegation to address his speech to Theodosius, then the proconsulship of Africa, and, the last we hear, the position of *comes rei priuatae* ("count of the privy purse") to Theodosius in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> The imperative for critical enquiry's comparative method is more urgent still if René Pichon's suggestion that Pacatus was himself the editor of the *Panegyrici* collection is upheld.<sup>6</sup> What verdict could the collection's Bordelais editor expect from critical enquiry when his designated comparandum and keynote was the *maximus optimus primus*?<sup>7</sup>

Given the confidence required to disrupt chronology and juxtapose Pacatus's speech with Pliny's, we might hasten to dismiss the confession of rhetorical inadequacy in his opening chapter—"rudem hunc et incultum Transalpini sermonis horrorem," "the crude and uncultivated roughness of my Transalpine mode of speech," II[12]1.3)—as a disingenuous *modestia* formula.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that this phrase reprises an opening gambit played seventy-six years earlier by another Gallic orator addressing Constantine.<sup>9</sup> This is a bright but tiny thread of an insistent web of intertextual echoes which obstruct clear views of linear developments within the collection. Pliny looms large in this respect too, for juxtaposition is not the only means by which Pacatus's speech engages with the *Panegyricus*: frequent lexical echoes accentuate an affinity between the two. For example, Pacatus's commendation of the manner of Theodosius's entry into Rome reprises some diction from Pliny's account of Trajan's: where Pliny wrote "triumphum . . . de superbia principum egisti" ("You conducted a triumph over the arrogance of emperors," *Pan.* 22.2), Pacatus has *de superbia triumpharis* ("You triumphed over arrogance," II[12]47.3; Pichon 1906a.244–45). The interpretative possibilities are various: in terms

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5 Chadwick 1955.29–30, Lippold 1968, Matthews 1971, and Turcan-Verkerk 2003.149–52.

6 Pichon 1906a and b, welcomed by, e.g., Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994.6–7, Paschoud 2002.349, and Turcan-Verkerk 2003.62–65; cautiously entertained by Vessey 2010.271; cf. the scepticism of Lippold 1968. If Pichon's hypothesis is wrong, the collection's editor must have been sympathetic to Pacatus.

7 On Bordeaux as Pacatus's home, see II(12)2.1; Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994.437–38.

8 Adams 2007.192, 244; on Gallic Latin in late antiquity, 259; on the "inadequacy" formula, Menander Rhetor *Basilikos Logos* 368. Vessey 2010.277 characterises Pacatus as "impeccably well spoken."

9 "Ex illo fonte et capite [et] facundiae imitatio nostra deriuat," "Our imitation derives from that font and source of eloquence," XII(9)1.2.

of political ideology, the intertext casts Theodosius as neo-Trajanic, a conception furthered elsewhere by Pacatus when, as we shall see below, he figures his addressee's reign as a welcome replacement for the tyranny of Magnus Maximus, broadly recalling Pliny's presentation of Trajan's rule following Domitian's. High politics aside, the *superbia* intertext also helps to confirm Pacatus's speech *qua* distinguished Latin epideictic oratory—a worthy heir to a noble tradition, aware of its legacy.<sup>10</sup> But while juxtaposition of the two speeches and echoes of Pliny in Pacatus can suggest a deferential attitude in Pacatus towards the *Panegyricus* according to which the later speech gains authority and status by comparison with the earlier, the editorial decision to put Pacatus's speech second in the collection also highlights some differences between the two.

In modern scholarship, the style of Pliny's *Panegyricus* has drawn some famously hostile fire, but in a volume such as this, it should bear repeating that the speech had sufficient late antique admirers for it to be anthologised.<sup>11</sup> Pliny's concern for the speech's style is evident both in the *Panegyricus* itself and in *Epistles* 3.18 in particular, where he claims a variety in stylistic colour across the speech that some moderns have found difficult to detect (Gamberini 1983.412). It is certainly more dynamic at times than others, and at its sparkiest, affects convincingly the form of a live delivery, with vocatives, questions, and exclamations (e.g., Durry 1938.40). Repetitions of words and constructions and reduplications of figures of thought abound;<sup>12</sup> the lexis of the *Panegyricus*, like that of *Epistles* Books 1–9, includes poeticisms, but usually in isolation, rarely evoking a specific text.<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to gauge accurately the overall original impact of these stylistic characteristics given the lack of survival of any other Latin

10 Other examples of similarly acute evocation of the *Panegyricus*: “*duas res diuersissimas iunxi metum et temeritatem*” (“I have joined two most disparate things—fear and temerity,” II[12]2.2), recalling “*iunxisti enim ac miscuisti res diuersissimas, securitatem olim imperantis et incipientis pudorem*” (“For you joined and mixed most disparate things—the confidence of one who has ruled a long while and the modesty of a beginner,” *Pan.* 24.1). “*Quid tua intererat te principem fieri, qui futurus eras in imperatore privatus?*” (“What did it matter to you to become emperor, you who were going to be a private citizen while emperor?” II[12]12.5) recalling “*iam imperator . . . et . . . quantum ad te pertinet, privatus*” (“Now emperor and, as far as you were concerned, a private citizen,” *Pan.* 9.3).

11 Some memorable broadsides: Syme 1958.114, Sherwin-White 1969.77, 82, and Seager 1984.129. See Fedeli 1989 for further bibliography.

12 Durry 1938.47–48, Gamberini 1983.382–85, and Hutchinson 2011.

13 Durry 1938.53–59, Gamberini 1983.458–60, 517–24, Rees 2004.34. On the methodological hazards of labelling vocabulary “poetic,” see Durry 1938.55 and Hine 2005.

epideictic oratory from the period, but if we can have any confidence in the pronouncements of Martial and Pliny himself, we might consider the speech an attempt to transform a rhetorical type considered dull in its time whose style underwent transformation as much as its content.<sup>14</sup> As such, Pliny's is seen to be a conscious attempt to commemorate, ideologize, and aestheticize: to create political *belles lettres* that will have a shelf life long after the regime it celebrates.

Pliny dilates considerably on the newness of his mode of speech to Trajan, eager to differentiate it from the oratory of previous years. The key passage occurs early (*Pan.* 1.6–2.3):

. . . omnibus quae dicentur a me libertas fides ueritas constet, tantumque a specie adulationis absit gratiarum actio mea quantum abest a necessitate. equidem non consuli modo, sed omnibus ciuibus enitendum reor, ne quid de principe nostro ita dicant, ut idem illud de alio dici potuisse uideatur. quare abeant ac recedant uoces illae, quas metus exprimebat. nihil, quale ante, dicamus, nihil enim, quale antea, patimur; nec eadem de principe palam, quae prius praedicemus, neque enim eadem secreto quae prius loquimur. discernatur orationibus nostris diuersitas temporum, et ex ipso genere gratiarum agendarum intellegatur, cui, quando sint actae. nusquam ut deo, nusquam ut numini blandiamur; non enim de tyranno sed de ciue, non de domino sed de parente loquimur.

. . . [grant that] freedom, trust, truth be in everything I will say, that my thanksgiving be as far from the appearance of adulation as it is from necessity. Indeed, not only the consul but all citizens should strive to say nothing about our emperor which it seems could have been said about any predecessor. Therefore, let those voices which fear used to extort be gone and withdraw. Let us say nothing such as before, for we experience nothing such as before; let us not proclaim in public the same things about the emperor as before, for we do not say the same things in

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14 Mart. *Epig.* 10.72, Plin. *Epist.* 3.13 and 18, *Pan.* 2, discussed below.

secret as before. Let the change in times be seen in our speeches, and from the very form of our thanksgiving, let it be understood to whom and when thanks are being given. Nowhere let us flatter him like a god, like a divinity; for we speak not about a tyrant but a citizen, not about a master but a parent.

The style of the passage puts down a marker for the speech. Simple pairing (*abeant ac recedant*) is less frequent here than the extensive use of dualism of expression in cola (*tantum . . . quantum; non . . . modo sed . . . ; ita . . . ut; quale . . . quale . . . ; quae prius . . . quae prius*); the interplay between negation and affirmation drives the expressions on, and the jussive subjunctives orchestrate the impression of a shared experience of Domitianic and Trajanic rule (Gamberini 1983.381–85). Some of these stylistic hallmarks can be seen in a passage which appears similarly early in Pacatus's speech (II[12]2.2–4):

quin et illud me impulit ad dicendum quod ut dicerem nullus adigebat; non enim iam coacta laudatio et expressae metu uoces periculum silentii redimunt. fuerit aberitque tristis illa facundiae ancillantibus necessitas, cum trucem dominum auras omnes plausuum publicorum uentosa popularitate captantem mendax adsentatio titillabat, cum gratis agebant dolentes et tyrannum non praedicasse tyrannidis accusatio uocabatur. nunc par dicendi tacendique libertas, et quam promptum laudare principem, tam tutum siluisse de principe.

And indeed, the fact that nobody was forcing me to speak impelled me to speak; for now praise-giving is not coerced, nor do voices extorted by fear redeem the danger of silence. May it be past and gone, that grim obligation of an enslaved rhetoric, when lying flattery tickled a fierce tyrant as he captured every breath of public applause with his breezy popular appeal, when the afflicted gave thanks, and not to have praised the tyrant was said to be an accusation of tyranny. Now there is equal freedom to speak or to stay quiet, and as it is safe to have said nothing about the emperor, so it is easy to praise him.

The most distinctive lexical echo is probably *expressae metu uoces* recalling Pliny's "uoces illae, quas metus exprimebat," but the opening interplay between negation and affirmation, the pairing *fuert abieritque* (in the subjunctive mood, like Pliny's *abeant ac recedant*) and the dualisms in expressions (*illud . . . quod; quam . . . tam*) confirm a stylistic dependence which extends to further words in isolation (such as *necessitas, gratis agebant, tyrannum, and libertas*). This reanimation of a pronounced Plinian style at the point where Pacatus justifies his political and oratorical project can hardly be coincidence; stylistic reminiscence from a speech with which it is juxtaposed energises and validates the difficult political apology for speeches delivered in Gaul to Magnus Maximus.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, however, Pacatus here parades some original stylistic flair. The optative doublet *fuert abieritque* is unusual in its tense and, by position, postpones the subject.<sup>16</sup> The chiasmic arrangement of "tristis illa facundiae ancillantis necessitas" foregrounds its sound effects, and while the delayed *necessitas* recalls Pliny, the collocation with *tristis* is unparalleled.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps more arresting is *facundiae ancillantis* with the rare deponent verb here used in personification.<sup>18</sup> Pacatus's care in word choice is manifest in the sound effects and images generated in pairs ("trucem dominum / auras omnes / plausuum publicorum / uentosa popularitate / . . . mendax adsentatio") before the closing—and damning—verb.<sup>19</sup> In sum, there is a marked Plinian ingredient here, in content and style, but there is also a reach to further embellishment.<sup>20</sup> Pacatus's literary signature will be considered in a close reading of two further passages.

The juxtaposition of Pacatus's speech with Pliny's puts two Spanish emperors side by side (Turcan-Verkerk 2003.65). Menander Rhetor recommended (2.369) an emperor's native country as a topic, and Pacatus devoted a complete chapter to Theodosius's Spain, the opening two sentences of which are as follows (4.2–4):

15 N.b., too, the Plinian tag quoted above in n. 10 immediately precedes the passage quoted in full, and *Pan.* 55.3 on silence and praise-giving.

16 For the infrequency of perfect tense optative subjunctives, see Woodcock 1959.88.

17 The sound patterns: *-is -is -as, -und -ant, -ac anc -ec*.

18 Grinda 1916 ad loc. cites Cic. *de Orat.* 1.236, where knowledge of the law is cast as a "little slave girl and waiting woman to eloquence," "eloquentiae tamquam ancillulam pedisequamque." On *ancillor*, see Chruzander 1897.10.

19 Cf. IV(10)37.3 with the possibility of the same metaphorical sense of "tickle," but in Nazarius's context, a positive sense.

20 Pacatus's *nullus* for the classical *nemo* has parallels at III(11)5.1 and II(12)27.1: Chruzander 1897.92.



nam primum tibi mater Hispania est, terris omnibus terra felicior, cui excolendae atque adeo ditandae impensius quam ceteris gentibus supremus ille rerum fabricator indulisit; 3. quae nec austrinis obnoxia aestibus nec arctois subiecta frigoribus media fouetur axis utriusque temperie; quae hinc Pyrenaei montibus, illinc Oceani aestibus, inde Tyrrheni maris litoribus coronata naturae sollertis ingenio uelut alter orbis includitur. 4. adde tot egregias ciuitates, adde culta incultaque omnia uel fructibus plena uel gregibus, adde auriferorum opes fluminum, adde radiantium metalla gemmarum.

For Spain is your motherland, a land more blessed than all lands, which in so adorning and enriching it, that supreme maker of things has indulged more eagerly than other peoples; neither exposed to the southern heat waves nor subject to arctic cold, it is caressed by the moderate temperature of both skies; crowned here by the Pyrenean Mountains, there by the tides of the [Atlantic] Ocean, here by the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea, it is shut off by the genius of clever nature as if some other world. Add so many outstanding cities, add all the cultivated and uncultivated fields, full of crops and flocks, add the wealth of gold-bearing rivers, add the mines of radiant jewels.

The chapter's closing conceit casts Theodosius as an heir of some sort to Trajan (4.5), but the passage does not draw on Pliny's speech, which is silent about Trajan's origins.<sup>21</sup> The wider ideological and political context of Pacatus's interest in Spain reveals an important contrast to Pliny, but the style of the passage and the compositional technique its analysis lays bare is the present focus. The long opening sentence (*nam primum . . . includitur*) consists of a paratactic series of clauses and phrases regulated in isocolon. The emphasis at the outset is on clarity (*tibi mater Hispania est*); the appositional phrase which follows relocates a description of Britain from a speech to Constantine in 310, now refreshed with the repetition *terris . . . terra*.<sup>22</sup> The first of three sustained relative

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21 On Pliny's silence on Trajan's Spain, see Rees (forthcoming).

22 *Omnibus beatior terris Britannia* ("Britain, more blessed than all lands," VI[7]9.1).

clauses (*cui . . . indulisit*) combines a doublet of unusual gerundives with the extraordinary circumlocution for “god,” recalling both *summe rerum sator* (“supreme creator of things,” XII[9]26.1) and, more immediately, *supremus ille . . . auctor . . . indulisit*, said by Pacatus’s friend Ausonius in his *gratiarum actio* to Gratian ten years earlier in 379 (*Grat. act.* XVIII.83). The second relative clause (*quae . . . temperie*) returns to the speech of 310, this time for its meteorological train of thought (*in qua . . . aestatis*, VI[7]9.2), here arranged into pendant descriptive phrases in identical arrangement, and the final relative clause (*quae . . . includitur*) with the spatial markers characteristic of ephrastic discourse (*hinc . . . illinc . . . inde*; e.g., *Symm. Or.* 3.5) heading three matching phrases all looking forward to the ennobling metaphor *coronata*. In structure, the sentence is a study in controlled *amplificatio* and, as such, broadly in keeping with a fundamental ambition of Pliny’s speech;<sup>23</sup> but in its lexical, clausular, and intertextual detail, the sentence’s principal debts are to a more contemporary aesthetic.

Pacatus’s next sentence is another combination of old and new. His *adde tot egregias ciuitates* clearly recalls Vergil (*Georgics* 2.155–57):

adde tot egregias urbes operumque laborem,  
tot congesta manu praeuptis oppida saxis  
fluminaque antiquos subter labentia muros.

Add so many outstanding cities and the product of labour,  
so many towns piled up by hand on overhanging rocks,  
and rivers slipping by underneath ancient walls.

After describing the climate and fertility of Britain in the speech to Constantine of 310, the orator had mentioned the fauna, “pecorum mitium innumerabilis multitudo lacte distenta et onusta uelleribus” (“a countless multitude of gentle flocks and herds, distended with milk and laden with fleeces,” VI[7]9.2). The application to Britain of a commonplace of pastoral poetry perhaps fired Pacatus with a sense of the panegyric potential of a Vergilian topical intertext.<sup>24</sup> It seems possible, too, that Pacatus was inspired by Ausonius, who had himself taken up Vergil’s *Georgics* in his *Moselle* (454–58):

23 See Plin. *Epist.* 3.18.1.

24 E.g., for *lacte distenta*, cf. *Ecl.* 4.21, 7.3, 9.31; Luc. *de Rerum Nat.* 1.258–59.

addam urbes, tacito quas subter laberis alueo,  
 moeniaque antiquis te prospectantia muris;  
 addam praesidiis dubiarum condita rerum,  
 sed modo securis non castra, sed horrea Belgis;  
 addam felices ripa ex utraque colonos.

I will add cities, underneath which you slip in your silent channel, and ramparts looking down on you from ancient walls; I will add stores used as defences in uncertain times, but now not camps but granaries for the safe Belgae; I will add prosperous settlers on both banks.

The ideological effect of a transfer to Spain by a Gallic orator of lines from the so-called *laudes Italiae* will be many layered, but it is on the poetics of the manoeuvre that I wish to concentrate.<sup>25</sup> Pacatus's version returns to the imperative mood of the Vergilian original, but his fourfold catalogue of *adde* matches and surpasses Ausonius's triplet, again witnessing to the tendency for *amplificatio*. This indulgence in Vergilian-Ausonian poeticizing aestheticizes the discourse in a manner unlike Pliny's *Panegyricus*; for although Pliny worked into his speech some diction with poetic ancestry, there is a step-change here in Pacatus's description of Spain where, by contrast, poetic ornamentation, via marked intertext and lexis, is a conspicuous constant.<sup>26</sup> His carefully wrought passage of literary geography combining various sources and discourses can hardly be considered stylistically "Plinian," a point enhanced both by the absence of an equivalent passage in the *Panegyricus* and by the juxtaposition of the two speeches.

A different mode again can be seen in Pacatus's account of the closing stages of Theodosius's victorious campaign against Magnus Maximus. Military campaign narratives are recommended by Menander Rhetor (2.373–74) and feature in several of the *Panegyrici*. In 100, the Dacian Wars for which Trajan is best known lay ahead of him, but Pliny devotes some attention at least to his military achievements (*Pan.* 12–15). By contrast, the *raison d'être* for some of the later speeches seems to have been to contribute to celebrations of military successes, and, accordingly, they feature

25 The Vergilian intertext is discussed by Galletier 1930.

26 On Pliny and poeticism, see above, n. 13.

lengthy sections of narrative.<sup>27</sup> In such sections, the narrative perspective adopted by the orators tends to ventriloquize the panoramic omniscience of an epic or historiographic voice as the focus shifts without hesitation from one army to another.<sup>28</sup> Pacatus, too, grants himself this privileged authorial view (II[12]30–38), but he cuts himself an unusual degree of creative licence when he details the flight of Magnus Maximus on the point of defeat (38.1–2):

ibat interim Maximus ac te post terga respectans in modum amentis attonitus auolabat. nec ullum ille consilium ulla-  
mue rationem aut denique spem, quae postrema homines  
deserit, sequebatur; quin ipsos uiae implicabat errores et  
nunc dexter aut laeuus, nunc uestigiis suis obuius incer-  
tum iter ancipiti ambage texebat. 2. quotiens sibi ipsum  
putamus dixisse : “quo fugio? bellumne temptabo?—ut  
quem uiribus totis ferre non potui, parte sustineam? Alpes  
Cottias obserabo, quia Iuliae profuerunt? peto Africam,  
quam exhausti? repeto Britanniam, quam reliqui? credo  
me Galliae?—sed inuisus sum. Hispaniae committo?—  
sed notus sum. 3. quid ergo faciam inter arma et odia  
medius? a tergo premor hostibus, a fronte criminibus. si  
morerer, euaseram. sed ecce nec animum sequitur manus  
nec manum gladius; labitur ferrum, tremit dextera, mens  
fatiscit. o quam difficile est miseris etiam perire!”

Meanwhile Maximus was moving, and looking back at you behind him, he was flying off stunned, like a madman. Nor was he following any plan or rationale or even hope, which deserts men last of all; rather, he was confusing the very wanderings of his route, now to the right or left, now in the path of his own footprints, he was weaving an uncertain course in his windings. How often we imagine he said to himself: “Where am I fleeing? Will I try battle?—so I would withstand with part of my forces

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27 E.g., VIII(4), XII(9), and II(12). IV(10) has a narrative of Constantine’s victorious campaign against Maxentius (in 312), but the speech (of 321) was not part of dedicated victory celebrations. On the function/s of narrative in panegyric, see Rees 2010a.

28 E.g., VIII(4)13–16, XII(9)16–17, IV(10)21–30.

what I couldn't resist with all of them? Shall I bar off the Cottian Alps, since the Julian Alps were so helpful to me? Shall I seek Africa, which I drained dry? Do I go back to Britain, which I abandoned? Do I trust myself to Gaul—but I'm hated there; do I commit to Spain?—but I am known there. So what can I do, stuck in the middle between weapons and hatred? From behind I'm pressed by the enemy, in front by my own crimes. If I were to die, I had escaped them, but look, my hand doesn't obey my mind nor my sword my hand; the sword slips, my right hand trembles, my mind grows weak. O how difficult it is even for the wretched to die!"

The phrasing of the opening action is taken directly from speech VIII(4), where it refers to the flight of the usurper Allectus in 296.<sup>29</sup> Pacatus's register then changes with an adaptation from Lucan's epic description of Pompey in flight: "Magnus . . . incerta fugae uestigia turbat / implicitasque errore uias" ("Magnus confuses the uncertain footsteps of his flight and his paths entangled with wandering," *Bellum Civile* 8.4–5).<sup>30</sup> This elevating trajectory continues in the direct speech introduced by the distancing device *ipsum putamus dixisse* which invites his audience's collusion in the bold fiction of the words given to Maximus.<sup>31</sup> None of the doomed usurpations treated at length elsewhere in the collection attribute direct speech to their protagonists.<sup>32</sup> But as well as being an innovation, Maximus's rhetoric of the despair of a fugitive with no place (or means) to go reverberates with moments of high tragedy and epic: lexical and formulaic echoes resound from Sophocles' Ajax and Philoctetes, the Medea of Euripides, Ennius, and Seneca, Catullus's Ariadne, Vergil's Dido, and Ovid's Scylla.<sup>33</sup> But

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29 "Te post terga respiciens et in modum amentis attonitus" ("Looking back at you behind him, stunned, like a madman," VIII[4]16.2).

30 See Lunn-Rockliffe 2010.328–29 on other threads between Magnus Maximus and Pompeius Magnus via Vergil, Lucan, and Servius.

31 Lunn-Rockliffe 2010.328–29: "[Pacatus] builds on the tradition of using the epic past to allegorize and even elevate the sordid present, as well as displaying his literary credentials and ambitions."

32 Similarly, unlike Carausius, Allectus, and Maxentius, Magnus Maximus is named in the speech to his conqueror; see Lassandro 1981 and Lunn-Rockliffe 2010.324.

33 Soph. *Ajax* 457ff., *Phil.* 1350ff.; Eur. *Med.* 502ff., *Enn. Med.* 284–85 (= Jocelyn 1967.217–18), Sen. *Med.* 451ff.; Cat. 64.177ff.; Verg. *Aen.* 4.534ff.; Ovid *Met.* 8.108ff. N.b. also

Maximus is a parody of a tragic hero or heroine: his melodramatic nine deliberative questions, the exclamatory *ecce* and *o*, and his rank cowardice expose, emasculate, and even feminise him.<sup>34</sup> No doubt this powerful invective might have been comic in performance depending on Pacatus's delivery, but even on the written page, it is clear that the orator was keen to extend the lexical and stylistic range of panegyric.

The examples above demonstrate that Pacatus was well read and comfortable in the world of letters. More speculative than the hypothesis that Pacatus was the collection's editor, but likewise assimilated into scholarship's orthodoxy, is Pichon's suggestion that Pacatus was a Professor of Rhetoric at Bordeaux. His west-Gallic provenance is clear: "ab ultimo Galliarum recessu, qua litus Oceani cadentem excipit solem et deficientibus terris sociale miscetur elementum" ([I come] "from the furthest recess of Gaul, where the Ocean's shore receives the setting sun and the common element mixes with the lands as they slip away," 2.1).<sup>35</sup> But the speech yields little else of secure prosopographical value. Rather, Pichon's conclusion is based on the assumption that only a Professor of Rhetoric could have enjoyed the access to the earlier speeches of praise that Pacatus's speech manifests, evidence of which we have noted above; and a Professor of Rhetoric would be the most likely nominee from his community to make the trip to Rome to address a speech of praise to the new emperor. These are sensible suggestions.<sup>36</sup>

However, while Pacatus's Chair of Rhetoric remains a possibility, in fact other sources from the late fourth and mid fifth centuries reveal that his oratorical skills were not what Pacatus was best admired and remembered for by his Gallic contemporaries and successors. In his own lifetime, Ausonius rated Pacatus as second only to Vergil among Roman poets (*Praef. Var.* 4.10–14, Green):

Cic. *de Orat.* 3.214, the original tone of which is difficult to recapture from Cicero's context.

34 Maximus's inability to fall on his sword exposes a cowardice that differentiates him from Ajax and perhaps further feminises him; his "labitur ferrum, tremit dextera, mens fatiscit" also damns him, since death by the sword (rather than the noose) was masculine on the Greek tragic stage even when suicidal: Loraux 1985, esp. 7–13.

35 Vessey 2010.270–71.

36 Orthodoxy attributes Pacatus's absence from Ausonius's *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium* (*Prof. Burd.*) to the fact he was still alive when that poem was written; e.g., Galletier 1955.49, Etienne 1962.250, Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994.437–38, Turcan-Verkerk 2003.49. Other Professors of Rhetoric whose panegyrics survive are Eumenius and Nazarius.

hoc nullus mihi carior meorum  
 quem pluris faciunt nouem sorores,  
 quam cunctos alios Marone dempto.  
 “Pacatum haut dubie, poeta, dicis?”  
 ipse est.

None of my own family is dearer to me than the man whom the Nine Sister Muses blessed more than all the others, except Vergil. “Surely you speak of Pacatus, o poet?” That’s him.<sup>37</sup>

And several decades later, Sidonius lightly bantered about how the Gallic Nitiobroges and Vesunnici indulged in a sort of tug of war for Lupus, each claiming him as their own: “tu uero utrisque praesentiam tuam disposite uicissimque partitus nunc Drepanium illis, modo istis restituis Anthedium. et si a te instructio rhetorica poscatur, hi Paulinum, illi Alcimium non requirunt,” “Indeed, you split your time fairly between them in turn, now giving Drepanius [Pacatus] back to the former, now Anthedius back to the latter. And if rhetorical instruction is demanded of you, those don’t miss Paulinus nor these Alcimus” (*Epist.* 8.11.1–2).

The name dropping assumes an immediate familiarity with the association of Pacatus and Alcimus with the Nitiobroges (that is, Agen on the Garonne, near Bordeaux) and Anthedius and Paulinus with the Vesunnici (Périgueux). But the man to represent Bordelais rhetorical instruction is Alcimus, not Pacatus, and meanwhile Anthedius, with whom Sidonius juxtaposes Pacatus, seems to have been a well-known local poet.<sup>38</sup> In sum, Pacatus *may have* been a Professor of Rhetoric, but he was certainly a poet—and, of course, the two functions were not mutually exclusive.<sup>39</sup> However, the primary identification of Pacatus as a poet in his own lifetime and in the following century demands particular attention when considering how his only surviving work of oratory bears up against the speech it follows in the *Panegyrici* anthology.

37 Ausonius gives his opinion of Pacatus’s poetry here (17), in the *Technopaegnon* 1 (Preface), and the *Ludus Septem Sapientum* 1–18.

38 On Anthedius, Sidon. *Carm.* 9.311–12, 22.2–3 and *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (PLRE) II.93; on Paulinus, PLRE II.846; on Latinus Alcimus Alethius, see Aus. *Prof. Burd.* 2 (Green), Jer. *Chron.* 354, and PLRE I.136–38; cf. Turcan-Verkerk 2003.10.

39 PLRE I.272: “He was a poet.” I consider intractable the question of the attribution of the Christian poem *de Cereio Paschali* to Pacatus as explored by Turcan-Verkerk 2003.

Pliny himself read and wrote poetry, but it seems that it is not on his verse that his literary reputation has ever rested in his own lifetime, late antiquity, or since.<sup>40</sup> But in his revision and publication of his *Panegyricus*, Pliny's ambition that his speech would enjoy a future readership is clear. This is spelled out in detail early in the speech itself when Pliny says that under the heading of his speech of thanksgiving, "boni principes, quae facerent, recognoscerent; mali, quae facere deberent" ("Good emperors recognise what they are doing and bad ones [recognise] what they ought to be doing," *Pan.* 4.1). This degree of self-reflexiveness in relation to a speech's future appears nowhere else in the collection except in Pacatus's speech to Theodosius, at the close of which a note of oratorical *modestia*, first seen in the opening chapter, returns.<sup>41</sup> Pacatus finishes by saying (47.6):

ad me longinuae conuenient ciuitates, a me gestarum  
ordinem rerum stilus omnis accipiet, a me argumentum  
poetica, a me fidem sumet historia. compensabo tibi istam,  
imperator, iniuriam si, cum de te ipse nil dixerim quod  
legendum sit, instruam qui legantur.

Cities will come to me from afar; from me, every literary  
pen/genre will receive the run of your achievements; from  
me, poetry will take its theme and historiography its reli-  
ability. Emperor, I will make good the offence that, if I  
have said nothing worthy about you which must be read,  
I will provide instruction for those who will be [read].

Pliny's claim to be articulating political instruction for future emperors comes early in his speech; in his and Pacatus's lines, visions of the texts' futures bookend the collection (as chronologically sequenced). Like Pliny, Pacatus wants his speech to be an inspiration—but not to future emperors, but to future authors of all types including poets and historiographers. In their variety of forms, those authors will celebrate Theodosius's

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40 Hershkowitz 1995; see the Introduction above.

41 See II(12)1.3, discussed above. Cf. the note of specific petition or general well-wishing for the emperor/s which closes most speeches: Claudius Mamertinus speaks of his intention to devote his work and leisure to extolling and celebrating Julian's achievements, but this is a separate undertaking from the speech he delivered, III(11)32.2. Cf. Vessey 2010.274, who says that Pacatus's remark "sounds routine."



reign. Deftly, Pacatus here engineers one way round the problem of the enormity of Pliny's *Panegyricus*: his own speech closes at half the length of Pliny's, but its ongoing influence will ensure its endless usefulness as a source of knowledge and inspiration. Whatever its claims for oratorical inadequacy ("de te ipse nil dixerim quod legendum sit"), Pacatus presents himself as instrumental in a coalescence of intellectual and artistic activity with imperial politics.

And just as Pliny's ambition to instruct future emperors is served by his inclusion in the *Panegyricus* of specific aspects of Trajanic policy (for example, in fiscal [*Pan.* 36–41] and legal measures [43]) and of broader ideological material which could ultimately be reflected in or translated into policy (for example, in the emperor's ethics [4, 44–45] or his respect for the senate [56–60, 93]), so, too, Pacatus's speech seems actively to cultivate its own accessibility to later writers of all types by itself adopting a variety of literary styles. In fact, this conceit of figuring his discourse as an inspiration to future artistic endeavour is not restricted to literature (44.4–45.2):

huc, huc totas, pii uates, doctarum noctium conferte curas, hoc omnibus litteris linguisque celebrate, nec sitis de operum uestrorum perennitate solliciti. illa quam praestare historiis solebatis ab historia ueniet aeternitas. 5. uos quoque quibus secunda sors cessit dare famam rebus, artifices, uulgata illa ueterum fabularum argumenta despiciate, Herculeos labores et Indicos Liberi triumphos et anguipedum bella monstrorum. haec potius, haec gesta sollertes manus ducant; his fora, his templa decorentur; haec ebore reddantur haec marmore, haec in coloribus uiuant, haec in aere moueantur, haec gemmis augeant pretium. 45.1. pertinet ad securitatem omnium saeculorum quod est factum uideri, ut, si quis umquam nefaria uota conceperit, monumentis nostrorum temporum recensitis per oculos hauriat innocentiam. 2. quisquis purpura quandoque regali uestire humeros cogitabit, Maximus ei exutus occurrat. quisquis aurum gemmasque priuatis pedibus optabit, Maximus ei plantis nudus appareat. quisquis imponere capiti diadema meditabitur, auulsum humeris Maximi caput et sine nomine corpus adspiciat.

To this, to this, you dutiful poets attend the labours of your learned nights, celebrate this in all your books and

languages, have no worries that your works will last forever. That eternity which you were accustomed to grant to history will come from history. And you also, artists, whom favourable fate has empowered to bestow reputation, look down on those standard themes of the stories of old, Hercules' labours, and the Indian triumphs of Bacchus, and the battle of snakes-footed monsters. These, let these exploits lead your skilful hands; let these decorate the forums and the temples; let these be cast in ivory and marble; let these live in colours; let them be fashioned in bronze; let them add to the value of jewels. It matters to the security of every age that what has been done can be seen, so that if anyone ever takes on any nefarious ambitions, may he review the monuments of our times and drink in innocence through his eyes. If anyone thinks of draping his shoulders with royal purple, may a stripped Maximus cross his mind; if anyone wants gold and jewels for his citizen's feet, let barefooted Maximus appear before him; if anyone intends to place a crown on his head, let him see Maximus's head torn from his shoulders and his body without a name.

Pacatus's basic means to *amplificatio* here—an accumulation of short clauses and sentences essentially restating an established point—might reasonably be considered “Plinian.” Continuities are found in repetitions (“haec . . . haec . . . his . . . his . . . haec . . .,” etc.; “quisquis . . . quisquis . . . quisquis”; and “Maximus . . . Maximus”) each fronting its clause or phrase, inverted relative clauses (“illa quam . . . uos quibus”) and carefully placed verbal forms in the future indicative (*cogitabit . . . optabit . . . meditabitur . . .*) and jussive subjunctive (*ducant . . . decorentur . . . reddantur . . .*, etc.; *occurrat . . . appareat . . . adspiciat*), again to an effect reminiscent of the *Panegyricus*. Meanwhile, alliterative phrases (“litteris linguisque . . . secunda sors . . . vulgata illa veterum . . . priuatis pedibus”) and chiasmic arrangements (“totas . . . doctarum noctium . . . curas”; “uulgata illa ueterum fabularum argumenta”) continue the collection's frequent concern for aesthetic effect at the level of phrasal composition. Yet the explicit call to *pii uates* and *artifices* to join forces in making Theodosius's victory over Maximus their standard subject hereafter signals a grand and unprecedented ambition; the boundaries between poetry, art, and oratory are collapsed in a passage which adopts an ecphrastic mode to

complement the workmanship it encourages in the visual arts and builds through a fleeting revival of an epic metaphor for viewing to the culminating quotation of a famous Vergilian line.<sup>42</sup> Artfully wrought, Pacatus's speech itself becomes an object lesson in how the poetics and register of discourses other than traditional epideictic could successfully be co-opted in appropriate expressions of praise of Theodosius.

Their juxtaposition provides a constant prompt to compare the panegyrics of Pliny and Pacatus. The imperative for interpretive comparison is pervasive and operates in tandem with Pacatus's many echoes from other speeches in the collection. His most conspicuous deployment of the figure of comparison to engineer panegyric leverage for his addressee is in a catalogue of contrasts between Theodosius and Maximus (II[12]31); this direct comparison draws heavily on a passage from the speech of 313 which set Constantine and his defeated rival Maxentius head-to-head with each other (XII[9]4); in both passages, the pared-down expressions give the comparison rhetorical force.<sup>43</sup>

But however powerful the expression, to compare an honorand with a defeated and dead rival is in reality a cheap shot—far greater rhetorical advantage could be made out of a comparison between Theodosius and Trajan Optimus, and in effecting this, we see both Pacatus's respect and flair.<sup>44</sup> Anthologised at the head of the collection, the *Panegyricus* enjoys a canonical and originary status; juxtaposition with it, and lexical and tropical echoes of it in the speech to Theodosius invite—even demand—comparison. But that comparison is neither stark nor unitary but accommodated within a bold landscape of literary eclecticism. As a form of literary embellishment, an increase in *amplificatio* beyond Pliny's

42 *Monimentis . . . per oculos hauriat*: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 12.945–46: *oculis . . . monimenta . . . hausit* and *PanLat* IV(10)32.4: *oculis hauriuntur*; Verg. *Aen.* 2.558: “*auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus*” (“The head torn from the shoulders and a body without a name”); see Lunn-Rockliffe 2010.327–30.

43 E.g., “*te clementia, illum crudelitas; te pudicitia soli dicata coniugio, illum libido stupris omnibus contaminata; te diuina praecepta, illum superstiosa maleficia*” (“Forgiveness [follows] you, cruelty him; you, chastity dedicated to one spouse, him, lust stained by all crimes; you, divine precepts, him superstitious malpractice,” XII[9]4.4); “*tecum fidem, secum perfidiam; tecum fas, secum nefas; tecum ius, secum iniuriam; tecum clementiam pudicitiam religionem, secum impietatem libidinem crudelitatem*” ([that] “you had loyalty, he had treachery; you right, he wrong; you justice, he injustice; you forgiveness, modesty, religion, he impiousness, lust, cruelty,” II[12]31.3).

44 N.b. the fourth-century imperial acclamation recorded in *Eutr. Brev.* 8.5.3: *felicior Augusto, melior Traiano* (“more blessed than Augustus, better than Trajan”); B. Gibson 2010.134.

achievement was impracticable—Pliny’s speech is simply too long. But while adopting many stylistic traits redolent of the *Panegyricus* far more insistently and daringly than Pliny, Pacatus embellished by a different aesthetic: a weaving of the tropes, echoes, and vocabulary of poetry within the prose discourse of epideictic oratory.

This could, perhaps, be considered a magpie aesthetic, reminiscent of the spoliation-decoration on the Arch of Constantine and vulnerable like that monument to charges of dilettantism or ineptitude.<sup>45</sup> A more progressive criticism can see Pacatus as a collector of panegyrics and an author of a panegyric, but at the same time, as a collector of epic, tragic, historiographical, and ecphrastic discourses, all of which then feature in his text; his is an accumulating, totalising speech, as well as (he says) an inspiration. From the vantage point of the head of the collection but next to its close, Pliny’s *Panegyricus* seems not a prototype or model for crude or mechanistic imitation but an authoritative cue for political praise-giving to be appreciated as serious literary work, a genre capable of inventiveness and adventure.<sup>46</sup> Pliny’s call for a new rhetoric justifies not a post-*Panegyricus* generic stagnation but a sense of vital self-renewal and a reach for inventiveness realised with confidence by Pacatus the poet. Against Pliny’s, his speech seems the political endnote and aesthetic highpoint where the Theodosian regime and Theodosian praise discourse work together in mutual support.<sup>47</sup>

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45 See the discussion of Elsner 2004, esp. 292–93 and 304–09.

46 On the *Panegyricus* as a model, see the Introduction above; on the interpretation of an intertextual “model,” Barchiesi 2001.142.

47 For their suggestions and observations, I am very grateful to audiences at St. Andrews, Nottingham, Brussels, Manchester, and Pisa.